

Adult Category

grassroots

by Alisa Gordaneer

First Place

there's a revolution afoot in the garden, the chickens
are scratching up resentment, the beans have surrendered.
it's become an all-out struggle, with worms,
beetles rambling in shiny coats
stolen
from the night's shimmer.

at first it's quiet, as though
you could imagine them fomenting quietly, muttering against
damp grass by moonlight, passing secret messages in
the scuttering of dry day. but the trees get wind of it, bushes
rustle, and suddenly the grasses know all, tell all
until the whole garden has rebellion on its leaf tips, insurgency
in every seed.

it will go like this
despite the gardener, despite the scythe, despite
white flags waving from the laundry line.

THE CITY THAT KILLED A POET

by Lavonne Mueller

Honorable Mention

The house where Lorca hid in Granada
is now a hotel
local business men use their cell phones
to call in Iberian stock reports

next to the door
where he was dragged out to his
Our Lady of Agonies still holds court
here in the city that killed a poet.

Today
boys eat chocolate buns on church steps
sweets their only piety

during the early months of the Spanish Civil War
thirty thousand people were shot
roaring lorries packed with victims
drove past roses big as cabbages.

Loose red earth
drifted in Andalusian refinement

no one could be executed
without the opportunity for confession

by the light of a lorry headlamp
Lorca dug his grave
in his own suit of light.

IN THE NAME OF GOD

by Melisa Cahnmann

Honorable Mention

I don't care for a bearded God,
a God that throws spit or stones.
You can keep your spilled blood,
your wrestlers and victors. I want
a God who sweats when she dances,
a God who craves dark chocolate, a God
of multitudes, a God who plays H.O.R.S.E..
I want a God that listens, a yoga God
who moves from plank pose to upward
facing dog. I want a vegan God, a God
who eats bacon, I want a God without judgment,
a God of patience and knit sweaters, a God
who isn't afraid to change his mind.
God, almighty King of the Universe –
I don't want that chauvinistic bully
to forgive me. I don't care for robes
or loincloths, velvet or cashmere or
whose God has the better basketball team.
The God that I love is not yours, not mine
not so easily possessed, not a God who owns
property or wears vests full of explosives.
Your God leaves a funny taste in my mouth.
The God who has a rich feast in the foyer
of a finer structure or sings in the sweeter sorrow
of a minor key – all these Gods, the male
and female, the dead and the risen,
keep them, call them whatever you like.
I want a God whose name is all names,
whose enemies are arrogance and war,
whose peace is as present as the purple crocus
and her possible bloom in the spring.

Youth (13-18) Category

what Mrs. K from next door said when I asked her if she's happy

by Joyce Li

First Place

happy yes
aren't I lucky?
these days hereabouts not too many people are
funny how we have so much yet we're never happy
it's too bad
what I mean is
young kids your age have seen entire villages destroyed
like a horror movie except without cuts and it lasts
more than a couple hours
like you entered the wrong theatre and now you can't get out
it's your life
and maybe you've three little sisters and a little brother who are
hungry and maybe today there is enough rice to go around
not like yesterday
you'd be relieved and you'd play a game maybe
and the laughter of your siblings would be so beautiful
you would smile
wouldn't you?
while some people've got everything and then some
but they never stop to breathe and sigh and dance
or even to look at each other
no they're not sad
but we both know that
happiness is not just a lack of sadness
it's beautiful and fleeting and hard to describe like snow.

The Antaeus Dream

by Katherine Tan

Honorable Mention:

On nights the moon stands
solemn faced and the stars
half-hang-half-float like fireflies
suspended in glowing martyrdom
and the breeze rasps secrets of the
crucified to anyone who'll listen.
I step out. Crunching grass beneath my
feet, worms between my toes, ears pressed
to ground, waiting –
like stethoscope to patient's heart,
I attune myself to Earth's pulse
(not the throbbing in my ear) but the
shuddering recoil as shell
shatters ground, the silent moan as
body plunges face forward
into dirt.

Somewhere, a mother returns her son to
soil. Bowing deeply, her tears baptize
the spot. They quiver for a moment, like
final echoes of a lullaby many years
unsung, then disappear beneath
black earth.

I still taste salt
in these blades of grass – my
tongue stings with remembering, my
ears acknowledge pain. I am Antaeus-bound
to the soil, the secret sacrifice of its
pulse, but for this I will not cry –
Only for the dream of a bullet-startled dove
who discovers nothing
but a trick
of pebbles and wind.

Youth (12 – Under) Category

All I Can Do Is Hope

by Jamie Handgis

First Place

I long to see a world,
a world of a different color
a world of only peace
where all the darkness is hidden away

I dream to see a world
a world of a different color
possibly lavender with an overflow of grace
Where race doesn't matter and the many moons
have a scratch of maroon

I want to see a world
a world of a different color
where the possibilities are endless
Where yellow, orange and blue blessings
are found among the clouds
where the silky sky holds all the
answers

Yes, I can see the truth
so all I can do is hope,
hope to see a world
a world of a different color

twenty-one kinds of peace

by Ellie Weinstock

Honorable Mention

a leaf on water
birdsong
a growing tree
this sky
a poem
friendship
a book of fantasy
no capitals
a candle
color
a jar
a baby
children playing
music
clouds
a feather
purple butterfly
heart shape
culture
meditation
a dove