

Margaret Walloch

***Nostalgia***

Third Place

12th Grade

Arrowhead Union High School

Educator: Terri Carnell

my dream-like memories must have deceived me,  
so young as I spent my days studying the sky  
without thanking the coarse ground  
that caresses my agile steps.

for my real vision could be detailed on a blank  
canvas.

contemplating undertones—brown or red—of our  
distant barn.

I could convey a story—

between a girl and the light, sprinkled gust of  
wind

or share the bond of those periwinkle flowers  
and how they cause a dusk sky to remind me of  
home—

the skies I surveyed everyday after my ham  
sandwich.

or reveal that the lush, wise trees,  
always kept my secrets in spring.

I slowly step forward

behind the secret gate that dad built for me  
to keep the rest of the world out.

the fields that I've roamed a million times,  
a place that I keep for myself.

Katie Weitner  
***Sapphire Blue***

Second Place

11th Grade

Arrowhead Union High School

Educator: Elizabeth Jorgensen

The cardboard box sat in the corner of my room.  
At first I would hear its thumping, frantic  
scratching, and  
I pictured it, throwing itself against the sides of  
the box;  
A hysterical desperation to escape,  
so vivid and raw that I almost could taste it.  
A small life, driven by the instincts of self-  
preservation,  
confined to a paper prison.  
I decided to keep it there, in the cardboard box.  
At night, I imagined how it might've felt:  
claustrophobic and cornered,  
confusion suffocating its senses  
as the darkness only seemed to get  
smaller and smaller around it.  
I wondered if its cornflower feathers  
ever began to dull while it was in that box,  
or if it somehow knew  
that I wasn't going to let it out.  
I opened the box, and  
the bird wasn't dead, but  
it didn't seem to be alive, either.  
The frenzied sapphire blur had been replaced  
with an exhausted lump of feathers,  
its survival instincts worn to the bone,  
all out.

Xavier Kastner

***Barnet's Brushed Tale***

First Place

11th Grade

Arrowhead Union High School

Educator: Elizabeth Jorgensen

In Barnet's ballet of brush, a dream's debut,  
a watercolor waltz on a vellum's view.  
Carbon whispers secrets, a silent hum,  
smiles in the hues, like a midnight drum.  
Figures in flight, like shadows in the air.  
A dream architecture, delicate and rare.  
The canvas, the storyboard of nocturnal myths  
each stroke narrates a tale to explore.  
A tale unread, like pages in the night  
Winds weave in a poetic sprite.  
The dance on vellum, a story untold  
1990's dream, in each detail, bold.

Alex Marlis  
***the mad crow***

Honorable Mention

12th Grade  
Arrowhead Union High School  
Educator: Katie Herman

the sun dissolves  
into the  
cosmic horizon,  
watch as  
his dust explodes  
into the  
galactic seascape  
and see  
the moon step  
up to her  
divine silver throne –  
can you  
hear the prayers  
below her  
heavenly kingdom?  
oh, how i love  
the evening theater!  
its candor is the air i breathe!  
but, oh, how i hate to see  
my murder flee!  
night after night,  
they forget me  
and cross the great sky sea  
in a malignant display of reality.

Eden Harrison

## ***A Murder Right Outside***

Honorable Mention

12th Grade

Arrowhead High School

Educator: Katie Herman

Oh, what Hitchcock-horror is this,  
swarming, an attack on its precipice?  
What is this tapping, rapping at my chamber  
door?

Some hellish nightmare? Or something more?  
Curiously and cautiously, I tread to the window.  
Upon that sight, I felt so ill, a creeping sense of  
vertigo.

Like inky black rockets, birds of a feather  
blitzing the blues, shades of midnight and heather.  
Slack-jawed, agape, yet no features on my face,  
I watch the pilots begin to fall, now doubling in  
pace.

"But I am safe," I say, paralyzed with awe in my  
ivory tower.

Then I note my open window.

Now I have reason  
to cower.

Tyler Heimen

***Tranquil***

Honorable Mention

12th Grade

Arrowhead High Union High School

Educator: Terri Carnell

Surrounded by acres of farmland,  
a barn filled with tractors,  
no traffic, just subtle noises of birds in the  
distance,  
there couldn't be a more peaceful place.  
The sun's rays shone through the clouds.  
Trees dispersed all over,  
corn starting to grow.

Beckett Hughes

***Last Stand***

Honorable Mention

12th Grade

Arrowhead Union High School

Educator: Terri Carnell

Today I am here to talk about my gate  
built for nobody to come in.

The unwelcomed, the unwanted, the uninvited

The wind blew past me

The rain crossed over the line.

The rat dug under me as a rainbow grew over me

The chicken went around me as I grew angrier

While the bird decided to fly over me

As I grow older and my body rots weaker

I continue to fail and let things across my way

Daniel Paquin

***Boxed Bird Betrayed***

Honorable Mention

9th Grade

Hayward High School

Educator: Karen Duffy

Boxed bird betrayed, disarranged  
Having lost your tattered feather strewn across the  
floor  
Looks your beak has words hath need to be  
exchanged  
But staying in that box might have you chirp  
much little more  
So be free you muddleheaded bird  
For I don't speak for no reason, your freedom do I  
implore  
The box is open, so fly away, unless your stay is preferred  
For now, I am quite interested, your intentions do  
I pore  
So now boxed bird, are you really so betrayed  
Or attention do you seek, then my confusion  
grows evermore  
Boxed bird betrayed, disarranged  
Or is this a ploy to get me too engaged



Owen Wick

## ***Through the Window***

Honorable Mention

12th Grade

Arrowhead Union High School

Educator: Elizabeth Jorgensen

I used to be free, feeling the breeze beneath my  
yellow beak

I used to dance, delicately flapping my wings in  
the air

I used to chirp, challenging my children to follow  
my glide

They used to watch us through the window  
smiling

pointing out our orange bellies and slick blue  
backs

They once were little like my children

She was the landlord, the mother of the nest

She assembled her home as I constructed mine

We scavenged for food to feed our children,  
helped them grow

I am now in a box, my wings are tattered  
torn and weathered from the wind

My children, now grown, glide above making sure  
I am alright

But I am sick,  
too sick to fly,  
too sick to dance,  
too sick to try

Now, grown, they carefully carry me in my  
cardboard box

Their smiles have faded and their eyes look heavy

Through the window she watches from her bed

Soon we will both be free.

Evelyn Morse

***Birds Eye View (Here I sit, Here I ponder)***

Honorable Mention

9th Grade

Hayward High School

Educator: Karen Duffy

Here I sit, the towering trees tower no longer  
The immense sky span is covered.  
Here I sit, tall brown walls on all my sides  
My ruffled royal blue feathers thrust upon them.  
Here I sit, what a curiosity, these walls  
where do they lead, where will I go, where do they bring me?  
Sitting in the box, I think how I have come to this room.  
I was laying in the grass, plucked from the earth  
I chirped while being placed in this dark home.  
Small delicate feathers have been misplaced, the box shakes  
Here I sit, three days, two minutes, what's the limit  
Of time? Who knows, I'm just a prim jay who cannot soar.  
Though I cannot wander, I ponder, I ponder  
What does it mean to be a bird? Does it not mean to be free?  
So when will I be a bird again? When will I be free?  
Here I sit, Here I ponder.  
Here I sit, I lean my wing onder the small dirt colored sky.  
Where am I headed, where have I gone, will I arrive at dawn?  
Here I sit, lay, and watch, breath heaving, heart beating.  
Until the bright sky opens once again, and I flee to the sun  
Until the clouds once more wrap me in a blanket of warmth.  
Until I can sleep peacefully once more without these walls.  
As my eyes fill with wonder,  
Here I sit. Here I ponder.

Ben Laird

## ***My Field***

Honorable Mention

11th Grade

Hayward High School

Educator: Karen Duffy

I took a stroll in my elegant field.  
Sapphire flowers room the rich soil  
while the navy blue sky gives us shield  
from the colossal sun that makes our skin boil  
While providing the farm the nutrients it needs  
I took a saunter in my cultivated field.  
Modish crops graze the pasture

With green stems poking their young heads out of the dirt.  
Plentiful quantities of flowers and crops  
surrounded by one old oaken fence  
I plodded through my earthly field.  
Walking miles upon miles aimless with no intent  
It seems I could keep an eagle eye on the distant horizon  
and of the countless fields that form like aisles  
Walking in my field is time well spent.

Sarah Freek

***The Hawks of Slumber***

Honorable Mention

10th Grade

Whitnall High School

Educator: Kathryn Zimpel

Deep Saxe shades of midnight,  
bleeding through chillingly raw panes,  
will certainly ignite  
pure terror inside veins.

Shadows of dark pacing,  
blood-curdling screeches and squawks-  
pull back the draping,  
reveals mobs of ravaging hawks.

Nothing can ease such torture:  
Why must it always transcend  
this sleeping horror?  
Hallucinations won't end.