

Emily Baber

And a Blue Footed Boobie: Watching the Bonds Break

Third Place

12th Grade

Arrowhead Union High School

Educator: Terri Carnell

"Would you pass me the sugar please, *my dear?*"

"Of course, *darling.*"

The terms of endearment laced with so much venom,
they were received simply as 'terms.'

I see the smear of another woman's lipstick,
staining the man's collar.

I smell the aroma of another man's luxury cologne,
engulfing the woman's body.

All the flyers coated in black and yellow that flew above
choked from the tension, and fell to their demise

The same would happen to me, I fear.

I sit upon my perch, careful not to join them.

Two sets of young eyes stare from the windowsill.

Young eyes that mirror the woman's glitzy green irises.

Two young mouths move in urgent whispers.

Young mouths that mirror the man's pale puce lips.

The flaming ember between the man and woman
had long extinguished into a cold ash. But,
it is because of the two young hearts,
that the man and woman will strive to rebind theirs.

Helen Thompson

To Survive is to Pretend

Second Place

11th Grade

Hayward High School

Educator: Karen Duffy

Before I wake fully I know-
it is a day of hunger.
Twisting, gnawing pains in my belly
open my eyes to a dim reality.
On these days,
to survive is to pretend.
Suddenly, my straw-like blue tunic
becomes shivering velvet robes of the deepest purple.
Low, dripping ceilings
rise to a height never imagined-
the damp stone walls
widening, cloaked in wondrous tapestries.
The abject lack of light
chased away by a multicolored whirlwind of stained-glass sunlight,
filling my newfound castle completely.
A soft, warbling clack
leads me to heave open my grand double doors-
no small feat,
even for such a king as I.
And there, upon my shining steps-
my loyal subjects!

Brady Weston

Balancing Actions

First Place

12th Grade

KM Global

Educator: Elizabeth Jorgensen

Contorted, desperate, brilliant gem,
fighting for its kin.

Every living moment
spent in the delicate balance
between life and death.

Don't give in to the temptation of false nectar
and vibrant red against the storm.

You must not falter,
for storms pass,
flowers wither and die,
but life perpetuates itself.

Through every heartbeat and buzz,
through every delicate cocoon,
shading their immature eyes.

Ty Wall
Caged Desire

Honorable Mention

12th Grade
Arrowhead High Union High School
Educator: Katie Hermann

IN THIS
painted PRISON of
porcelain and possibility,
roses strain against their vessel's
dreams, while distant Mountains mock
their captive state. Each petal whispers
tales OF wind-wild FREEDOM, of Gardens
ungoverned by gilded walls. Here, trapped
in perfect Stillness, Beauty becomes ITS
own cage - pristine, Preserved, Precise.
The hummingbird hovers, suspended in
eternal Approach, never to taste the
NECTAR it seeks. Below, an Egg
holds Secrets of flight not yet
unfurled, Promises wrapped
in shell and Shadow. WE
are all vessels, aren't
we? Containing
multitudes of
DESIRE

Mariella Lehrmann

Teetering

Honorable Mention

11th Grade

Kettle Moraine High School

Educator: Angie Mclean

Was known by others in bad connotations.
Her temperament, dour.
Had no belongings, but belonged to the wind.
Loved its strength, how it swept her
to the places her wings could not.
Her body, fragile, but her eyes,
indestructible black pearls.
Her soul was misfortuned, the unlucky
whose body would not suffice.
The day the great storm hit,
she was cursed
with a fragile, blue-speckled egg.
Its weight, anchoring her to the earth
where she could only feel the wind's passing
and her great longing.
She did the only thing she could do;
grasp a twig.
Refused to comfort the small egg,
she held steadfast.
Watched a flock of birds fly with her beloved wind.
*That poor baby, one sang aloud,
on the short end of that stick.*

Phoenix Rickard

Wonder is the Way to Win

Honorable Mention

11th Grade

Hayward High School

Educator: Karen Duffy

Although it's sullen and barren,
This home still allows the flower of wonder to bloom.

Although it's something so trite,
so boring, so banal

The camouflaging, ashy feathered figures
attract every bit of attention of the young.

Although not human, perhaps the birds wonder too?
Who is this girl?
Why is she wearing blue?
Is she the boundless sky we fly into?

The barren sky leaves little to fly into,
yet still wonder seeps in once more.
How will it look when blue?

Awe drives the young,
whether it be one of flesh, feather, or fin.

Wonder.

Wonder is the way to win.

Harrison Pack

A Child-Like Curiosity

Honorable Mention

12th Grade

Arrowhead Union High School

Educator: Terri Carnell

With curiosity and hesitation,
the innocent child peers out,
and what he sees captivates him.
A stunning sight of the unknown:
Feelings of fear clash with the intense need to know.

What does he see?
Something almost hidden,
among the monotony of the street.
Something one notices with the keenest eye,
discrete figures distinguished by dull outlines,
figures depicting unfamiliar life

But what are their intentions?
Are they friend or foe?

Fear begets retreat.
While curiosity immobilizes,
as the child peers out,
at the sight of three geese.

Gabrielle McAnany
Alluring Fraudulence

Honorable Mention

12th Grade
Arrowhead Union High School
Educator: Terri Carnell

Peering at his face quick enough to not make eye contact,
but long enough to even be repulsed by
the cuisine on the table. His top hat grows
with every deceptive phrase he throws at me.
I combat this with an infectious smile
and reassure him I know what I am talking about.
Drinking another glass of wine to fight back yawning,
I grow impatient. My feet begin to ache because
of my size too small heel as do my cinched ribs.
Noticeably the tulips are quite mature and
smell perfumed enchanting the bees.
He finally slides me the black paper, however,
before handing me the white feathered pen he asks,
"Are you sure?"
Innocently I grab the pen.
Sign. Shake his scaly snow hand.
I parade off with my poker fading off as
I look back, smile, and yell,
"You are a blue footed booby, nothing more than a joke
nothing less than a joke!"
Swaying my hips as I ascend in the distance
the sun sets in my tremendous colors.

Taylor Malec

In the Last Moments

Honorable Mention

11th Grade

Arrowhead Union High School

Educator: Terri Carnell

Why must they turn away from the echoes of our despair?
It is clear from the spots and stripes
that my brother and I are nearing the end.
With no succor in sight,
Mother and Father remain oblivious to our demise,
lost to their pleasures of drink and laughter.

I feel the quietus creep in,
wondering who is there to stop it.
Do not fear, reaper—no one is here.
Mother and Father do not care,
nor do they rush to help.
Brother and I shall drift off,
without so much as a goodbye
from those who should love us more
than any possession in the sky.

As I look out the window, nearly succumbing to the darkness,
I see what will remain of my past life once I descend:
Mother,
Father,
and a Blue-Footed Boobie perched above
indifferent to our fate,
the silent witness to our end.