

The Kumquat Challenge



Poems by current and former WCC
faculty, staff, and students celebrating
National Poetry Month

Spring 2015

Whatcom Community College Library

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school level in the Poetry Out Loud recitation contest and reached region-als. His favorite poet is Edgar Allen Poe. Maxim also enjoys playing tennis, practicing the violin, and skiing. (p.3)

LYNDA SPAULDING is a beginning poet and writer. She had taken classes through community education at WCC and appreciates the involvement WCC has within the community. (p.15)

BARBARA STROMME is a grandmother who has entertained her grandchildren with little stories for a number of years. She lives in Ferndale with her husband Joel, a few chickens, and an old cat named Baba. Poetry is a sorting method for her as she tries to live her faith gratefully. (p.32)

DIANA SWAN, a former WCC student and a member of the Bellingham community, feels *all* entries are winners. She's currently working on a performance piece, "Bland Parenthood, Goth Housekeeping." She is very happy to attend the Kumquat event *this* year since she is *not* in Iceland or having surgery. (p.8)

ARA TAYLOR is a member of the Library Marketing Committee and manages the student textbook collections in the WCC library. (p.34)

JUDY TERESA is a retired special education teacher. She's currently writing a memoir that critiques her educational experiences. Her poems have been published in *The Bellingham Herald*, *The Kumquat Challenge*, *Prime Time*, and *Whatcom Watch*. Her poem "The Morning After" won a Walk Award in the 2014 Sue Boynton Poetry Contest. (p.5)

COLE THOMAS grew up in the Seattle area where he attended Catholic school and enjoyed playing basketball. After high school he decided to move across the country and attended Drexel University for two years. Last fall Cole moved to Bellingham and now attends WCC. (p.39)

JOHN TYLER is a student at WCC and a U. S. Army veteran. He is from Arkansas and attended the University of Arkansas prior to joining the army. While serving, he was stationed in Fort Hood, Texas and deployed overseas. He has a long-standing passion for poetry and writing. (p.13)

CAROL WILKINSON was born 49 years ago and is an average female. (p.8)

HEATHER C. WILLIAMS is proud to be a WCC librarian. She and her husband currently enjoy hosting one Japanese exchange student and one fluffy orange cat with a wonky leg. Sometimes life would be easier if her muse had a muzzle, but it would also be pretty boring. (p.23)

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to WWU in 2016 to study English and Creative Writing. Lucas spends his days in WCC's Outreach department and nights at local poetry slams. (p.33)

CAROL OUELETTE is fulfilling a long-time dream to go back to school and complete her education. Carol is a mother and grandmother, and these relationships have shaped her life in deep ways. Coffee, art and nature are three things that Carol needs on a daily basis. (p.4)

JODIE PERMEN was inspired by the pace of life on the west coast of Ireland. Time seems slower and the lighting softer there. Jodie was struck by the beautiful blessings she found in pubs, songs, and books. Her poem is a blessing she wrote for winding down at the end of a hectic day. (p.38)

TIMOTHY PILGRIM, associate professor emeritus at Western Washington University and former WCC student in evening classes, has more than 250 poems accepted for publication by literary journals, anthologies and other periodicals. He is co-author of *Bellingham Poems*, published in 2014 by Flying Trout Press. (p.13)

ISABELLE RODRIGUEZ is a second-year student at WCC working on her AAS transfer degree. She was born in Seattle and has lived all across Washington state. She is an avid reader and is interested in hobbies such as drawing, gardening, ornithology, and motorcycling. Poetry and writing are also on that growing list. (p.3)

DONNA WATSON RUSHING loves poetry as puzzle and challenge, and never knew this fact until the Kumquat Challenge taught it to her. Other than writing poems requiring ten specific words, she also enjoys writing in form, and ought to do it more often. She currently teaches English at Whatcom Community College. (p.11)

ALISON SCHERER is WCC's grant writer. She is originally from Lake Forest Park and worked at the University of Washington before moving to Bellingham. Alison enjoys working at WCC and calling this area home. She lives in Sudden Valley with her husband, two young daughters, and a yellow lab. (p.18)

HARVEY SCHWARTZ grew up on the east coast. He hitchhiked west for a summer vacation but never returned to live in the east. A tipi vision quest led to a twenty-five year chiropractic career. Since retiring he's been a gardener, improv player, and now a writer. (p.10)

SALLY SHEEDY is the systems librarian at WCC, collects stuff, plays the fiddle, sings, contra dances, and is the mother of twins, recent graduates from separate colleges. (p.33)

MAXIM SHMOTLOKHA is a Running Start student at WCC. He enjoys reading poetry in his spare time and in literature classes. In 2013, he won at the

MEYYAPPAN KUMAR teaches ECON 100 at WCC. He is a chemical engineer with an MBA from the University of Chicago and retired after 30 years at BP. He loves teaching and helping young students and preparing them for the real world. Kumar is married, and his hobbies are drawing, learning French, and playing the guitar, including at a WCC concert. (p.2)

LINDA LAMBERT is a student in the Stonecoast MFA program (University of Southern Maine) and a student in Ron Leatherbarrow's English 113 (Poetry) Class at WCC. (p.26)

GREG LANE, aspiring to become a monster, a terrible yet approachable one, is a young man with a bright future. He has lurked in Bellingham for the last few years and won't be driven out anytime soon. He is the tyrant of WCC's Writers of Whatcom club and relishes a lifestyle of hard work and intoxicated play. (p.23)

DAVID M. LAWS is a poet, musical instrument repair technician, and former teacher living in Bellingham with his wife Judith and his dog Possum. He likes to garden, play with model trains, hike, read, and write. He plays baritone saxophone with a big band, the Jansen Jazz Band. (p.8)

NANCY McABEE has been an employee at WCC for 15 years and currently works in the STEM division. (p.31)

ANDREW SHATTUCK McBRIDE has recent work in *Peace Poems* (an anthology), and in *Kokako*, *Mud Season Review*, *Frogpond*, *Whatcom Watch*, *The Bellingham Herald*, *Ribbons*, and *Clover*, *A Literary Rag*. His poem "I Love My City in Snow" was a Walk Award winner. (p.29)

KATE MILLER is an instructor in the English Department at WCC. She writes poetry and memoir, loves birdwatching and admits that when stressed, she looks at cute corgi puppies on Pinterest. (p.21)

JIM MILSTEAD is a member of Independent Writers Studio, Village Books Poetry Group, a winner of two Boynton Merit Awards, is published in *Clover*, and is the author of *Collage*. (p.20)

MARY MUELLER has been retired for three years, and still wonders what retirement is, anyway. In the past she has taken classes at Whatcom Community College. She is often found in her garden or sitting in her glass porch writing. (p.18)

JOSHUA NORTHOUSE was born in Bothell in 1994 and raised in Whatcom County. He is attending WCC to work toward a degree in computer science, though he enjoys "writing words" on occasion, as well as hiking and making up music. (p.16)

LUCAS NYDAM has experienced Whatcom as a student, a student president, and a full-time staff member in less than 3 years. He plans to transfer



Introduction

The library's marketing committee is grateful to all of the poets who took part in our ninth Kumquat Challenge. To meet the challenge, poems must include all ten of the words the library chooses. This year, however, it turned out there was an additional challenge. Due to a typo on some published posters, an alternate tenth word was introduced into the mix, "sign" in the place of "sigh." We know now that our posters are a good way to promote the challenge! We decided to allow either of these words. As it turns out, nine of the poets chose to include both of them in addition to the other nine. Thanks to the many wonderful poets for their submissions which we now include here for your reading pleasure.

Here are this year's words:

**awake bloom chord fan kick
passage play relief rise sigh (or sign)**

Ara Taylor and Sally Sheedy headed up the challenge this year with the arrangements and planning. The collation of poems for submission to the judges and the production of the poetry book were a joint effort of Nate Dalgas, Zoe Bronstein, Heather Williams, and Sally Sheedy.

Applause goes to the judges, who volunteered their time to carefully consider all of the poems: Johnny Hu, math faculty; Nathan Franklin, English faculty; Ron Leatherbarrow, vice president for instruction; Mike Singletary, registrar; and Anna Wolff, English faculty.

Those who agreed to share their art at the event deserve special recognition. Melanie Sehman performed "To the Earth" (1985), composed by Frederic Rzewski. This interesting piece featured Sehman playing on flowerpots while reciting a Homeric poem. Dance instructor Alethea Alexander and student performers from her class translated the challenge words into expressive movement.

The library is grateful for the WCC copy center staff, who faithfully print dozens of copies of our book every year, and often with a very short timeline!

Heather Williams

Let the Music Say
by Meyyappan Kumar

I am lying awake and I want to say so much
Sulking in silence not a word in my reach
I kicked off my bed sheets, turned on my fan
Picked up my guitar and played a single chord
I let my hand rise up, and down with the rhythm
Then came the music taking its own passage
It bloomed; it played, in its own way
Said so much what a million words could not say
I feel the relief and sigh in disbelief
Who needs those words?
Just let the music rise and play.

PLAY



for a career in creative writing. After graduating, she plans to jump right into the field and continue working on her novels. Her choice genre is fantasy, and her favorite authors include George R. R. Martin and J.K. Rowling. (p.17)

LESLIE GLEN has always enjoyed writing, and has dabbled in poetry since the age of 15. When she is not working, she can usually be found reading, but also enjoys solving various types of puzzles and Scottish Country Dancing (but not usually at the same time). (p.6)

DOUGLAS HAMILTON has worked at WCC for 2 ½ years and loves reading and writing science fiction/fantasy along with raising his 7-year-old son. He can be found at local parks on the weekends or at his favorite restaurant, The Mount Bakery. (p.22)

JOHN HANSEN is known for his flair for floral arrangements, displayed at many campus events. He has a degree in display design from Spokane Falls Community College, and is on the custodial staff at WCC. (p.19)

LEVI HEERINGA likes to write in his spare time and is currently working on a screenplay, which is very much in its early stages. He loves long walks on the beach, watching sunsets and movies, and pretty much every cliché one can imagine. (p.27)

KAREN M. HOLLINGSWORTH is a lifelong learner, living in Bellingham with free spirit and energy, and her soulmate Jim. She strives to start each day as a new adventure and to enjoy the day wherever it may take her. (p. 7)

JULIE HORST spent time in the tropics before moving to Bellingham; however when one day the temperature climbed to 108 in dear old Bellingham, she packed her bags and moved to California. (p.38)

EMMA ISLIP is a recent graduate of East Lake High School in Sammamish, where she started writing poetry. She received the Mark Di'Re poetry award in 2012, and her poem "Through the eyes of a flat chested, blue girl" was published in *Off the Coast* literary magazine. She pursues her passions for poetry and short fiction writing at WCC. (p.14)

KATRINA KAPPELE is an alumna of WCC, former editor of the Whatcom Horizon, and is currently a procurement specialist for the U. S. Air Force. Her favourite topics are anthropology and living history. She is frequently mistaken for being Canadian. (p.30)

JESSY IRIS KRAVCHENKO is a bubbly girl who loves to write. She and her husband are expecting their first baby (it's a boy!) this August. She's a very family-oriented person. Her personal heroes in life are her parents Eric and Kelly Stewart, and her grandmothers Iris Sherfey and Pam Lang. (p.37)

Contributors

KATIE ATKINS has been writing poetry since 2010. She finds beauty in exploring emotion and the heart through words, and hopes that through her words, she can bring life and hope to others. She is finishing her AA at WCC and will transfer to WWU in the fall of 2015. (p.12)

DENNIS BARNES, a graduate of WWU, discovered the joy of writing poetry and prose while studying at WCC and subsequently earning a degree from Fairhaven College in creative writing. Another interest is singing bass, including barbershop harmony with the Mount Baker Toppers. Dennis recently planted his first garden. (p.22)

NATÁLIA GALINDO CESTARO is an international student from Brazil who enjoys meeting new people and listening to their stories. She is passionate about writing and dreams of opening a cultural cafe because she believes that good music and a cup of coffee can enhance any bad mood. (p.24)

LINDA CONROY is a community education participant. She believes it is a writer's responsibility to watch things as they happen, to see people as they are. (p.36)

ELLIOT CRIBBS, a Whidbey Islander-turned-Hamster, is about to earn an Associates degree and transfer to WWU. WCC has provided ample inspiration toward developing a greater understanding of the world. His poem represents the joys of spring and the satisfaction that accompanies an impending graduation, including the adventure it entails! (p.28)

VINCENT DREYER will miss good ol' Whatcom Community College. It has been his full-time learning playground for the past two years, but he looks forward to participating in future Kumquat Challenges as an alumnus. This fall as he begins a geology/education major at WWU, he and his wife will welcome their first child into the world. (p.9)

HANNAH EMORY's passions in life are self-education, the arts, literature, writing, and philosophy. After WCC Hannah wants to volunteer, travel, blog, start a career in acting, drink lots of coffee, and pursue whatever other adventures God puts in her path. Hannah lives out in the sticks with her roommate, Emme the parakeet. (p.40)

FIAFIALAUIA, born Lauia Ester Lamositele in Tacoma had an adverse upbringing, experiencing a fatherless home, sexual abuse, poverty, fear of deportation of caretakers, and racial discrimination. Her poems reflect her coping and rising above tragedies and turning them into positive catalysts for personal and social change. (p.25)

AMBER FRICK is 21, a second-year student at WCC, currently studying

In That Moment by Isabelle Rodriguez

2nd Place Winner!
Current Student Category

It was innocent play
the way we kids climbed the sturdy pale tree
grasped at the thick limbs
felt the sap between our fingers
and rise into its sheltered rib cage
We were like the sigh within the lungs of that body
what quiet relief
For a moment we strummed like a chord
in tune with the soft sway of the tree
Was it innocent play
when my friend ruptured the silence
and like a delirious fan kicked out at me
opening a broken passage to the earth
When my life bloomed behind my eyes
I knew I was awake in that moment
until I was not.

Springtime in the Park by Maxim Shmotolokha

The Earth awakes
serenading a chord,
a sigh,
of relief
the flowers bloom,
the rabbits play,
and kick,
the family walks,
along the passage,
the path,
of life,
as the leaves of the trees cool
the rise
of the heat
and the fan of peaceful splendor
shades the earth
in its new Arcadia
as time passes in a timeless place

Relief

by Carol Ouellette

The relief is

I'm still here.

My passage through time has brought

leaf

bud

and now bloom.

Like the new moon on the rise

I too

awake to new possibilities.

Living before

was play compared to now.

Before was dullness

now I fan the flame of perception.

I kick the chains of Plato's cave

leaving my past behind,

ascending into my heart.

This place of beauty

Strikes

the chord of truth.

Colors

my life with signs of love.

Photo Credits

<https://www.flickr.com/commons>

awake	<i>Young people on a camp stay</i>	The Royal Library, Denmark
bloom	<i>Currie's farm and garden annual : spring 1915</i>	U.S. Department of Agriculture
chord	<i>Portrait of Billy Taylor and Bob Wyatt, New York, N.Y., ca. 1947</i>	Library of Congress
fan	<i>Three women at Florida Field - Gainesville</i>	State Library and Archives of Florida
kick	<i>Goshen College Soccer player kicking ball, undated</i>	Mennonite Church USA Archives
passage	<i>AL-18, Kreps Coco Solo</i>	San Diego Air and Space Museum Archive
play	<i>Play at Hiawatha Fieldhouse, 1913</i>	Seattle Municipal Archives
relief	<i>Cocaine Toothache Drops</i>	National Library of Medicine
rise	<i>Balloon ascension with the exhibition buildings in the background</i>	OSU Special Collections & Archives
sigh	<i>What's happened to the man I married?</i>	Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums
sign	<i>White dust on railroad crossing has floated over from gypsum plant at Plaster City, May 1972</i>	The U.S. National Archives

The Epic of Time

by Hannah Emory

Time is now beautiful in her blushing bloom
Wide awake is her youthful visage
As she births movements and raises ages

Time sings a blessed chord and cries triumphant
As her infant revolutions and epochs toddle forth
Her songs like a fan to their freedom flame

Time's passage is a mystery to her heart
Her offspring discontent as they rise and age
For they win not from her what they would have

Time feels like a play with no plot
On her stage, those she birthed, kick and rage
Seldom to return to her wings with a joyful sigh or smile

Time weeps, for now her old age is no relief
For still her children are weary, they mewl
They long hungrily for a new age to flow forth

Time now speaks, "Truly, I see my passage before me;
I see a future I was not meant to view.
Gray and powerless to sleep, all I wish is to die."

Going Solo

by Judy Teresa

I dream I'm at a Frank Sinatra concert.
When he sings "I Get a Kick Out of You"
it strikes a responsive chord
because I'm a Cole Porter fan.

Members of the audience
are called on stage
to stand on the riser
and sing along with Sinatra.

I'm so relaxed I doze off
but quickly awaken
when each person in the audience
is asked to sing a solo passage.

I look to heaven
for a sign of deus ex machina
to save me from my tragic plight,
but see nothing.

When I'm not rescued
I decide to play along
and sing my part of the song.
My face turns bright red,

like a rose in bloom.
I fan myself repeatedly
and breathe a sigh of relief
when my solo is over.

At the end of the concert
Sinatra pulls me aside
and whispers in my ear,
"You have perfect pitch."

I swoon dead away.



CHORD

Untitled

by Leslie Glen

I hear, from within a memory, a sweet and haunting tune.
It swims unbidden through my soul,
and causes me to weep without the benefit of reason,
sigh with an emotion I cannot find.
A true and humble chord it strikes upon my heart;
winking and teasing, plucking at my senses, it bids me, "play!"
It fans the sleeping embers of hope I have carried
so long that I have forgotten that I have them,
warps and weaves a teasing passage, whispering my name,
and I am helpless but to follow.
I know it well, but cannot place it in time or space.

We go together through the dark places in my dreams;
I feel it more than hear it rise above the voices that bid me quit.
It drives me onward,
guides me when I am afraid,
comforts me when I am sad,
pulls me when I am uncertain,
pushes me when I am complacent...

A new hope begins to bloom.
The song becomes a march, a victorious thing.
I throw off the mantle of despair I did not know I carried,
tear off the bonds of apathy,
kick doubt and fear away,
and go on.

And before I realize that I am in a race, I find myself at the finish line,
awake though I did not know I slept;
relief is unexpected but not unwelcome.

And the melody plays on,
beyond the end of everything,
a sign that I have only begun.

Be Here

by Cole Thomas

I often wonder if you will awake,
You are resting in that shoe box,
I want to change your fate,
but how? How can I give you rise?
I want to see you, hear you, feel you
I want us to play together
I want us to be together,
There is no place for me to sigh
no one for me to kick or hit or bite
I am stuck in this limbo without you
there is no passage or verse to sooth me
I feel a curse has been doomed,
With no relief in sight
this confusion is turning to chaos
I am playing the same chord of your favorite song,
Again
Again
Again
Again
I am calling to you, but no answer is heard
you do not exist anymore
all I have are pictures and fading memories
Where is this supposed to take me?
I cannot bloom without you here,
I cannot grow with you so low,
I cannot be heard without your praise,
I am lost in chaos and confusion,
Please come home,
Be here in the sun with me
be my fan to cheer me on
be my arm to grab
be my road to stability,
You must wake.

THE KUMQUAT CHALLENGE

Write a poem with these words:

Play Relief
Sign Awake
Bloom
passage Chord
Kick Rise Fan

Submit to: wccpoet@gmail.com
by 11:59 pm Thursday April 30th

Rules & info: <http://library.whatcom.ctc.edu/blog/kc-2015/>

For Ease At Bedtime

by Jodie Permen

When you find yourself awake, buzzed by the resonate noise of pale
blue light

When dull bars of grey kick with every heartbeat behind each eye

And your stomach spits the memories of self-doubt

Release the heavy, satin chord, fanning your curtains wide across like
layers of pigments playing with the deep-coloured sky

Cleanse your heart in the relief of words dressed in the kindness of
golden candlelight

You are a treasure. You have an abundance of gifts. You are loved.

Breathe out, giving in to the absorbent passage of coal-coloured night.

As the next morning blooms with peonymoke and thistle hues, may
you rise with a renewed spark of wonder for the day

Soothed and calm with clear eyes

It is bedtime now. Let your mind drift and body sigh. Sleep well
knowing that you are loved as you are.

Tropics

by Julie Horst

As I lay awake on a midnight passage
The slow bloom of intense heat rises.

From across the water I hear the sigh of a chord.

A zephyr kicks up, playing with my hair.

The music halts as I turn for my fan
RELIEF.

My Brother

by anonymous

My brother died last fall. Did yours?

Did you feel gut-kicked when you heard?

Did you awake with no memory

Of when you last played together?

Did you sigh with relief: It wasn't you?

Did you smile as thoughts of him bloomed?

Did you rise to the occasion

Of speaking stories without tears?

Did you ponder your own passage?

Did you offer words of solace

Striking chords between life and death?

Are you a fan of living?

Let the Day Begin

by Karen M. Hollingsworth

One's passage of life is defined by habits and attitudes.

Each morning I awake, rise and sigh and choose one of my moods.

Here's a new day with opportunity to kick a bad pattern.

I elect to go forward with more kindness and compassion,
a lot to learn.

I felt relief to have struck a new chord with myself on life's journey.

Now I shall fan out and bloom while I work, play, pause and feel free

Menopause in the Spring

by Carol Wilkinson

Awakened by the chords of birds and blooms and sweat
The kick of relief finally fans the temperature rise in my body
Sighing, the passage plays with me.

Song of the Flowers

by David M. Laws

Sunshine awakens buds from their slumber.
The world breathes a sigh of relief at the passage
of seasons from spring to winter, the blooms
rise from the earth as if from the grave,
play in the breeze that fans them into motion,
give a kick in the pants to frost and cold,
sing out with colorful chords rusty from silence:
"It's Spring! We're still here! We're alive!"

A Sign

by Diana Swan

Rise! Awake!
Ye Fan of the Bloom!
Unexpected Relief
Kick at the Passage to
Unleash the Chord
Go Play---Sigh

AWAKE



Honorable Mention
Non-student Category

Butterball

by Jessie Iris Kravchenko

I lay awake letting out a happy sigh,
My eyes closed treasuring every kick.
Hoping you'll have your father's eyes,
And that the years won't pass too quick.

Hopes and dreams flood my mind,
I cannot wait to watch you play,
I will raise you to be strong and kind,
You'll be my sunshine when skies are gray.

My baby bloom sprouting new life,
It will be a relief to hold you close.
Made with love by husband and wife,
Who will always love you most.

Whatever life passage you roam,
I'll forever be your biggest fan.
I promise to always be your home,
Even when you're a man.

Soon your Daddy will cut your chord,
Our eyes will rise to see our son.
The most perfect gift from our Lord,
Our perfectly beautiful little one.

You've already brought such joy,
My sweet and darling baby boy.



Lesson
by Linda Conroy

2nd Place Winner!
Non-Student Category

The more we play, the more we merry make
but with our games will recognition rise
or would we fall to dreaming while awake?

That day we took the pathway to the lake
I hoped to find contentment in your eyes
for the more we play, the more we merry make.

Breezes fanned and made the willows shake
to match our laughter, soothe our languid sighs.
Did I mean to dream? Was I awake?

The ardent bloom of youth was ours to take.
The chords we sang like pleading to the skies.
The more we play, the more we merry make.

I never really knew what was at stake
'til thought's passages began to turn to lies.
I didn't mean to dream. I was awake.

I kick myself for causing this heartache
with nothing but relief the final prize.
The more we play the more we merry make.
I did not mean to dream. I was awake!

The Orb of Man
by Vince Dreyer

Mountains improvise as they rise
Burst awake in the birth of a quake
Milan, Bhutan, Pakistan, Japan

Many other finite places
Infinite lives, infinite races

The world is a womb to entomb any bloom
A plume from a star has fueled our desire
Lords leave fjords and gourds to be adored

Humans are left to revise consolations

Alluvial fans, coral reefs
Trilobites peek in the peaks of massifs
Unexplored terrains, unexpected beliefs
Passageways painted pose relief to motifs

Clastic flows drown
As they kick the signs down
Of warnings, of dangers,
The qualms of Seiser Alm

To allay these feelings of decay
A play, a chord
A sigh, a spore

Life as we know it,
Can anybody show it?
Walkin' round town like a nobly-damned poet

A life to live
Satisfying wants and needs
Knowledge, wisdom, courage and discernment
The deference in between

RELIEF



Dad

by Harvey Schwartz

Winter's chilled refrain
is both a reminder
and a relief.

It's easy to forget
in a busy life. I zip
my jacket to the cold.

Feelings rise like the sun,
which has called up tulips early.

Dad bloomed late, was
called down too soon.

This transitory tease
of flowery fulfillment
plays me like a viola.

Chords of musical memory
awaken images of
strolling here with Dad.

The passages of
time and times
kicks me from
silent slumber.

A cool breeze, tinged with snow
fans across effluent fields.
I stand, chilled and alone,
with nothing but my sigh.



SIGN

Inside the courtroom low fans circulated. But not the crowd outside. They waited in silence for the count to begin, klieg lights trained on the door. "What is a chord?" one of the prosecutors had asked him. "A tone," was all the idiot had said.

Then it came: an announcement over the intercom: a verdict had been reached. The hibernating crowd came awake. News helicopters circled overhead. Three thousand journalists stood, poised, keen for the takedown to commence.

Release? Relief? For whom? Not for him. But maybe for the ones who loved him, waiting faithfully outside.

When he died, five years later, of a cardiac arrest (ha!) some said he'd escaped again for good.

He Lived
by Ara Taylor

For one moment, in the hot Los Olivos sun, it seemed like he wouldn't. Signs were not good. A crowd had gathered, not unlike the crowd that had shouted a long life to Barabbas, who went on (I'm told) to found a monastery in Ethiopia. But never mind him. It's Icarus we're talking here, the one who flew so close to the sun that his guardian angel melted (or maybe it was his wings).

This one, the one reduced to a filament by the too hot flare of the sun, was not going to get a second chance to rise up and dare defy physics again.

Somehow he made his way past the armored guards with billy clubs, through suffocated passageways and into the courtroom where his life was (surely) going to end. You could see the sadists, itching to kick him as he passed, hate blooming acrid in their mouths. Here, they said, was a matchless escape artist who wouldn't be playing the crowds again.

In one prison or another for most of his life, on a visit to England once, he'd walked freely into the Tower of London and out again.

But here the magic was going to end.

(Continued on page 35)

(Continued from page 34)



FAN

write a poem with these words
by Donna Watson Rushing

the kick balls are locked up for the summer
a relief, no more slap of red rubber balls
hurled at her bare legs on the playground
instead, she can play in the green metal sprinkler
which ca-chinks its spray in satisfying circles
then "lay out" in her two-piece bathing suit
on the bare patio
the Texas sun heats the gardenias nearby
perfectly white
their sweet scent rises, suffusing the air

in the evening, the air barely cooled
throng of cicadas thrum their tuneless chords
no patio lanterns here, just Daddy smoking
maybe they talk, but if they do
he punctuates the conversation with a sigh
ends it by a flick of his cigarette
into the grass

later, the black fan rattles
spins hot air as she lies in bed, staring up at the ceiling
awake, but unable to move
what bright and dark passage is this?
from childhood to something
more or less
what will bloom
and what will die?

They Tell Me
by Katie Atkins

Honorable Mention
Student Category

They told me I could be anything I wanted to be.
If I would only rise to the challenges set before me
But I cringe as I look back on that passage of pain
A journey through a sea of unbelief
The inner turmoil within simply gave me no relief

But where did it all begin, I ask myself in quiet hours
When I awake and hear the songbird play his note so solemnly
yet so faithful.
And I sigh, a deep and fearless sigh.
I look back on a stumbling season where I kicked and I cried and I
ran

That was where the sea found me
Engulfing me, enveloping me, changing me
When I finally found the surface
I nearly decided it wasn't worth it
But strong hands wrapped so gently around my heart
As I breathed in the fresh, clear air

And it seems all along
I was never left to bloom
In the sea, by myself, all alone.
Because the people who know my heart
Those who sit down to fan the flame
To steer me away from a sea of questions without answers
And trust
In the beckoning chord He's placed right in me.

Those are the ones I choose to believe
They tell me I already am
everything I need to be.

instant coffee
by Lucas Nydam

sun blooms through rain stained glass
the church band shakes off hangovers

relief comes with the
first strike of a kick drum
and the strum of a first chord
floods the warm pine pews

the band plays and fans
the golden embers of dust
now awake
suspended in sunbeams

yawns and sighs interrupted
for sips of instant coffee

"please rise
as we traverse
the passage of time"

The Finer Things
by Sally Sheedy

You're such a fan
of the finer things in life

I sighed in relief
when I knew this,
when I saw the obvious signs

When you kicked
up your heels to dance

When you set fruit and
blooming flowers before me

When you played passages
and chords to favorite tunes

We *are* the finer things

And when we awaken
we rise up singing

Who Changed the Season

by Barbara Stromme

"Have you ever in your life commanded the morning and caused the dawn to know its place?"

Wee hours of spring. Frozen soil thaws, the earth awakens, grasses rise and snowdrops bloom.

"Have you entered the storehouses of snow or seen the storehouses of hail?"

I blink winter from my eyes. Kick the wool quilt from the bed, rise with a sigh, yawning, stretching. Relief that there's no rain chording in C Minor or droning wind, fanning the evergreens.

"Where is the way that the light is divided, or the East wind scattered over the Earth?"

Bright sunlight that plays on the window and splashes across the floor. It's a sign, I am ready. Passage of one season into another, each with its appeal. Excited to see the next begin.

"Can you lead forth a constellation in its season and guide the bear with her satellites?"
Do you know the ordinances of the heavens, or fix their rule over the earth?"

Gone is the sun. What has changed? Sand dollar snowflakes float to the ground silent and mesmerizing. Spring? It is snowing on dandelions in bloom and fresh spring grass? Newly budded leaves look confused.

Morphing seasons, a kaleidoscope of possibilities. Done His way, no limitations.

"Who has given to Me that I should repay him?"

"Whatever is under the whole heaven is Mine."

[phrases in italics: Job, chapters 38 and 41]

Lucky

by Timothy Pilgrim

1st Place Winner!
Non-Student Category

I awake listless each day, rise
but don't smile, never kick sky, play --

pretend it is fine no one sleeps
by my side. I say I deserve nothing,

live miserly on surprise. I lie.
When I trudge dark passages, ignore

every full moon, hear only dour chords,
stomp roses in full bloom, I actually fan

my flame of love by not having any.
Nobody knows of this hope to get lucky --

a soulmate arrives with smoldering eyes.
I will weep from relief, sing -- and, yes, sigh.

Untitled

by John Tyler

—=0=—

Never would I have thought that my therapeutic relief would
come
in the form of my writing down passages from my life
Constant edits and typos, mixed with thoughts some would call maniacal... to
some extent, a pen and a pad have become the source of my plight
You see when these thoughts roam my head, I feel the need to kick knowledge
like I'm KRS-1, u know leaders of the old school
And also infused with some new school, giving meaning to every word I ever spit
like the Messiah when he shows what he told u
Revealing to our youth that they are just a fan of the moment, leading me to play
musical chords from our society just to show what's on the other side
Show them that there are some signs of improvement and awaken the
empowerment of our youth like Phoenix on the rise
And on how if they would only choose... then their minds... they would bloom...
but who am I kidding, these words never left the page
And I'm still just TALKING about what I would've done...haven't budged yet, it's
like these thoughts have found a way to keep me in this cage
I wonder if other people think like that...on second thought, never mind...
it's just me and my thoughts ...just my...

—=0=—

An Education
by Emma Islip

1st Place Winner!
Current Student Category

4am blooms, my mother wakes breath
sour with tork and chest, two decades late
a belly round and hard she pins her curls to the mirror, cracked
and spelled with spice, her spine in three knots

curved by relief, she sighs. Fans in anticipation
waits in light of having risen, a single chord,
waits for the sun to burst;

the kick.

Is blessed with a sole and homely daughter.

Now I have aged a second passage
the shoulder bird sits atop its peak, sings and spits
into my left ear drum. With a smile, inhales then exhales
its claws digging into my bare shoulder blades and plates

with black toes, fingers and nail
black teeth, black eyes, and gum –
oiled feathers like sharp tongues;

the old street cat.

I'm left with weighed limbs; fair and white
left deaf and assured; still and listening. His voice creaks
and cracks, floods the chambers. Takes my tubes, lungs, stomach
and cheek; throws them to the back of the vehicle.

A misplaced bulb and I'm strapped in,
years go by and I'm left, with no spool, no thread.
Hanging single from the ceiling, the child which rocked and fell
into shallow waters, cold; a mere fraction.

Asleep I'm let out, a piece of meat from underneath
the household stairs. No more no less a lemon drop,
a choked up honey bee. Sour without hunger

no need for play,

(Continued on page 15)

Second Attention
by Nancy McAbee

Am I awake?

Or is this my own personal dream?

Blazing colors of orange and red.

Blooming poppies fan the fields.

Chords of peaceful music rise and fall,

keeping time with my shallow breath.

A sigh of relief as time gently passes.

The secret passage guides me back,
into reality as it is.

I kick back the covers and play it over again,

surrendering the old dream for the new.



KICK

Sappho's Secret Garden

by Katrina Kappelé

I awake in Sappho's secret garden,
Where the passage of the breeze
Lets the warm sunshine play
With the sparkling stream
And heats the grass and soil
Beneath the heavy blooms of roses.

Come with me to gather a chord of
Fragrant applewood branches
To perfume the bowers of our home.

Beneath the honey-smelling trees
The meadow lies in stillness,
A welcome relief from the fast-paced world.

Come and I will fan you with the wind
As we chase the blowing breezes up
To the rise of the world
And we will sit beside the shore
Where the waves leap and
The silver fish kick up sparkles
For the wind to chase.

And when we have drunk our fill of wildness,
We will return to our meadow
With its fence of apple trees
And I will recline with you in the soft grass
Beneath the apple-boughs and roses
And with a sigh I will pull you
To the earth and kiss you sweetly
As the lazy afternoon sunlight
Sinks away into soft twilight.

(Continued from page 14)

a taste of cherry and secondhand cigarette, the absence of
a rabbit's foot.

I am neither the dove nor the snare. But
the half bird, half bred

flying, flying

eyes wide like planes, I watch
the pines together slide, and sway. Stretch

awake.

A lost aerial.

Awake

by Lynda Spaulding

Relief, winter's passage all but forgotten

Kick open the door to spring's riotous bloom

The full-throated birdsong rises declaring it halleluiah chord

Wings of butterflies fan the fragrant air

Children play and stamp in puddles

The sign says

Rejoice,

You are Awake!

Rise

by Joshua Northouse

A single stone,
Drops.
And gives ripples, as echoes,
Voice,
Who dares break the silence.
Allows to bloom, as sunlight, this heavenly chord
Blessed with a colour such like dawn.
From clear water, petals reach,
With veins pure as glass
To catch faer light dancing through morning mist.
Oh how this lily must glow!
Whose gentle waves,
Soft as breath
Breathe a sigh of relief,
For its voice has been heard!
As a passage from a play,
Far, as on distant stage.
Pause,
On your walks along the bank.

And kick a single stone.
To watch the ripples fan across the lake,

(Continued on page 17)

Always Awake

by Andrew Shattuck McBride

In memoriam Liam Wood, Stephen Tsiorvas, Wade King

Whatcom Creek is always awake
in its winding passage to the bay —
through rise of summer,
through colors of fall,
through decline into winter,
through bloom and renewal of spring.
Its waters whisper and sigh along flats,
its waters thunder down cataracts.

Equipment failures
and human errors cascaded
to a pipeline leak, an explosion
and a creek suddenly writhing with fire.
Like a vicious kick, deaths
of a fly fisherman and two boys at play.
In the aftermath, relief the fire wasn't worse.
So many questions. *Why? Why these three?*

Few signs remain of the conflagration.
We're left with names: the name
of an organization created to promote
environmental education and fly-fishing,
the name of a new elementary school.
Names sound chords of memory
and love. So many years have passed,
reeling in seasons after perfect casts.

Liam, Stephen, and Wade live on
in how we — their fans — remain awake,
take care of this creek and each other.

Sweet, Clement Times

by *elliott cribbs*

Didn't crisp and unforgiving evenings grip us more last year?..
These ones are still cold but we are relatively winterless
by comparison. Some back East are buried in frost and flakes
while some here are sacrificing their beards to the Winter Gods
for a layer on Baker before we see Spring

First a quick kick-start to our moods and internal clocks
while we dutifully reestablish seasonal harmony with warmer chords
Roaring into the quickening felicity takes a tick but we catch on
just in time for a slide into another frigid quiescence
where we can consider the thrill of the months that have us play

When the world is once again warm and awake we may need shades
For unless we get the wet end of the rain stick,
we will be wide awake and prepared to play in the sun
It brings sweet relief to see leaves on the trees
and to know that a t-shirt and shorts is the most we'll need

It begins with pink petal bloom storms speckling the streets
But these are just a presage of Summer, a mark of many colors to come
The wind harbors barbecue sign and birdsong to complete the mood
& once it stays light out as late as 8 we will miss bedtimes,
fooled by the habits formed in our passage through the dark months

Practicality may just take a backseat to feeling the rise in energy
in everything. People, plants, and animals acting out in earnest
like there wasn't enough air before. Life-force refueled,
we arc out over the land in adventurous vacationary fans
Making the best of the shiniest days in another good year's span.

(Continued from page 16)

And hold close the sound of light,

So you too, might awake to

A dawn as pure as glass.

And as a single moment, rise,

To stretch your arm into the skies,

Joshua Northouse

Reach and find

A voice.

So to sign your own

Across this page.

Sweet Scars

by *Amber Frick*

The passage of time is always cruel
Like a chord played on a harp of gold
Moments linger sweetly,
And are gone to the rise of the wind
We wait patiently for the trees to bloom
In the still of winter
Before the world comes awake
The sigh of spring brings relief to the frozen earth
And the blooms fill the land in shades of pink.
Then like spring's obnoxious younger brother,
Summer kicks in the door with a laugh
He blows through fields like a red hot fan
And the pink blooms are lost.
But not all moments leave no trace
The memory of sweet chords will linger in our minds forever
And the pink blossoms lost make room for the fruits of fall.

A Little Loonie
by Mary M. Mueller

Some play and dance
to a money chord
Fans continue to awake
and lift to
right of passage
Where finances
fail or bloom
Finding only graves
but not The Empty Tomb

O world of violence
warning signs arise
Unheard by stopped ears
unseen by vacant eyes
Relief does not come
in the kicker line
of a competitive poem
Or in the jingle of
extra pennies
to take home

Heed the message
of the sighing loon
Listen to the warning
of the next blood moon

We cannot worship
both God and "mooney"
Or put our faith
in a single loonie

The Heir...and the Spare
by Alison Scherer

Tick... Kick
Sign... Dine
Chord... Poured
Awake... Cake
Fan... Tan
Passage... Massage
Belief... Relief
Bloom... Zoom
Rise... Devise
Stay... Play



(Continued from page 26)

Capitalism Hits the Fan:
*The Economic Meltdown &
What to Do About It.*

Professor Wolff pontificates about
bank bailouts and austerity policies.
All I can do is sigh and count my change.

ACT ON

Awake to Nap
an incomplete alphabet book
because Finn, Nikki McClure's new baby, took naps
that were too short.

I think I'll go take a nap,
after which I'll find relief
in what expert Stuart Brown
Indicates in the title of his book
*Play: How it Shapes the Brain and
Opens The Imagination and
Invigorates the Soul.*

And then I'll write another poem.

How to Celebrate a Mild Winter
by Levi Heeringa

Sigh relief, today is new
Kick that blanket, a sleepy shroud
Fan the smell of your bold brew
For today is without a cloud.
Rise awake in a sunny room
Play a chord and sing aloud
Write a passage of Spring bloom
Because today is without a cloud.

The Kumquat Challenge, Book Review Style

by Linda Lambert

BE INTRIGUED BY

Kick One, a new mystery
by a northwest author,
Cheryl Strayed's friend,
Chelsea Cain.
They met in a public restroom.

OR CONSIDER

Veiled Passages, in which a
mystery author drowns in a bathtub.
No wonder Terri Reid,
grandmother of eleven,
mother of seven,
writes paranormal tales.

RECONSIDER

Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*,
Included in The Puffin In Bloom series,
a repackaging of classics with
illustrations and explanations
for grade school kids.

WRESTLE WITH

The Rise of the Robots,
by Martin Ford, silicon entrepreneur,
who predicts a jobless future,
caused by that handy scapegoat,
technology.

LEARN FROM

Jim Fleser's *The Chord Wheel*,
promising "solo talk about chops,"
and that the reader will
"comprehend key structure
as never before."
(Whaaaaa?)

WORRY OVER

(Continued on page 27)



RISE

Flight 9525

by John Hansen

I was awake at 4:20, with the fan running.

I heard the news of the rise and fall
of German-wings Flight 9525 crash.

The play of events with passengers screaming

And the pilot frantically pounding
on the locked door

Not able to kick it in.

It was a sure sign of the co-pilot's choice
to slam the jet into the Alps.

Not knowing his passage with mental illness,
he flew himself and 149 others into a French mountainside.

Lufthansa's speech struck a sympathetic chord

With Germany and the rest of the world.

Also relief, when no terrorism was involved.

The bloom of time will flower

With the outpouring of grief.

Adventure

by Jim Milstead

Moon ripe, under the curtain of time, arisen
brightly to move, she kicks, glides,
describes a curve, fragile yet certain.

Afraid of missing her, the shadow follows

obediently graceful, silently awake,
determined to maintain itself.

Limbs sinuously insistent, their passage
rises to reach beyond reason. Her fans utter a cadence
of sighs, their eyes catch them in the bloom of the moment.

She pauses briefly in seamless anticipation
of new directions. Her shadow plays along,

strives to keep up appearances,
clings to every chord,
determined not to lose
the paper thin tissue of their connection.

Their dance continues, a sensuous relief,
a conjunction of harmony and counterpoint,
where shadow revels in its dedication.
Between them a gleaming tapestry of movement

grows. Within this spring crucible of
improvisational awareness, dancer
and shadow grow green and flowering,

weave
silhouettes
of fancy.

Run On Little One

by FiafiaLauia

Little one,
Always remember to Play and Rise above limitations
And Kick because it's fun and not for hurt
Always remember that you are constantly at Bloom
and it's never over

Little one,
Don't forget to Fan away doubt and hate
And sing a few sweet Chords you like
Look for Signs around that tell you were to go and
where beauty lies
Then you will know that relief
But never forget or linger in pain

Little One,
As you go through this Rite of Passage you will
have to let go of many olds
To make room for that ever-changing new
Remember to be brave
And you aren't alone on this
Journey of Life and Death and Life

It's time to Awake,

Ou te alofa ia te oe.

Little one.



Tau

by Natalia Galindo Cestaro

Time is a short path
every step is passing by
It is a friend or an enemy
that sooner or later I'll face
It is a passage that
like it or not
I must range

Life plays around
a game of dusk and dawn
until time finally kicks out
who can't find their all about

The sun awakes my soul
as it never, would ever go
away. Stay, leave the day
a last hope sigh
in my lungs, my hope rises.
A deep breath, it is all it takes.

The moon sings its melody
chord after chord in melancholy
as if a song could fan out
my pain from my gain
in a four line refrain

As an endless cycle,
hope must again bloom
chances come with the day
and, for hard times that may flow

I listen, I whisper
Let it go, let it go, let it go.

With relief, I breath, I let everything glows
because there is no misery
that with time shall not go.

Season

by Kate Miller

The sky blooms feathers, carried in each updraft
of air sighing through our yards, playing tag with
stray raindrops. House sparrows chitter, flickers
drum on the roof, chords of spring as I sprint out
the back door. Among the flowering plum's white
petals already airborne, feathers rise, fall in the
breeze. As strong gusts of wind kick my neighbor's
pine awake, blizzards of pigeon feathers fan out
from high up in its branches, spiraling as they swirl
into my yard, resting with relief on new green grass,
lifting skyward again with each breath. I cannot locate
the hawk among the tree's swaying branches, yet
I know this beauty is just another kind of passage.



SS ANCON IN CULEBRA CUT
FIRST SHIP TO TRANSIT PANAMA CANAL

PASSAGE

Frigid Demise*by Douglas Hamilton*

Green grasses glazed with frost,
 Play on rises of hills.
 Colorful blooms amidst the Chaos,
 Frozen and encrusted with silvery chills.

The bite of the air kicks me awake;
 Its passage a sigh of ice along my spine.

The raw earth beneath is no relief,
 To the pain, old, and new felt over and over.
 The brass bells in my head never cease,
 Cold chords slam into me repeatedly.

Frigid tears of bitterness sting down my cheeks,
 As the turgid air is fanned by my brittle breath;
 Intangible clouds drifting to nothingness,
 Grow fainter...fainter...gone.

Chord*by Dennis Barnes*

A chord of raindrops

Patter their harmony on the garage roof

As gently fanned air moves under the rising sheet

Over the newly welcomed body next to me

A gradual glow of light makes the room come alive

With relief the passage of night to blooming morning

Invites us to awake and kick off our covers

I playfully nudge her hip

We both utter a sigh and smile

And rise to our first day of wedded bliss

Leviathan*by Greg Lane*

An opaqued sun dared rays over my scales
 and I am awakened from Antarctic sopor
 Ahab played at nemesis to a white whale
 but none on earth are my equal

I did not rise quietly from abyssal fan
 but ascended from depths horrendous
 through passages of ice and stone Cretaceous
 my breach retributive and tremendous
 and under clouds atramentous

My eyes, brighter than stellar bloom
 were recalled of Babel's doom

I shall not suffer your lives rapacious and brief
 but strike chords misplaced as archaic
 of ages bereft luxury and relief
 then kick my tail upon your works prosaic
 interring the exalted in rubble tombs

Red and glistening
 I will descend
 when all is still and dark
 my sigh a ripple

Muse*by Heather C. Williams*

I may awaken with a chord
 or bloom in bored resounding sighs
 or spark from sun off sand and sea—
 my sleep comes swiftly when ignored.

Yet when you paint and play and reach,
 I breathe relief; I kick and rise.
 A passage forms to set you free.
 I fan the flames that none can teach.