3rd grade Winners

Sounds of Learning
Children yelling and playing at recess
Singing in music class
Bells ringing
Balls bouncing on the playground
Teachers talking, teaching
Closing of books and zippers on backpacks
School is full of cheerful noises
And in between is learning

by Angeline Agag
3rd Grade, St. Theresa School

If I Were…
If I were an apple
I would be picked for sure.
I would be put in a lunch box.
I would go to school
and be eaten,
and ouch it would hurt.

by Allison Leclerc
3rd Grade, Holy Family Catholic Academy

What If
What if elephants swung
With monkeys,
Ate bananas, and
Let monkeys slide down their trunks?

by Abigail Wright
3rd Grade, Enchanted Lake Elementary School

Stubborn
I am a wall
I will not move for you.
I am a bull
get out of my way.
I am a boulder
you can’t push me over.
I am a mountain
you can’t hurt me.

by Kaiwi Greaney
3rd Grade, Enchanted Lake Elementary School

4th grade Winners

Popcorn
You put me in the microwave
and press the start button.
You wait anxiously for my arrival.
Then something breaks the silence, POP!
There I am.
You can’t resist my aroma
and it makes your mouth water.
POP, POP!
You can remember
the taste of my buttery, sweet kernels.
POP, POP, POP!
And your misery is over …
Go on, eat me!

by Elizabeth Tan
4th Grade, Kāne‘ohe Elementary School

Kabloosh!
You crash on walls with so much force
You clobber boats like they’re ants at a picnic
You suck people in and spit them out
But beneath your surface everything
is peaceful
Everything is free and beautiful
You have swaying seaweed,
multi-colored fish, and sparkling coral
You hide this peacefulness inside of you
You’re a mix of peace and destruction
You’re the thrilling ocean

by Cole Mijo
4th Grade, Kāne‘ohe Elementary School

Jolly’licious
A rock hard candy, sweet n’sour
Stays in your mouth about a half an hour.
Red, Yellow, Green, and Blue
Will all make your tongue change color too.
Apple, Grape, Lemon, and Cherry
Fill the air with fruit and berry.
Soft and sticky on a hot summer’s day.
Leaves a little on my fingers that I lick away.
I could have munched in a moment’s delight.
But it’s much better if it could last all night.

by Laura Recklies
3rd Grade, Mokapu Elementary School

What If
What if elephants swung
With monkeys,
Ate bananas, and
Let monkeys slide down their trunks?

by Abigail Wright
3rd Grade, Enchanted Lake Elementary School

3rd Grade Honorable Mention

Baseball Practice by Caleb Robinson, Enchanted Lake Elementary School

The Star Poets project is a partnership between Windward Community College and the Hawai‘i Council for the Humanities, with support from the Hawai‘i Writing Project, the Windward Arts Council, the Atherton Family Foundation and the “We the People” initiative of the National Endowment for the Humanities. This year, more than 2,100 students from Hawai‘i’s public, private, charter and home schools entered the contest. We thank the participating teachers who made poetry a priority in their classrooms. View winning and honorable mention poems online under “Star Poets 2011” at windward.hawaii.edu/poets.

Look for Honolulu Theater for Youth’s “Poetry Fever”
For the 2011-2012 season, the Honolulu Theater for Youth will produce “Poetry Fever” in two versions — one for upper elementary students and the other for middle and high school students — featuring Star Poets poems from the last decade of winners. For more details, go to www.htyweb.org/plays/poetry-fever.
Video Games
You lure me into your selfish traps with easy success.
You mash my eyes into useless junk and push me into a ditch of trouble.
You give me headaches that make me groggy.
I am no match for your hypnotizing tricks.
I am sick of being your servant and tired of playing your addicting games.
So please, just give me a chance to do my homework first!
by Sean Koyamatsu
4th Grade, Kāne‘ohe Elementary School

Riding A Storm Cloud
Waves crash down behind me.
I swing my arms furiously, to get ahead of the dark storm cloud closing in on me.
The barrel rockets me forward like a football from a quarterback’s hand as I explode to the shore.
A smile plastered all over my face, I’m already dreaming of the other storm clouds I plan to catch all day long.
by Tristen Jarmon
4th Grade, Mokapu Elementary School

Night Time at the Driving Range
I look up from the ground level of the driving range. There’s only empty, black sky.
The sounds of a reassuring “whoosh clicks” follow. No duffed clunkers here to fall in front of me.
The dimpled balls streak across the sky like shooting stars.
One by one, I can almost feel the wind splashing by as they zoom overhead.
I watch them disappear into the quiet and distant darkness. GOING, GOING, GOING… gone.
by Michael Voss
4th Grade, Salt Lake Elementary School

4th Grade Honorable Mention
Halawa: A Special and Sacred Place by Alía-Marie Gomes Madela, Kualapu‘u School
Homesick by Theodora You, Enchanted Lake Elementary

5th grade Winners

Wipeout!!!
The awesome blueness of the ocean. Waves crashing on shore.
It’s a perfect day to surf in Waimea Bay. I grab my board.
Paddling out over the rough surf, a colossal set of waves are coming.
I stand up and hang 10. Sadly it breaks early.
WIPEOUT!!!
My head pops above the water.
The salt water stings my eyes.
The lifeguard shouts on the megaphone, “You ok, Bud?”
I give him the shaka and thumbs up.
I grab my board and keep trying, even though I am embarrassed, today is not a day to quit.
It’s a day to finish.
by Aaron Wehrman
5th Grade, ‘Iolani School

The Forest
A walk into the forest. The cool breeze touches the face.
The smell of pine trees.
A bird silhouette in the sunrise.
Humming bugs in the ear.
Deeper into the forest, the pine and redwoods smell fills the nose.
Lie in the soft grass patch.
Look up.
The treetops are little green hats. They sway with the wind.
Pick up a pine cone, it smells like cinnamon.
The smell fills the mind like water fills a pond.
When you are in the forest, nothing seems to matter anymore.
by Alexandra Casamajor
5th Grade, Carden Academy of Maui

5th Grade Honorable Mention
Hawaiian Humane Society by Eason Nishioka, ‘Iolani School
Waterstarting by Camille Erdman, Carden Academy of Maui

6th grade Winners

Alarm Clock
I sit in the darkness awaiting dawn.
My slow ticks soothe me.
Soon the room is filled with light and it’s my time to shine!
I take one more look at you sleeping peacefully then… R I I I N N N G!
You jump up puzzled and I laugh to myself and think, I LOVE MY JOB!
by Amy Kawatani
6th Grade, Kāne‘ohe Elementary School

The Baby ‘Ali‘i
He was born and supposed to die.
Nae‘ole saved him that night.
The water is shining.
The moon is hiding.
As Nae‘ole runs into the mountain.
The baby, Kamehameha, doesn’t cry.
As he looks at the night sky.
Can they survive?
by Kahawai Tancayo
5th Grade, Kualapu‘u School

The Fire Beneath Me
The fire beneath me. No one knows where.
Disguised in my human body.
The words I want to say never come out.
But for some reason I like it that way.
The fire is beneath me.
by Keilani Kim
5th Grade, Kuhio Elementary School

My Peaceful Place
My grandma’s back porch…
When I look up I see the ceiling with that hook that held up my swing when I was one.
It’s evening about 5:30, I’m waiting for sunset.
I look down and see my toes wiggling because they’re cold.
I see palm trees swaying side to side, Sunset glowing on the horizon and in my eyes.
I touch my mom’s hand while it’s on my lap, I hear my sister laughing while she plays, I smell my grandma’s famous Pinakbet.
(I can feel it tingling on my tongue.)
I feel the wind rushing against my body, I think about how God made the world so beautiful.
I feel peaceful.
by Morgan Lorenzo
5th Grade, Waolani Judd Nazarene School

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Humming bugs in the ear.
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4th Grade Honorable Mention
Hawaiian Humane Society by Eason Nishioka, ‘Iolani School
Waterstarting by Camille Erdman, Carden Academy of Maui
My Dark Side

I’ve been cut with so many words.
The tears that flow from the wounds
build up and form her.
My friends don’t know my dark side.

She’s fully grown and has been waiting.
She comes to me when she’s upset.
She wants to take out her anger
on a “certain person,” she says.
My friends don’t know my dark side.

“Don’t talk to me right now.
Leave me alone!” she screams.
She wants to stay.
But I want her to leave.
It’s an odd thing
to have her around all the time.
My friends don’t know my dark side.

by Tadum Lee Reyes
6th Grade, Kāne‘ohe Elementary School

The Fall

Rainy day
I walk up to the cold, metal monkey bars
I grab hold of the first bar
water leaks between my fingers.
I reach out for the next bar
swoosh
I fly through the air like a bird in flight
but I’m not
I’m falling
by Kai Mitchell
6th Grade, Seabury Hall

At Oma’s

The smell
of bread baking in
the oven…
the sound
of oma’s
soft
caring
voice calling us
in for dinner…
the soft fur of
the dog’s back
after swimming
in the
roaring
dark
river…
at oma’s
by Cameron Hanisch
6th Grade, Seabury Hall

Dancing our Love for Hawai‘i

On the shimmering grassy stage,
the bright rays of the dawn on May Day,
I join the dance, sharing a story,
with hula and beautiful songs.
Dancing to the song Lei Hinahina,
revealing a purplish and silvery tinted lei,
fragrant sage-like smells strung together,
gleaming like pearls.

Curving our arms like baskets,
Picking miniature white stars using subtle fingers,
Moving delicately across the stage
Weaving the hinahina,
Unveiling a cotton-soft lei,
I present it to my ohana with aloha,
bestowing my love,
Smiling softly, a message of
Compassion, joy and happiness
For Hawaii and its people;
Dancing on May Day:
My forever passion

by Albert Jiang
6th Grade, Punahou School

6th Grade Honorable Mention

Friends First by Ian Roth, Seabury Hall
Beach Crab by Leah Boisvert, ‘Iolani School
The Fox by Kaitlyn Yamada, Seabury Hall

Bridge

I dwell on a small island in the Pacific.
If you seek me,
I can be found when you need me the most.
When despair pours on you,
and drenches you in cold tears,
don’t give up.
As a ray of hope peeks in,
I will extend my multi-colored bridge to you,
like a friend there to comfort you.
I will leave when you don’t need me anymore.
But no need to worry,
you can always find me.
Whenever sadness rains in on you,
there is always hope,
and I will be there.
I am the long and graceful,
arch in the sky.
I am the path to a brighter day,
a better future,
a new hope.

by Jamiee Kato
7th grade, ‘Iolani School

The Wind

The wind is sacred.
It is a quiet secret.
It blows: it trembles.
Stop, listen: whoss whoss —
I design the stormy seas;
I drift through the rain.
I flicker through faces,
slither into the night,
burst into light.
I spill into the desert,
swallow soothing music,
I follow the child.
I rustle through trees,
I stroll through the calm, gentle park,
tangle with time.

by Marisa Tanioka
7th grade, Na‘au

My Hawai‘i

Crispy jin doi crackles
in the black oil tubs.
Lions shake from side to side.
Tails swishing, heads bobbing,
wafting off the dark
evil spirits.
Red is everywhere
covering everything like
a plastic mask.
The little Chinese flags
dance with the wind,
as the smell of happiness
wafts through the air.
Gau, delicately wrapped
in red good luck paper,
wafts through the calm, gentle park,
I find the child.

by Cecily Choy
7th grade, ‘Iolani School

The Cat

He pounces onto the bed like an angry tiger
with his angry fire eyes.
He opens his triangle mouth
shows his snake-like teeth
His mouth is open so wide
He looks like a vampire ready to suck my blood,
but he doesn’t.
After making a short and stumpy crackling noise,
he closes his mouth
and plops like a potato on the burgundy bed.

by Sarah Duval
7th grade, ‘Iolani School
New Year
To ears
kindlers
deep in the valley
Sing fear-striking paeans
Home-made fireworks
sound against mine
rain upon an umbrella
Piercing ears

To eyes
Hibiscus turned leaden
Wrapped in a magenta ribbon
Weeping on the ground
As its stem
An emerald chalice
Holds a drink to the sky

by Dante Hirata-Epstein
7th grade, 'Iolani School

Coffee Picking
My dad grew up in Kona
Home of fishing, sunsets, and coffee
Every summa, him and his older braddas
Would go to Keauhou to pick coffee

Ho da kine some hard
Picking da colorful cherries
Dey no come off
Stuck like one fat ophidi to a rock

In da hot Big Island sun
The water no stay cold
Your lunch, one musubi and a can of Vienna
Make you some thirsty

Da only good ting, brah
Was da radio
Could listen to da Yankees play
Listen to Mickey Mantle hit ‘um hard

Now the field no mo’
The coffee plants cut down
The only ting left
Is one big ugly hotel

by Perry Onaka
8th grade, Punahou School

A Flower for my Grandmother
Recklessly, I pluck bulb after bulb.
Grandma masks her anger with a cheerful grin.
I proudly hand the full bouquet to her.
My lips pulled into a wide smile,
Laughing, happy.

Later, I pick the same flowers,
From the same garden, for the same person.
Yet everything has changed.
I give the flowers to her.
It’s not with a smile.
As I place the flowers that mock me on her grave,
Hateful tears scar them.
The clear pool of tears drips off the petals, slowly,
Rhythmically.

The next time I visit, all is vacant.
Staring at the cold, hard stone separating my
Grandma from me
Something on her grave catches my eye.
A flower I placed a while back, still there, still alive.
My lips slowly turn up
I gently pick the delicate flower,
And with a soft smile
I give it to her once more.
Soft, sweet, lovely: A flower for my grandmother.

by Kori Chun
8th grade, 'Iolani School

Matamata Turtle
Lurking in the shallow pools of my Brazil
You may not see me,
Camouflaged as algae; my prey approaches
Quickly sucked into my invisible mouth
No way out
You feel no pain for I do not chew
Before death, you see my ugly features
Dark, flattened body
Protuberances
That’s my world, the way I am
In Spanish I am “Matamata”
In English, “I kill, I kill.”

by Marissa – Anne Olang
8th grade, Punahou School

Arisagawa Koen:
Tokyo through my eyes.
The bustling streets surround me,
Giant buildings; canyon walls of steel,
The cars: miniature speeding caravans
Without horses,
The vendors: merchants selling great spices
From afar.
The sight of the park makes me run,
The hills morph into a majestic mountain range,
The pond, serene and placid, swooshes into a
great hazardous ocean,
The koi transform into gigantic monsters
Of the deep.
Through my eyes,
The sakura in blossom,
Float from the trees to the ground like snow,
A springtime winter wonderland.
As I walk back home,
The streets, buildings, cars and vendors return.
My home ahead, I begin to run,
For it is not my house that I see,
It is my castle.

by Kaz Tomozawa
8th grade, 'Iolani School

Slippers
Out of little glass vials
The sticky stench
Of nail polish
Grandma used petite brushes
To paint
A delicate clear coat
On my perfect little toesies
All is well, except
I’m a boy
That’s what I can expect
Coming from a lineage
Of girl grandchildren
Barbie dolls populated her toy chest
She forces cooking and sewing onto me
(unsuccesfully)
So why Grandma, must you torment me like this?
But Grandma’s eyes laughed
The message was as clear as the polish
I got to hang out more with Grandpa.

by Farin Fukunaga
9th grade, Moanalua High School
Goodbye, Grammy
Like a bonsai she stands, petite but present, roots deeply embedded in the earth piercing the Hawaiian topsoil, clutching the Japanese bedrock.
Lending her branches for shade, offering homes to the meek, healing the weak, cherishing her seed.
One hundred three years of harsh winters have taken their toll. Two weeks refusing sustenance. Though inflexible, she collapses.
Three generations of saplings nurtured, our sole duty to rise as our illustrious ancestors did centuries ago.

Poison Ivy
I may be allergic to your prickly, green disposition which burns me and irks me and gets under my skin. I try to ignore the sensitive scratches but the sharp and tingling tenderness is heightening as I feel your pullulating vines strangling and constricting me an obstruction to my positivity my body becomes an open wound of torment slowly dying every time I hear your name As you stab me and suffocate me with your creeping hands And finally, I can take it no longer I scream a sharp, piercing cry of pure scorn until the itch begins to subside.

Sun's Shoes
Bright and radiant Sun lights up everyone’s life Other planets only hold envy towards her “Always the center of attention,” they say The earth people love her They call her “the big ball of energy” Sun knows the truth “Center of attention?” she thinks Rather the opposite The planets glide past Never bothering to stop and talk They're constantly moving on with their orbits “Ball of energy?” she thinks Four and a half billion years does not make one so Sun spins, lonely and exhausted An eternity of desolate work forever following her future Sun grimaces at her life A slave continuously in servitude A prisoner completing a life sentence A solitary figure in a crowded room

The Pickle
I’m the pickle at the bottom of the jar watching my friend from afar get eaten. Then, he licks his sweet fingers as the flavor still lingers and he dives deep down to the dark depths of the abyss and picks me to be his next victim. I fight with all might to avoid the big bite but I hear the crunch of my bumpy skin and out go all my ideas, all my thoughts and here I am stuck here all alone, stumped.

Home Sweet Homes
Tick tock tick tock you’re ten minutes late you’re on time, Hawaiian time Hawaii is like a poi dog, lying in the hot Hawaiian sun It’s a mixed plate of cultures, customs and people dressed in t-shirts, shorts, and rubber slippers with two scoops of rice.
tickticktick tick you’re ten minutes early you’re on time, Hong Kong time Hong Kong is like a pedigree, walked two times a day It’s an organized dim sum cart of cultures, customs and people wearing suits, jackets and ties with a bowl of rice on the side Honolulu, Hawaii 21 degrees north Hong Kong 22 degrees north latitudes apart, yes worlds apart, maybe but me, I stand in that degree right in the middle with my spam musubi Hong Kong and Hawaii, my Home Sweet Homes

Father’s Footsteps
Tired and sluggish Pondering across In graceless waddle The sturdy wood creaks As each footstep thumps On empty floorboards Leather cushions sag A sigh of relief Proud and happy, his Great belly protrudes Grotesque deformed fat His buttons feel the pain Hunted delight in His leisure lifestyle Chasing vacant prints Searching for the bliss Only finding glut Lethargic burden Unintentional Paternal teachings

by Austyn Lee
9th grade, ‘Iolani School

by Erin Voss
9th grade, LeJardin Academy

by Jarren Takaki
9th grade, ‘Iolani School

by Haley Harada
9th grade, ‘Iolani School

by Creighton Nakamura
10th Grade, ‘Iolani School

by Courtney Wilson
10th Grade, Mililani High School

by Emerald Tsui
10th Grade, ‘Iolani School
Darn That Ode
I sigh deeply.
With free verse, I could dive
Dive into a pool of words
And gather the first letters that brush my fingertips
Gathering, whipping them into carefully put phrases
But I’m tied to the shoreline by the Ode.

It would be better if I fly.
Fly up the gentle breezes
Carrying off characters spelling “cloud” and “bird”
And capture special words like “bees,” “trees,”
and “green peas.”
Together, what a wonder it would be
Wonderful phrases of rhyme
But I am tied to the shoreline by the Ode.

It would be better if I dig
Dig deep in the smooth, soft sand
The very soft sand now crunching beneath my feet.
I stop...and feel a push,
A push that sends me falling deep, deep down
Down into a pool of words, and I’m drowning
Drowning in the Ode.

by Jennifer Takahashi
10th Grade, St. Andrew’s Priory

Human Nature
While walking along the street one day,
I passed an old man.
He lay on the hard ground
Covered by a ratty old tarp.
His brown and crusted fingers
Clutched to the edges,
And he hid himself away
From the rest of the crowd.
In the middle of the road, I paused.
The five dollar bill, meant for my afternoon snack,
Weighed like a stone in my pocket.
The people around me paid no attention
To the flustered little girl in the road
And the disheveled man, who hid his face.
He seemed invisible to them,
A mere inconvenience to their day.
Today I dearly wish
That yesterday would come again,
So that I could see that old man again.
And give him that heavy five-dollar bill.

by Molly Browning
10th Grade, Iolani School

10th Grade Honorable Mention
My Dad by Micah Goshi, Iolani School
Dead Words by Summer Mundon, St. Andrew’s Priory
A Day at Kapiolani Park by Edwin Li, Iolani School

Driving Blind
Early morning sunlight ignites the air
And sparks the dewy grass, icy fire
beneath my toes.
I unlock my car, toss school things onto
the backseat and propel myself
into the driver’s seat.
Key in ignition, I rev the engine.
My sister comes running – late again,
leaps into the passenger seat, and
we’re off –
away from the house, driveway, and
mom’s calls of “Be careful!”
rolling toward the highway.
Accelerate.
Trees, cars, and road blur together,
glowing golden
sunlight blinds me to such silly things as
speed limits and rules, until
“What you should do”
becomes “I don’t think so” and
we pass the school and keep on going.

by Emily Lanter
11th Grade, Kahuku High and Intermediate School

Illustrating Imagination
A full tank of gas
Black wheels polished
Seat belt securely strapped
Revving the engine full throttle
Flying across the blazing asphalt

A single black marker
Cardboard box my blank canvas
Wheels, windows, and windshield
Rug burned knees huddled to my chest
Grip the imaginary steering wheel with little hands
An empty box
Strewn about the stained carpet
My marker made my creations
Box car buggy to rapid racecar
Swift strokes reveal
A blink of an eye
Soaring across the asphalt again
Adrenaline pumping blurs of color in
my peripheral
A blink of an eye, and empty box again
My marker in hand, imagination running wild

by Kassandra Sanchez
11th Grade, University Laboratory School

Fiery Jubilee
With the flick of the wrist and a small hopeful spark
The flame is born.
At first small and weak, its toasty warmthes smiles on
naught but the wooden floor.
But quickly it becomes bigger and bolder,
Twisting and twirling like a trapeze artist amongst
the wood.
Relentlessly it reaches and grasps for the top,
Caressing each branch with its warm kisses,
Delicately licking the sides with its scorching breath.
It pops noisily and crackles delicately as it feeds its
insatiable hunger.
And as the flame grows bigger it becomes an
uncontrollable tempest
And wildly whips up the withered wood.
Roaring and biting it leaves behind an ebony
shadow of the one it once embraced
But erased.
Out of control, it laughs and chuckles as it consumes.
On its wild rampage not even all the angels in
heaven
Could halt the destruction of this crazed inferno.
Firelight gleams mischievously in your eyes as you
see your everything
Burnt and consumed in the fiery jubilee.

by Sheena Choy
11th Grade, Mid-Pacific Institute

67 Heartbeats
Sometimes I like to plant myself into the water,
Immersing into the cold, slipping off the
cardigan of the sun
I lean forward and bend my back like the
crescent moon
snuggle myself, a baby in a womb
My toes are curled and my knees pushed back
against my breasts
Fashioning every inch of heat I can retain
to my body
With wet eyelashes, my vision melts away
into a softened haze
I see smoky rocks beneath me dancing
and swaying to
Sassy waves drumming their cavernous beats
and yawning melodies
The ocean spreads its arms, unafraid
And cherishes the alien creature
Until oxygen’s mighty voice entices my lungs
I am static
Solitude for 67 heartbeats long

by Patrick Nevada
11th Grade, University Laboratory School
Miles from Saturday
Miles from Saturday
My eyes burn like a fever.
They feel chili pepper red
as my lids share
quick butterfly kisses
and my lashes skip over my cheeks.

My pencil wiggles
last-baby-tooth loose in my fingers
and the end letter grows a tail across the page.
The room starts spinning
and words begin bumping into each other.
The print grows bigger and bigger.
Someone’s dimming down the lights.
The edges vignette black as the fog thickens.
The table slaps me awake.
The clock laughs at me from the wall.
Sensless words sit lonely on the page.
The calendar is a cruel joke:
It’s Thursday night
But I am miles from Saturday.

by Maile Beal
11th Grade, ‘Iolani School

11th Grade Honorable Mention
Hello Kitty by Layla Tulloch, Roosevelt High School
Cops and Robbers by Josie Tueller, Kahuku High and Intermediate

12th grade

Letter to a Poet from a Young Girl
It was a boy, really
She saw him laid open like a sacrificial god
bathed golden in the liquid sunlight
streaming across paper-thin leaves.
And as she read Rilke she dreamed,
drawing coiling ivy curlicues
and trapped bird songs in the margins.

In the inky black smudges of night
while she slept cocooned inside his ear,
she heard his voice,
while she slept cocooned inside his ear,
so deeply within her
the shadow of his soul echoing
until all the world and the glass stars
louder and louder and higher
and exploded.

She saw him laid open like a sacrificial god
It was a boy, really

by Victoria Kim
12th Grade, ‘Iolani School

Six Weeks of Work
Six weeks of Saturdays that were not my own.
A long red line
down the second-to-the-last day of the week
on my calendar.

A final armful of leaves
scratching long red lines down my arm
as I dump them into a scratched red truck.

Sitting in the pickup with my dad
mandatory country music squeaking out of the radio.
The dump smells sweet with decay.
We sweep out the pickup’s bed once more
and leaves fall like a Hawaiian autumn.

Back in my yard standing
with a stocky glass of lemonade in my
sticky hand.
We survey our work--
the looming lack of hedge
sunlight pouring through the gaping hole of
not-there-ness.

“You know,” says dad,
“I don’t think I like it.”

by Marissa Compton
12th Grade, Kahuku High and Intermediate School

Elegy
O Poem!
Thrust, virgin ore, into my burning soul
until you melted and I could form you,
Hammered upon the anvil as word-sparks
seared in white heat upon the very walls,
Cooled and tempered by the stale air
that enveloped you with jaded embrace,
Forged within the deepest smithies of my being,
artifice, pulsing hot with life.

Wordsmith that I was, I rested in silence
surrounded by that which I wrought.
Inevitably, the time came,
I tore your umbilical cord connection to me
until you melted and I could form you,
that enveloped you with jaded embrace,

I am from the hum of the fan,
a lullaby which spun me to sleep
accompanied by the roar of the traffic
and the occasional grinding shriek of collision.
I am from dull glass doorknobs and aching
hinges and locked keyholes
from found rings and spider-webbed pottery
and lost keys.
I am from vacuum cleaners
the dust of childhood sucked away
leaving behind the gleaming floors of the future.

Everything is swept away by the broom
of adulthood.

Where am I?
Because here it’s all blank, all light, all new
And here are mismatched keys that fit the doors
And here when I peer behind the couch
I am not afraid
For here the dust bunnies have been
lurking patiently
to welcome me and show me my space
in the dark
and here is my happiness just waiting to be
rescued from the silt of forgotten dreams.

by Kira Wong
12th Grade, ‘Iolani School

Lotus Root
Yesterday we made
A sudden, unexpected, but mutual
Agreement to walk separate paths,
Accompanied by an irrevocable
exchange of words
Performed so businesslike.
The decision felt right
At the moment
But I did not realize
That when the knife
Slices a lotus into two
The silky threads keep me attached to you.

by Serena Li
12th Grade, ‘Iolani School

12th Grade Honorable Mention
The More You Know by Jessica Tew, Kahuku High and Intermediate
Tree Hugger by Suzanne Kinghorn, Kahuku High and Intermediate
My Mom Washed My Clothes by Tevita Livai, Kahuku High and Intermediate
Make Up by Christina Hubner, Kahuku High and Intermediate
The Box by Teresa Ou, ‘Iolani School

Dreams from Dust Swept to the Future
I am from darkness and dust bunnies and
dreams behind the couch
who crept into the narrow creaking hallway
then scattered at the yellow flick of the
nightlight.
**Good Luck Lion**

Scare bad spirits, bring good luck  
Jumping high on tables and poles  
Hungry jaws snapping shut  
Spitting out greens  
Gobbling “li see”  
Jumping, snapping, spitting, gobbling  
To the pounding echoing drums  
And fast clanging cymbals  
Scare bad spirits, bring good luck  

by Preston Miller  
3rd Grade, St. Theresa School

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**My Popo’s Mango Pudding**

I peered into Popo’s Hawaiian mango tree,  
Sunlight peeking through the dense branches.  
Wobbling on my tippy-toes,  
my chubby hands strained to pluck the onolicious mango.  

Popo picked me up  
and lifted me high above her head.  
Flying in the sky,  
I grabbed hold of juicy lobes of sunshine.  

My small hands in her weatherworn palms.  
We tenderly wielded the knife,  
and peeled away the mottled golden skin.  
Inside lay the sweet, fleshy fruit of our labor.  

Together we mashed our ripe mangos,  
Creating bright puree.  
While Popo poured in the syrupy gelatin,  
I steadily stirred it in.  
After many hours of waiting to chill,  
we sat side by side on the worn porch stairs,  
enjoying our decadent dessert,  
under Popo’s Hawaiian mango tree.  

by Nicole Cheung  
10th Grade, ‘Iolani School

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**Flight of the Paper Cranes**

The room had one bed, two reclining chairs,  
and the walls were covered with holiday tinsel,  
red and green chains of construction paper,  
and cranes.  

Desperately wishing for an old legend  
to grant a final wish, she and all  
her friends were determined to take  
one last stand in losing battle.  

They folded cranes of all colors and sizes; each one  
was threaded carefully on thin fishing line.  
In all, one thousand graceful birds flew in harmony;  
bursts of life in a dim sky of matte paint.  

And when the time came on a peaceful  
December afternoon, family and friends  
gathered around his bed, against walls,  
out into the sterile hallways.  

In the sound of her father’s last breaths,  
she swore she could hear the whisper-light beat  
of birds’ wings. Finally, his face was peaceful,  
And she knew he was free.  

by Isabelle Oka  
10th Grade, ‘Iolani School

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**Inner Peace**

As I sink into the soft, dry sand,  
I watch the rhythmic breathing of the ocean.  
Waves roll in and just as quickly,  
they get flushed out.  
In and out.  
Again and again.  
I breathe in the moist, salty air,  
the crashing of waves overriding the faint caw of hungry birds.  
The warmth of the Hawaiian sun gliding blissfully over tanned skin,  
stopping to warm all the way down to my humming soul.  
My eyes feast upon the deep cobalt of the waters.  
I watch in silent awe as the ocean dances melodiously,  
as if God himself was strumming the idling chords of an ‘ukulele.  
Calm and peaceful, even as the stress of the world  
Weighs down on me, tearing me apart.  
And for a moment, as I close my eyes,  
All worries are pushed aside.  
And then I am the ocean.  
Breathing in and out.  
Again and again.  

Caitlin Miyashiro  
12th Grade, ‘Iolani School

Thanks to the generous support of the Hawai‘i Council for the Humanities,  
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the theme of bridges between Hawai‘i’s past and future or ways in which  
Hawai‘i is special.