

Second Prize

Weathered by Ashley Cumpston
Norwin High School

I took a walk on a trail that I ventured with people
Who I thought would be by my side till the end.
I would always sow and never reap, stuck on my own steeple,
Till I no longer called them my friends.

It took a while for me to let go
And be all okay on my own.
So I sat on the hill by my home to let the stars give me a show.
When I got up, wiped the dirt from my elbows and knees,
I decided I would act grown.

Come snow and sun and sleet and rain,
I'd pull myself together with the eastern climate.
Come pollen and petals and pumpkins and pain,
Wide woods and horizons never fixed things too late.

Pine needles and cones were comforting.
As much as they stung, they were the only promised living.
Dandelions and clovers kept the innocent wondering
Because they relied on wishes and luck for the ones that stopped
giving.

I pounded the pavement, seeking improvement and value.
The clouds kept me company. In return I let them rain on me.
I let the storms wane and rage, for there would always be another
day I'd rue.
Though that mentality left because there was always a rainbow
as far as I could see.

F. Ogden Nash Award

Grades 7-9: light humorous verse, any subject
Sponsored by Anita Staub

First Prize

The Mustard and the Ketchup by Zach Plymire
Belle Vernon Area Middle School

The mustard was walking
Down the street
When he heard
The ketchup say,
“Wait for me to ketchup.”

The mustard started to laugh.
The ketchup didn't understand.
Then the mustard said,
“I relish the fact
That you've mustard to ketchup.”

They both had a laugh
And a good time.

Second Prize

Jealous Jelly by Spencer Anderson
Belle Vernon Area Middle School

I don't really like the taste of jelly.
It doesn't feel good inside my belly.
I think the better taste is peanut butter,
Having that in my stomach makes my heart flutter.
But the peanut butter made the jelly jealous.
The thought of proving he's better than peanut butter made him
zealous.

The jelly tried to prove he was better on bread.
The idea, however, went bad instead.
He then tried to prove he was good on a cracker,
Better than that peanut butter slacker.
However, trying that left him with nothing but dread.
The event went the same way as the bread.
The jelly started feeling sad.
Always losing started to make him feel bad.
He decided to talk to the peanut butter.
Talking got his mood out of the gutter.
The peanut butter and jelly became friends.
This is how jelly's story ends.

Third Prize

Chasing Flies by Mona Brooks
Belle Vernon Area Middle School

Once I saw a fly.
Who knew they could fly so high?
Turns out the fly is shy.
That's why it flies so high.
I tried to reach its height
Without having any fright.
I climbed up so high
I was at the end of the sky.
But when I got to the top,
The fly immediately dropped!
I was so shocked I almost fell.
That's when I rang a bell.
There's no air up here!
Everybody, stand clear!
I'm starting to feel dizzy . . .
I think my name is Izzy?
Down, down I go.
Hope the traffic is low.



G. Dr. Len Roberts Memorial Award
Grades 10-12: traditional verse, any subject
Sponsored by Ruth McDonald

First Prize

Heart over Matter by Audrey Starck
North Allegheny High School

The unsettling malleability of the mind
Becomes apparent from time to time.
How easily the heart trumps that silly mass in my skull
When the mountains crumble and the rivers run dry.

This silly little mind of mine lacks that lustrous refine
That science brags about through names like Newton and Einstein.
Oh, the world loves to praise the captain of the hull,
But it's the ocean that decides the captain's success or demise.

The mind can think all the silly thoughts it desires;
It can observe the world around it with a greedy fire.
But as soon as the truth begins to dull
The heart paints over it with a pleasing, fictitious shine.

A heart of gold designs the most beautiful pyrite,
And even as my mind screams the truth it worked to find,
My eyes obey my heart's stringent ritual
Of believing the fantasy my dreams synthesized.

So move out of the way, silly little mind of mine.
My heart runs the show, and it doesn't like your attitude.
Say goodbye to your silver spotlight
Because your silly little reality is so easy to misconstrue.