

FIRST PRIZE

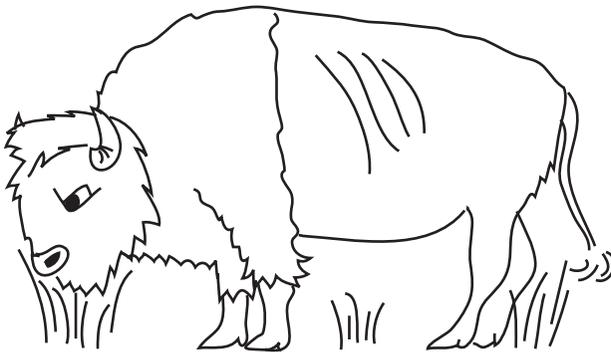
Secrets of the Prairies

I am a buffalo of the plains,
Sister Moon will call my name.
With thundering hooves we run as one,
Under Mother Earth's blazing sun.

Flat grassland is our prairie home,
With lots of freedom and space to roam.
We protect our calves from Sky's raging tears,
We circle them when danger nears.

We hold the secrets of the open land,
We know what Mother Earth has planned.
Our destiny will be told in time,
As the rivers flow and the sun still shines.

by Amanda Gel (Grade Six)
Stewart Hawke Elementary School
Hudson Bay, Saskatchewan



FIRST PRIZE

Letting Go

I've always held on,
But this time
I have to let go
And it breaks my heart.
I walk down the cold stairs
And my heart starts to accelerate.

The other donations
Are packed and loaded,
But this one
Is special.
I don't know what to do.

I hand it over,
Reluctant.
My hand vibrates
Out of control.
I can't help it.
Tears rush down my face
Like never before.
My heart pounds
Even faster.

The car goes away
And I know
It's not coming back.
I walk up the stairs,
Slow and sad.
The only memory left is
The fresh smell of the pages
When I first received it.

Now, this smell
Will be shared.

And I know
I've let go.

by Clèche Kokolo (Grade Seven)
Collège Louis-Riel
Winnipeg, Manitoba



FIRST PRIZE

Fiery Dragons

Sad wisps of fog creep along the ground
Steam, smoke, hiss, bubble
Sparks burn, powers great

Tongues of flames dance across empty caverns
Glowing embers light the dark abyss

Inside the cave, fiery scales encase a cold heart
Ruthless years of terror sit within the walls
Guarding its lifelong joys
Stolen, shiny treasures, each with their own story

Meanwhile, like a kiss from a kettle
Figures rise in unison
Now one thing
United against the awakened beast

United cries ring high into the mountains touching the sky
Over the bubbling lake of boiling horror
Pouring all of their strength into one
Energy lifting the enchantment
Slowly, surely, finally

Until

There sits a toad in all its simplistic wisdom
For matter cannot be created or destroyed
Ancient one, born from mystic legendary beasts who live no more

Twirling smoke is all that remains of its power
Victories of its past wither and fade
Tongues of flame dance no more
Aged by time
Foretold by fate
Dead and gone they're ghosts who
Are invisible to humans who cannot see their magic
Thinking all they see are toads

by Meg Warhurst (Grade Eight)
Lillooet Secondary School
Lillooet, British Columbia



SECOND PRIZE

The Businessman

The little girl, seated beside me
Hunches
Over a black moleskin notebook,
Her pen flying across the page.

A voice crackles over the intercom:
“Ladies and gentlemen, we have arrived in Paris,
Please gather all your belongings.”

She collects everything and rises,
The notebook hanging out of her backpack.
Its absence leaves me wondering,
What was in that book?

She walks off the plane,
The moleskin falls.
I run to it,
Wanting to call her back.

I don't.

I open the soft leather cover.
Her work is amazing—
Words and drawings,
All belonging to her.
In the back in neat printing:
“Please return to Sienna Longo.”

Months later,
I'm still reading a poem a day
From her book.
I know I should give it back,
But I can't.
The pages keep calling me to her words.

by Sienna Longo (Grade Six)
The Fernie Academy
Fernie, British Columbia

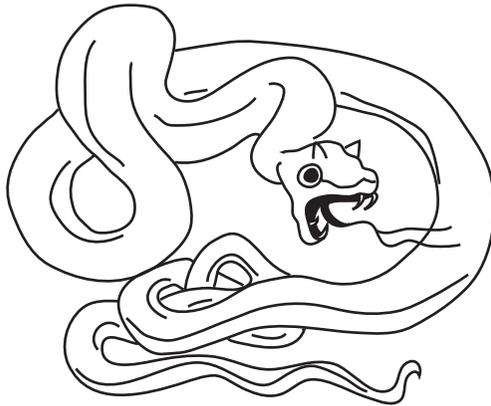


SECOND PRIZE

The Desert Viper

Undulating ripples on hot, white sand
The serpent burrows under desert land
A nose pokes out, a forked tongue flickers
Picks up a rodent's scent, the viper snickers
It glides towards prey, moving ever so silently
It bares its fangs in a manner most frightfully
The rodent's senses click on, it knows danger is near
But it has nowhere to run, it quivers with fear
The mouse looks up, it holds its breath
Now it's looking into the eyes of serpentine death

by *Patrick Ouyang* (Grade Seven)
Brant Hills Public School
Burlington, Ontario



SECOND PRIZE

Johnny Ratkins

A brave explorer from the west of Peru,
Born in the shadow of Machu Picchu,
Climbed aboard a pirate ship
Dreaming of a pleasure trip,
Every day a brand-new land,
From Fiji to Thailand, China to Japan!
Going ashore to meet new friends,
Helping himself to odds and ends;
Instead of staying he cut it short,
Jumping back on board to the next port.
Keep to the right! We're heading East!
Land of the polar bears and the maple leaf!
Mountains in the distance and hundreds of trees,
Nature in harmony with the large cities.
"Oh! It's so beautiful!" Johnny exclaimed.
Pleased with the landscape Vancouver contained.
Quick as a wink, he abandoned his ark,
Ran up Cambie Street towards Queen Elizabeth Park,
Stopping just short on West Twenty-Eighth.
"This place is good. Actually, it's great!"
Under the door and into the house,
Verily as quiet as a, well, mouse.
"What a perfect home for a rat like me."
"Xactly what I wanted it to be!"
Yawning as he settled under the couch,
"ZZZZZZZZ."

by *Megan Gilbert* (Grade Eight)
Sir Winston Churchill Secondary School
Vancouver, British Columbia



THIRD PRIZE

Sockeye

from an egg, her life did start
from the creek the fry departs
her journey she will now begin
her body is strong, fast, and thin

she swims until she meets the lake
she hopes she will not make a mistake
then she sincerely prays a prayer
that she won't be eaten by a bear

to the river now, she must go
the water is powerful and pulls her into its flow
the water keeps moving, moving on
she must keep swimming 'til the early dawn

she arrives at the ocean, the water is now cold
predators surround her, she must be bold
she carefully watches the orcas and seals
to makes sure she doesn't turn into their meals

she's older now, the ocean was fun
but her time in the saltwater is almost done
the water is strong, cold, and rough
her body is decaying, she must be tough

she changes colour from silver to red
gets a pointier jaw and a narrower head
navigating the water, she must find her way
she can feel it now, today is the day

she's finally returned to where her life begun
the new fry will hatch soon, in the warm spring sun
though she is weak, she digs a hole with her tail
then she sits patiently and waits for a male

she lays her eggs and takes her last breath
then lies down quietly and waits for her death
our hearts are heavy, but do not cry
for this the destiny of a sockeye

by Camryn Munday (Grade Six)
Pacific Academy
Surrey, British Columbia



THIRD PRIZE

Pandora

The world is cruel and dark and grim,
People crumbling down, no hope within.
They are beaten and bruised, despairing and lost,
Trying to survive, no matter the cost.

The world holds no laughter, just sorrow and pain,
As we yearn for the lost that we can't hope to gain.
The sounds of hearts breaking, too familiar for most,
It's happened to me, too many can boast.

Yet life holds small beauties amid all the fear:
The shimmering trail of the happiest tear,
Moonlight shines softly, tender blossoms bloom,
Lightning crackles, lighting the room.

And even the sounds can sometimes enchant,
The pit-patter of rain, a windstorm's great rant.
And best of all, no one can deny,
A mother's gentle voice, a child's sigh.

Maybe the world isn't so dark,
If such things can exist as the sound of a lark.
People stand strong, heartaches can heal,
Maybe love and kindness are both very real!

by Abby McEwan (Grade Seven)
Calvin Christian School
Hamilton, Ontario



THIRD PRIZE

What Is Beyond

When you once looked at me,
I know you didn't actually see;
You didn't look deep enough
Past the barrier, just skimmed the exterior,
Because it was easier to assume;
The mind didn't have the room
To fill it with the inner details.
So let's take time to unveil
What was actually there.
My smile was once plastic,
I thought the pain was chronic,
My beliefs had been shattered,
By those who once mattered.
Betrayed, abandoned, and undesired—
My false smile was the fence I built
To keep you from hurt and my own guilt;
Busy searching for something inside,
While playing a role so I could hide.
Sending me off was their form of aid,
Away from another home I watched fade.
Welcomed in by counterfeit families,
Love was just another one of their duties.
From house to house in search of acceptance,
To find what was unwanted was my presence.
This was beyond the barrier you failed to see,
And now that I've revealed my story,
Next time will you be so quick to assume?
Next time will you have the room?
Will you be so quick to respond?
Or will you try to see what is beyond?

by Nema Kebirungi (Grade Eight)
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