

Pass It On®...

Hope. Dream. Become.

Expressing emotions in a healthy way helps us see the world for what it is and, more importantly, how we choose to engage with it. Check out these young poetry winners from the WPSU poetry contest in Pennsylvania.

In classrooms across the country, students returning to fall assignments find themselves befuddled by the most daunting homework assignment: write a poem.

It is not easy to bare your emotions in poetry. Many grade-school kids avoid exposing their vulnerabilities at a time when they are trying so hard to fit in. But under the gentle guidance of good teachers, they put pencil to paper. Some of them even dare to submit their work.

In central Pennsylvania, Public Radio station WPSU sponsors a poetry contest. Eager young poets with minds sensitive to their surroundings timidly bring forth their musings in hopes of a little attention, perhaps encouraging others to be reflective, too.

Kindergartener Allison Caron writes: "The sunshine lights up the flowers ... / The moon shines on the cars. / The moon shine becomes a sun. / The sunshine lights up our new day." In a simple verse, Allison captures the hope we all share for a bright future.

Second-grader Alice Rimland writes: "Why is the world so big? ... / Why is summer hot? ... / Why did I ever write this poem? ... / Life holds so much more than what's in the near future. / Wonder awaits!" Childhood optimism is one of the great wonders of the world. It would do us all good to see our lives through the eyes of a child, seeking friendships and peace, warm days and wonder in every gaze. Imagine waking full of curiosity, impatient to throw ourselves into the magic of a fresh start.

Fourth-grader Poppy Goble writes: "High on the mountain, a meadowlark / enthralled by the beauty, bursts forth and sings. / All around the mountain his glorious voice rings." Such observation elevates the heart. Poppy goes on to describe a change in the scene; a storm rolls in, and the meadowlark takes refuge under a tree. Each of us has our place of

refuge. And each of us can be a place of refuge for others.

Sixth-grader Eveline Overdurf reminds us of how much we can do with a blank page: "First there was nothing / A blank page / Waiting to be a story / A story of dragons, of princesses, and lost princes / Or maybe it's a story of change, of patience / ... It could give hope, or give comfort / It could change you, or strengthen you / ... All on a single page of blank paper a better world could be formed."

Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Carl Sandburg is described as America's poet. He brought forth emotions that helped readers of all ages see the purpose of life more clearly. "I believe more than I can ever prove of the future of the human race," he wrote. And so we can, with ink and paper, make the future bright beyond imagination.

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