

# *2016 Peace Poetry Contest*

*Alachua County Schools  
Grades K-12*

A collection of the winning poems from the seventh annual Peace Poetry Contest in Alachua County schools, grades K-12, sponsored by the Gainesville Chapter 14 of Veterans for Peace.



The text of all the poems contained in this book are printed exactly as submitted. Due to space and color restraints, we were unable to include special illustrations and designs that accompanied poems.



A full video of the 2016 Peace Poetry Reading will be available via YouTube. If you would like to be added to the email list so that you are notified when it is available, please email [vfpeacepoetrycontest@gmail.com](mailto:vfpeacepoetrycontest@gmail.com). Veterans for Peace will also make photographs and video from the Reading available on our website at [vfpgainesville.org](http://vfpgainesville.org).

# *About the Peace Poetry Contest*

This is the seventh year that Gainesville Veterans for Peace has organized the Peace Poetry Contest in Alachua County, where all students, grades K–12, are encouraged to submit one original poem focusing on their interpretation of “peace.”

Veterans for Peace members believe that peace-making and hope for a peaceful world begin in our community, our homes and our schools. That is why we invited students to participate in the contest this year; a peaceful possibility lies in the younger generations of today who will be leading, transforming and inspiring the world tomorrow.

We want to honor the ideal of peace through the perspectives of young people. Peace is a uniquely human conception and affirms the human spirit. It is especially important to remember that peace is not merely a goal but a human right.

This year we received 266 poems from all grades, and the poems were judged by UF English professor Dr. Sidney Wade and her panel of graduate students. The winners were asked to read at the Peace Poetry Reading, and their poems are published in this book.

# Acknowledgments

Veterans for Peace would first and foremost like to thank all of the participants in the 2016 Peace Poetry Contest. This year we received 266 poems from students of all ages in Alachua County with diverse interpretations of peace. Without the poetry submissions, there would be no Peace Poetry Contest and none of the dialogue that comes with it.

Parents and teachers also play a large role in the Peace Poetry Contest every year by encouraging their children to participate, sometimes awarding extra credit and providing other incentives. Thank you for helping make the 2016 Peace Poetry Contest a success.

UF English professor Dr. Sidney Wade was integral to this year's contest as head judge of the poems. Dr. Wade also enlisted her team of graduate students to help judge the large number of submissions. Thank you to Erin O'Louanaigh, Nick Pierce, and Paul Roberts for your time and effort.

The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Gainesville has hosted the Peace Poetry Contest seven years in a row now, and Veterans for Peace is grateful for their support and continued cooperation.

With the sustained support and work of everyone involved, Veterans for Peace believes the Peace Poetry Contest will continue to grow and prosper, spreading the ideal of peace to more and more people each year.

Thank you for making this year's program a success.

# Peace Scholarship

Earlier this year, Veterans for Peace announced the annual Peace Scholarship award, a college scholarship program for Alachua County students. The scholarship competition was open to eligible high school seniors, college students, and adults who need financial support to succeed in college and who have demonstrated a commitment and leadership in activities involving: peace and social justice and/or nonviolent social change.

Peace scholarship applicants were asked to provide a brief autobiographical statement and evidence of leadership and/or personal initiative in activities in an organization (including volunteer or paid work) relating to peace and social justice, conflict resolution and/or nonviolent social change. Applicants were also asked to provide two letters of recommendation. In the end, VFP awarded peace scholarships to three students in the amount of \$500 each. The scholarships were awarded to:

**Douglas M. Bernal**, a student at Santa Fe College. A military veteran of the war in Iraq, he plans to enroll in the University of Florida Teach Program. His goal is to become a public school science teacher. He is the membership chair for the local Sierra Club and he also serves on the organization's executive committee. He is active with the Alachua County Labor Coalition on living wage issues and he has marched on behalf of the Fight for \$15 campaign. Doug is also the vice president of the Gainesville Veterans for Peace, and has helped to organize VFP's Memorial Mile, Winter Solstice, and many other events.

**Guerbrea P. Fort**, an Honors Program graduate at Santa Fe College. She is now working on her Bachelor's of Science degree in Public Relations at the University of Florida. She works extensively as a mentor in the community for girls age six to eight teaching them the values of peace as well as assertiveness and speaking up for their peers. She served as Student Activities director at Bucholz High School, and was the leader of Santa Fe College's 2015 Relay for Life team that raised funds to honor and support cancer survivors. Guerbrea plans to attend law school and work on behalf of social justice and educational equity for children.

**Mariana Castro**, a neurobiological science major at the University of Florida and a transfer student from Santa Fe College. She is a student leader of CHISPAS and the Gators Dream Forward program which aims to build a community for undocumented students at UF. Mariana was the lead organizer for this year's "Swipe Left on Wendy's Campaign" which brought over 50 agricultural laborers from the Coalition of Immokalee Workers to Gainesville to march in solidarity with students in support of farm worker rights. She is also fundraising director for a new scholarship program for undocumented and underrepresented students at UF.

To learn more about the VFP Peace Scholarship so you can apply next year, visit [vfp.gainesville.org](http://vfp.gainesville.org). There you will find detailed instructions and the application for the scholarship. If you have specific questions, contact VFP member Paul Ortiz at [ortizprof@gmail.com](mailto:ortizprof@gmail.com) or 352-373-3435.

# Winning Poets

## Grades 2 -4

Anjali Lloyd	9
1st Place	
Jaiden McGrath	10
2nd Place	
Dalastone Jonas	11
3rd Place	
Jalen Billingsley	11
High Honors	
Hannah Watkins	12
High Honors	

## Grade 5

Elena Frenock	13
1st Place	
Dani Livay	14
2nd Place	
Quinn Perrin	14
3rd Place	
Kelly Gill	15
High Honors	
Willa Rudenstine	15
High Honors	
Tupelo Hostetler	16
High Honors	

## Grades 6 -7

Michelle Tillero Hurst	17
1st Place	
Jaxson Christie	18
2nd Place	
Therese Rigor	19
3rd Place	
Anna Frenchman	20
High Honors	

Isaac Kaye	21
High Honors	
Blaire Moraski	21
High Honors	
Ky Manske	22
High Honors	

## *Grade 8*

Blake Smith	23
1st Place	
Sophie Viviano	24
2nd Place	
Harley Stewart	25
3rd Place	
Ian Stytz	26
High Honors	
Kalia Bernis	28
High Honors	
Ava Truluck	29
High Honors	
Taylor Stiff	30
High Honors	
Callista Coates	31
High Honors	
Dylan Allen	33
High Honors	

## *Grades 10-12*

Keoni Reid	34
1st Place	
Kaitlyn Maddux	35
2nd Place	
Hannah Strong	37
3rd Place	
Ryn Porter	38
High Honors	
Aaron Goll	39
High Honors	





## Peace for the World

I wish for a world with no hate.  
A world where people do not use  
their differences as bait.  
A world where people take the time  
to talk even if it makes them late.  
A world where people of all races and  
religion see each other as a mate.  
A world where people of all colors and  
gender are valued at the same rate.  
A world with no war or bombs or abuse,  
leading to an awful fate.  
A world where people do not talk  
bad about each other and instead stop to  
chat at the gate.  
A world where people say Hi, Hello,  
Good bye, Have a Great Day, mate!  
A world where people set a date to  
understand each other, and agree not to  
hate.  
This is my view of peace for the world.

*Anjali Lloyd*

*Grade 2, Hidden Oak Elementary School*

*1st Place, Grades 2-4*



## Black, White, and Brown

I am black, I am white,  
But I know I have my rights.

I know this from my heart,  
I have known this from the start.

Yes, I have some fear,  
I may have some shame, but I shall not blame.

You may yell and scream,  
But you will never shatter my dreams.

I am black, I am white,  
And I know I have my rights.

*Jaiden McGrath*

*Grade 4, Kimball Wiles Elementary School*

*2nd Place, Grades 2-4*



## **Peace to My Soul**

Peace is like having courage in your self. Peace is like your friend who will never leave you.

Peace is like food to your soul that stays there for your whole life. Peace tells you that you should never do violence or harm someone.

Peace tells you that everyone will love and support you. It also tells you that you should believe in yourself.

*Dalastone Jonas*

*Grade 3, Newberry Elementary School*

*3rd Place, Grades 2-4*

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## **Peace in Me**

Peace is flying.

Peace is fun.

Peace is in everyone.

Do I have peace?

Yes I do!

Come on guys we need to tell everyone!

Come on, come on!

Everyone has to know how to have fun with peace.

And have peace in your heart!

*Jalen Billingsley*

*Grade 2, Norton Elementary School*

*High Honors, Grades 2-4*

## Peace

Peace is joy and laughter.  
Peace is love and care.  
Peace is what I treasure.  
Peace is something that I hold  
on tight to.  
Peace is the opposite  
of racism.  
And the honey  
to my pot.  
I love peace.

*Hannah Watkins*  
*Grade 3, NewberryElementary School*

*High Honors, Grades 2-4*



## Peace

My father walks into my room  
he kneels down and kisses me on the head  
he has his bag all packed  
he looks me in the eye  
my mother is crying  
my dad kisses my baby sister  
my brave and heroic father is leaving to protect our country  
we waved him goodbye  
I had lost hope after seven years  
I was sitting in my room one quiet night  
my mother walked in half crying, half smiling  
I jumped out of bed and walked into the living room  
my father standing there  
missing one arm  
still a full heart  
he gave me a hug with the one arm he had  
I did not care what he was missing  
as long as he still has his heroic nature  
one month later, my father could swim  
my father could play baseball with us in the front yard  
my father could still bring everyone peace

*Elena Frenock*

*Grade 5, Jordan Glen School*

*1st Place, Grade 5*



## Peace

War is a dark dragon,  
That eats at guilty and innocent alike  
And makes them soulless husks  
Peace is an enchanted doe,  
That brings light  
And new souls  
For those lost.  
It brings justice  
For the innocent,  
It brings joy for the somber.  
What happens if War goes to your doorstep?  
Shut the door, and never, ever,  
Let it in.

*Dani Livay*

*Grade 5, Talbot Elementary School*

*2nd Place, Grade 5*

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## Peace

Freedom is like a blanket,  
It does not matter what color it is,  
As long as it warms you.  
Peace is like a piece of cake,  
It does not matter how much you get,  
As long as it fills you.  
Togetherness is like honey,  
It sticks to you,  
Until you wash it off.

*Quinn Perrin*

*Grade 5, Talbot Elementary School*

*3rd Place, Grade 5*

Laying on bed listening to the crickets chirp and the Cicadas talk to each other and watching the bright blue sky become inky black. This feels peaceful. Then you hear a motorcycle pass and watch a car start seeing the smoke lift up into the sky till it becomes no more. That peaceful moment has just left so I go on with my night.

*Kelly Gill*

*Grade 5, Jordan Glen School*

*High Honors, Grade 5*



The way faces are colored is the way they are  
People look at skin and decide to part  
The skin might be different from you and me  
But if you look beneath that's when you'll really see  
The way that we feel isn't different  
The way that we kneel isn't different  
The way that we cry isn't different  
The way that we die isn't different

We just need peace and try to look beneath from what we really see.

*Willa Rudenstine*

*Grade 5, Jordan Glen School*

*High Honors, Grade 5*

## A Place

A place that I've never been to,  
A dream that I've never dreamt,  
A song that I've never sung,  
A tale that I've never told.

A world filled with light,  
A world that is not.

A world full of love,  
A world full of hate.

We must choose the world that we wish to live in,  
We must make that world be.  
We must find the light in the darkest night,  
We must choose to make peace and not to fight.

*Tupelo Hostetler*

*Grade 5, P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School*

*High Honors*





Bees will buzz  
Kids will blow dandelion fuzz.  
Your dog is without care  
And your mother's kindness is just so fair.  
Your brother's outside,  
Kicking the ball into the net.  
Your sister's inside,  
Reading her favorite book, still completely content.  
Your parents are on the couch,  
Taking a nice long nap.  
Your dog is at your feet,  
Waiting for a delicious little snack.

Your life is without care,  
Because you know  
there will always be food on your plate,  
there are always people out there who love you,  
There are always people out there everyday  
Risking their lives for your protection,  
But who are these people?

But who are these people who so called  
"Risk their life for your sake everyday"?  
Who are these people who so called  
"Trained for years just for your protection"?  
Who are they?  
Have you ever wondered?

Somewhere else in the world,  
Someone died.  
Somewhere else in the world,  
People lose loved ones.  
Somewhere else in the world,  
Someone hasn't had food on their plate for a week.  
Somewhere else in this world  
Someone doesn't know if there is someone out there,

Protecting them from every harm that has been heard of,  
And more.

Who are these people?  
They are our armed forces.  
Who are these people?  
They are our veterans.

*Michelle Tillero Hurst*  
*Grade 6, Queen of Peace Catholic Academy*

*1st Place, Grades 6-7*

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## **Far Back**

As I travel to the sparkling, crystal clear river of the Florida springs  
to bring back my childhood memories of when there was no war,  
just peace.

As I wade in the river I see fish flashing quickly through the water  
remembering when my friend and I would catch minnows in the  
grassy shallow parts of the spring.

As I look in the shimmering water I see my friend's face, hear his  
jokes, and hear his laugh. The cold water brings back lots of cheer-  
ful memories of when we were children racing to get to the spring.

The morning fog slowly drifts away as my friend's life did.

As I am leaving I have one last look of the sparkling crystal clear  
river leaving behind those peaceful memories of my childhood.

*Jaxson Christie*  
*Grade 6, Jordan Glen School*

*2nd Place, Grades 6-7*

## You Are Now At Peace

Two opposing sides  
No one is at peace  
Loud voices collide  
No one is at peace  
Thousands have perished  
No one is at peace  
The battleground is hellish  
No one is at peace  
You want it all to stop  
No one is at peace  
But this is your job  
You close your baggy eyes  
No one is at peace  
You wish the war will die  
No one is at peace  
You open your eyes again  
No one is at peace  
The memories are in your head  
No one is at peace  
Your whole family is here  
No one is at peace  
They hold you tight and dear  
You are now at peace

*Therese Rigor*

*Grade 6, Queen of Peace Catholic Academy*

*3rd Place, Grades 6-7*



## Peace Poem

When I was two, my father was shipped to Afghanistan. I was too young to really be upset, or to know what was really going on. I loved my dad. I always will. When he has time off, we go swimming in our pool. One day when I was home alone the doorbell rang. As fast as I could go I ran downstairs. When I opened the door. There was a man in a uniform holding boots and a folded army uniform instantly my eyes filled with tears. My mom came to the door and fell to her knees and started crying. Two weeks later at my father's funeral I saw his casket. It had a flag over the coffin. When I went up to the stand, I said, "When I look at my dad's pictures for now on, the only thing I can think of is how much peace he brought to everyone in the world. Even me I wish he was here to tell him how much I loved him." There was a long pause; my hands and my forehead started sweating thinking everyone hated my speech. But when two people stood up from the audience. They started clapping and then two more people stood up and started clapping then everyone stood up and started clapping. That moment brought tears to my eyes knowing that everyone in the room agreed with me my dad and all other soldiers bring peace to this world.

*Anna Frenchman*

*Grade 6, Jordan Glen School*

*High Honors, Grades 6-7*



## Grass

The grass stands tall,  
flowing in the wind,  
from sudden silence,  
to sudden violence.  
the grass is stepped on,  
and shot through,  
the grass is sopping in blood,  
cut and destroyed,  
a man's body lies in the blood soaked grass,  
it's his death, his "path", his "destiny",  
he lies on his back,  
everything suddenly stops,  
a flower sprouts next to the man, as he dies in peace,  
the grass grows back,  
and again flows in the wind.

*Isaac Kaye*

*Grade 6, Jordan Glen School*

*High Honors, Grades 6-7*

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## The Colors of Maidan

The first time I went to Maidan, it seemed grey,  
It was all a gloomy day.  
Protesters stood strong in a crowd,  
As more went to stage and spoke aloud.

The next time we passed, it was black,  
I knew I had to watch my back.  
There had been fighting, I was aware.  
So I felt safer when we left Maidan Square.

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continued from p. 21

Now it's not safe there, it is red,  
Fires are raging, with smoke overhead.  
People have been killed, and there's more bad news,  
But my family cares about peace, not who will win or lose.

*Blaire Moraski*

*Grade 7, Westwood Middle School*

*High Honors, Grades 6-7*



### Peace Poem

Is peace when there is no war?  
When all is silent?  
You're in the woods,  
birds are chirping,  
rivers run as the abundant sun  
shines its previous yellow light.  
You're at the ocean:  
the calm water,  
the waves lightly crashing on the rocky shore,  
I think of the answer as I lay on my back  
watching the fluffy clouds float peacefully,  
as a butterfly with a delicate crimson pattern flutters close by.  
I wonder if the true meaning of peace will ever be found  
but if it was not,  
I would be fine.

*Ky Manske*

*Grade 6, Jordan Glen School*

*High Honors, Grades 6-7*

## Justice System

From protesters to innocent lives.  
A corrupt system lies.  
Enough is enough  
They have drawn the line.

Unarmed and black  
Prompts an attack  
Skittles and a phone?  
Shot dead in broad daylight?  
What's the verdict?  
Not guilty of course!

From a man begging for breath  
To a disabled man in a wheelchair.  
Brutally shot multiple times.  
What's the verdict?  
Not Guilty of course!

It shall be ent  
Police brutality.  
Claiming a mistake, a misunderstanding.  
Laws being bent  
Fix the justice system.  
Once and for all.

From Kent to Baltimore,  
Chicago to Ferguson,  
Hearts full of rage,  
Enough is enough,  
And peace at once

*Blake Smith*

*Grade 8, Fort Clarke Middle School*

*1st Place, Grade 8*

## Unnoticed

Can't you hear it?

The blowing of the bitter and rigorous December wind

As the guns shots scream past the shot at victim

Can't you see it?

The blood of all the innocent people

And the sound of men continuing to cock their guns back, unknowing  
of what they're shooting at

Can't you tell?

The screaming isn't heard any more

And the unfamiliar taste of death is right in your mouth

Can't you understand?

The wives and children of the dead soldiers still wait for them to come  
home

Of course you don't...

You don't see the dead bodies of the worn out soldiers who fought for us

You don't see the wives crying in pain and trying to get someone to  
explain to their kids that their father isn't coming home

You don't see the soldier in the hospital suffering from PTSD, fighting  
his demons daily just get a glimpse of reality

You only see the unfamiliar face of your long lost brother in a casket...

You only see the wife of this man going to therapy and drowning out her  
pain through pills

Or the dying roses on his casket that were suppose to symbolize his  
family's undying love

But what you don't see is that this man was one in a million

This man made a difference

Because of him, his friend got to live another day

But why is he looked at as just another face?

Just another soldier?

Just another death?

Why not a hero?

A savior?

A legend?

*Sophie Viviano*

*Grade 8, Queen of Peace Catholic Academy*

*2nd Place, Grade 8*



## Chaotic Motion

The crisp cool air of the morning,  
The sun shining through the towering leaves,  
The dew on the grass, like little crystals of emerald green,  
The birds are chirping to the rising sun,  
The trees rocking a steady sway,  
A calming place silences pain and agony far away.

But a time will come when pain and agony can no longer be silenced.  
The world is moving faster and louder every day.  
The swaying trees will be chopped,  
And the singing birds will go away.  
All left will be chaotic motion.  
And people locked in chaos's unbearable chains.

Most won't fight this progressing, demanding speed.  
Fears of failure and dreams of success are not enough for society's needs  
To break humanity's desire of being truly free and at peace.

But maybe one-day, people will choose to see  
That life is worth too much to continue living, going full speed.

*Harley Stewart*  
*Grade 8, Westwood Middle School*

*3rd Place, Grade 8*



## The Boy's Name

Welcome to the lonely fade  
Where everything's a masquerade.  
People pass by on the street  
With masks of gold and ivory.  
These people fight,  
These people clash,  
But they never ever  
Take off their mask.  
Until one day,  
A boy is born  
Without a mask  
To wear or to bear.

With wings on his feet,  
The boy floats down the street.  
With not a care in the world,  
He is whisked away  
By the morning breeze.  
Smiling softly,  
He shows such joy,  
Joy that the world  
Has never seen.  
His face is white  
As ash and snow.  
His soul cleanses the world  
With an earthly glow.  
Yet this calm was not to last.

The people are thrown  
Into an unholy rage.  
They could not stand  
Seeing his beautiful face.  
The people try to stop him,  
To catch the boy now.  
He would change the world,

They could tell somehow.  
So the people twist and  
The people writhe.  
To halt the boy  
And scare him to death.  
The boy's backed up  
To a wall.

His light slowly dims,  
But the people's masks gleam brighter.  
The people have him cornered,  
But the boy is a fighter.  
He would not stop.  
He stays light on his feet.  
He breaks through the crowd,  
And charges down the street.  
And one by one,  
The people's masks crack.  
To reveal beautiful faces  
Of snow and ash.

The boy nods.  
His work here was done.  
He floats down the road.  
No longer on the run.  
He was off to the next town  
With masks of gold and ivory.  
To do his miracle there,  
And let the people be free.  
The boy's name was Peace.

*Ian Stytz*  
*Grade 8, Westwood Middle School*

*High Honors, Grade 8*

They can paint a picture of the past and the present,  
and they know what happened and what is happening.

They cry softly.

Help me.

They see no hatred, but peace in the opponent's eyes,  
for they hear each other's silent cries.

They whisper in despair.

Help me.

The children at home not knowing what is going on,  
and wives praying for peace in their hearts, and to see loved ones  
returning safely.

They sit quietly.

Help me.

When or if they come home, faith is almost gone;  
but when they see those familiar faces,  
love and peace and hope is not in vain.

They weep loudly.

Help me.

However, returning home finds them lost in a world,  
a world of confusion and of war. Physically they are with you,  
but mentally they are distant.

They say nothing.

Help me.

When they do not return...

The families cry out loud.

Come back to me.

Is it worse for one to return when peace is finally won,  
and not to be able to reach out to anyone.  
Or is it better for the flag to be delivered to the family left behind.  
After the pain is gone, which it never is, they move on.  
Time is suppose to be the healer of all pain, but families with flags

would beg to differ.  
They think of a world with love and hope.  
And they wish for a world with one thing, one thing we all desire at  
some point,

## PEACE

*Kalia Bernis*

*Grade 8, Queen of Peace Catholic Academy*

*High Honors, Grade 8*



## Peace Poem

On the beach, everything is at peace.  
The birds soar aimlessly,  
Swooping, diving, and gliding on the air.  
At peace over the empty, sandy dunes,  
At peace over the cool, foamy, crashing waters.  
Crabs scuttle across the sultry sand,  
As ship's sails flap in the wind.  
The sea breeze smells strongly of salt,  
And blows all traces of footsteps and human traces away,  
Leaving peace in its wake.

*Ava Truluck*

*Grade 8, Jordan Glen School*

*High Honors, Grade 8*

## Feather Falling

Dew sits on a soft green meadow.  
The sun's rays peek through the stalks of trees  
With a morning dove perched on a ridged, crippled branch,  
Chirping a sweet tune.

The wind whisks his beautiful sound away.  
A shriek alerts, and the morning dove squeals.  
Red heart and white feathers burst into flames,  
Dropping from the green arms that once held his life.

Sparks

From his feathers begin a blaze.  
Trunks of trees turn to a stump of charcoal.  
The scorching meadow once green, now brown...  
Once a land of fulfillment, and  
Peace,  
But now a city of Ash.

Under the rubble and debris  
Is a crisp feather still touched with white, with the light and hope  
Of more peace to come.

*Taylor Stiff*

*Grade 8, Westwood Middle School*

*High Honors, Grade 8*



## Why Peace is Only Term

Long ago,  
When wars weren't raging,  
And blood wasn't being spilled,  
Peace was more,  
Than just a term,

It occurred in the streets of Syria,  
In homes of muslims,  
And in the streets of the Bronx,  
Where African-Americans,  
Were playing in the streets,  
Not worrying about being killed,  
In another gang war,  
Just like fatty livestock,  
That was a time,  
When peace was more,  
Than an unbelievable term,

But then greed,  
Ego,  
And a need for power,  
Destroyed our partially perfect utopia,  
Bringing death,  
Chaos,  
And basically,  
Human nature,  
That's why peace,  
Is only a term,

Because we are imperfect,  
Imperfect as a piece of gum on the sidewalk,  
We are bad choices at every turn,  
And that's why,  
Peace is an imaginary term,

But it's not just us,  
The common folk,  
It's also the presidents,

Dictators,  
And queens,  
They're not celestial beings,  
Who have no bias,  
And know just the right thing to do,  
But sometimes,  
At the strangest moment,  
Bam!

They have one idea,  
One idea that could bring peace to a nation,  
One idea that could finally end all wars,  
One idea that could save all humanity,  
Only one idea,  
That's why peace,  
Is only a term,

Because the idea,  
Only happens once in a millenia,  
And it isn't,  
That important,  
To the economy,

Because it doesn't shine as bright as,  
The diamond that is consumerism,  
It doesn't roar as loud as,  
The lioness that is the stock market,  
And that is why peace,  
Because we only think,  
Of two things,  
Spending more than our body weight,  
And ourselves.

*Callista Coates*  
*Grade 8, Fort Clarke Middle School*

*High Honors, Grade 8*



## Find the Peace

A black hand, touching a white  
A heavy women, holding a light  
They all join hand in hand  
To find the peace,  
In the land.

Stranger and stranger  
Become as one.  
A foe and foe  
Friends  
Till days are done.  
All come together, hand in hand  
To find the peace,  
In the land.

Wealthy helping the needy  
Kindness helping the greedy.  
Bullies reminiscing with nerds,  
Cats toying around with birds.  
All come together, hand in hand  
To find the peace  
In the land.

Hearts understanding a soul,  
Plate, understanding a bowl.  
All join, hand in hand  
To have found the peace  
In the land.

*Dylan Allen*  
*Grade 8, Fort Clarke Middle School*

*High Honors, Grade 8*

Black is broken, chains, whips and shame.

Black is paying your way out of prison but there's no price on freedom.

Young or old, black is the being of feeling stuck and controlled  
Equality is preached throughout our land but all in all we're beseeched  
to play nice and hold hands.

Black is slurs cutting deeply, visible open wounds revealing nothing  
but white meat.

Rolled eyes, and smacked teeth constant

Black is no real equality just the man holding a master key to the  
locked boxes of what black will never be

Black is no real justice just conversation of what should've, could've  
or what would've happened if we keep our mouths sealed with rubber  
base adhesive

Black is struggle, black is pain, black is trouble, black is gangs

Could black be beautiful? Successful or even peaceful

Could black get their roots and names back?

Or maybe the opportunity to be "triumphant" with the things we do,  
as you

Black is continuously being put in a box of what they'll never be

End placing black in a box strapped with several locks on top with no  
regret, regard, or sorrow

End making black what black isn't and build on making what black is.

*Keoni Reid*

*Grade 10, Gainesville High School*

*1st Place, Grades 10-12*



1944

Light filters through the tiny cracks above me  
I hold my breath as the floorboards creak  
All I can see are the soles of his shoes  
How does he not hear the pulse pounding in my ears?

My sister whimpers as a chair slides along the wood  
I squeeze her hand and close my eyes  
I don't know if we'll still be alive in five minutes  
I don't know how we're alive now

Think happy thoughts:  
I imagine our flat back in Warsaw  
Making latkes at Chanukah  
Going to the cinema on my birthday

My brother twitches and shudders nervously  
He always protected me and my sister  
Now it was my job to grab his arm  
And let him know I'm here

The Gestapo's voice is deep and clear  
He is casual  
He is calm  
And I am scared

My mother is silent and I wonder if she's breathing  
She is never quiet, not even in her sleep  
If she were in a film, she would be the narrator  
Chattering about every minuscule detail

Above me, he talks and I am paralyzed  
What if he already knows?  
What if he's drawing this out to torture us?  
What if we are already dead?

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My father is not here, but if he were, he'd laugh  
He'd spit in the officer's face  
He'd bathe him in our Jewish filth  
He'd die for our heritage

The man shifts and stands over my sister  
He looks and I swear he notices  
I close my eyes and pray he doesn't see me  
Pray that we do not die like this

My mother said that we'd be okay  
She said that if we hid, we'd be safe  
We would not end up dead like our father  
And if they catch us, to run

But now I doubt that as his hand moves to his hip  
This is it  
I brace myself for the killing blow  
But he walks through the front door and he's gone

*Kaitlyn Maddux*  
*Grade 11, Buchholz High School*

*2nd Place, Grades 10-12*



## The Eye of a Soldier

The thunder of bombs and artillery shells exploding slowly deafens me  
My body tenses as the piercing sound of bullets fly through the air  
My ears scream from the nearby rockets and grenades exploding  
I pray to hear the sound of combat aircraft flying overhead.

The smell of stale earthen dust engulfs me  
Men around me reek of BO  
The metallic smell of blood still burns my nostrils.  
The aroma of diesel fuel makes my head spin.

I lick my lips to moisten my dry, tasteless mouth.  
Grit rubs my gums raw, causing the taste of salty blood  
I can still taste disgusting metal and smoke from the last bomb.  
I feel like a hand is gnawing at my stomach as it grows.

I look over and my eyes scream at the sight of lone body limbs.  
My eyes try to adjust to all the bullets soaring by my head.  
All around me, soldiers are desperate, tired, and afraid.  
I am surprised my eyes can still see.

Something flies by me;  
I feel a burning sensation.  
One last thought overtakes me,  
“Why not peace?”

*Hannah Strong*  
*Grade 10, Newberry High School*

*3rd Place, Grades 10-12*



## Social Justice: A Paradox

The world is full of desperate pleas,  
In war and pain, famine, disease.  
And despite the yearning of the chest,  
those who want, find little rest.  
And though heaven lives in our head,  
we have never known it.

Polar powers have often sought,  
to make peace through battles fought.  
In love, dared to act on dreams,  
while some progress by any means.  
Centuries have come and gone,  
but peace is yet elusive.

And yet peace is known,  
not in reality, but by heart alone.  
How can it be felt, but not concrete,  
what is this strange miraculous feat?  
Peace is found not in books,  
for peace has inhuman looks.  
Peace has no ties to sovereign state,  
and it is not of the earth.

Peace is a state of mind, a fight,  
to be at Peace one struggles for light.  
One faces hate, discrimination,  
but Peace is not a destination.  
To speak out for all good above,  
to take hold and fight with love!  
That is the paradox,  
that Peace is a fight.

Though dictionaries disagree,  
Peace is conflict that sets all free.  
Face the evil, bear it all,  
Bear your heart and stand up tall.  
In the face of hate, sorrow, and fire,  
We must bleed and care and inspire!  
So if our world recycles an eternal war,  
Battle with love, and know Peace forevermore.

*Ryn Porter*  
*Grade 12, Buchholz High School*

*High Honors, Grades 10-12*

## Boys Will Be Boys

When I was a young boy I skinned my knee  
Because someones kid shoved me to the dirt.  
I told my father and he said to me:  
“Boys will be boys.” And mud was on my shirt.  
And well even way back then I could see  
How quickly muddy shirts turned to blood spurts.

Cause it’s a story we’ve all heard before  
Of men who come to town and ask for boys.  
They tell the mothers they are needed for war  
And tore the children away from their toys  
And so they go not knowing what’s in store.  
Too many kids have fallen for the ploy.

Oh do not listen to the generals  
Who’ve convinced themselves that they are not done  
Whose children from my mothers grip they stole.  
They took my mother, your father, our son  
Who we later had to bury in holes.  
They’ve taken a billion, they’ve taken one.

And how one was always more than enough.  
Please dear God you’ve let your children play,  
Boys will always be boys, and they play rough.  
I think it’s way past time for you to say  
that enough, my dear children, is enough.  
Boys will be boys, but at what price to pay?

*Aaron Goll*

*Grade 11, Buchholz High School*

*High Honors, Grades 10-12*



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**Chapter 14**



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