

Teen Poetry

1<sup>st</sup> Place

Lillian M.

## The Conversation

Despair:

Frail human, You are mine.

Your block-built life is tumbling down;

Your best-laid plans are out of time,

And peace of mind has long since drowned.

The entire world is burning, collapsing,

Everything dreamed for is falling away;

Its people are feebly, futilely grasping,

But under my rule, no mortal dream holds sway.

All you hold dear when touched crumbles to ash.

People are stealing, and starving, and dying;

The beliefs that you live for are thrown in the trash,

And all of your heroes turn out to be lying.

Those who need, go on needing,

Those in peril, unsaved.

Prejudice, Vanity, Selfishness are breeding,

While the human soul I keep enslaved.

Your life is a tunnel, walls closing in fast—

You've a match in your fist, but this one's your last—

The dark is so thick you can't see your own hand,

And all you thought to be rock's turning out to be sand.

It's pointless to argue, useless to struggle.

Can't you see now, how I win every time?

The odds aren't just stacked, they're ready to crush you.

Try to deny it? We'll all say that you're blind.

Your past may be yours, but your future is mine.

I'll choke the life out of you, stolen breath by breath,

Taking what's yours until there's nothing left

We'll start with your love, and end with your sanity

Let's see if that cures all you mortals of vanity!

And there's nothing you can do to stop me.

The Human's reply:

The game may be rigged,

And life's steps now a slope,

But I've one thing you haven't,

And I call it hope.



# Teen Poetry

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Place

Lillian M.

## Bubbles

Blowing,  
Floating just in reach,  
Rising,  
Shining in the sun,  
Gleaming,  
Smirking at me  
Through the endless airy space between,  
Knowing if I touch it,  
It will vanish,  
And just like every other forgotten wish  
Leave only a sticky residue on the fingers.

# Teen Poetry

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Place

Shrishant H.



### **The Lamp**

The lamp on my desk stands tall and bright,  
A beacon of hope on a darkened night.  
Its warm glow casts a comforting spell,  
And banishes the shadows that once befell.

It illuminates the pages of my book,  
And lights up the corners where darkness took.  
Its light fills the room with a gentle grace,  
And invites me in with an open embrace.

Oh, the stories it could tell if it could speak,  
Of late-night studies and secrets that we keep.  
It's been witness to laughter and to tears,  
To moments of triumph and moments of fears.

But for now, it stands in quiet repose,  
A sentinel of warmth that in stillness glows.  
A steadfast guide through the darkest of nights,  
Its gentle radiance a comforting sight.

A constant reminder of hope and grace,  
That brightens our path and lights up our space.

# Teen Poetry Honorable Mention

Soulee H.



## Porcelain Faced People

Sometimes I'll look in the mirror and I'll see my skin  
Up close, without makeup, nothing to hide the blemishes  
I see texture and freckles and hair  
And it's uneven and it's patchy  
And all of a sudden I am reminded of my humanity,  
That I am living and breathing and laughing  
That I am a single part of the most advanced species in our known universe  
All because I saw a couple of pimples.  
And maybe that's because no one really sees skin  
In TV shows it's covered up with pounds of concealer  
On apps filters have AI that smooths out your face  
And almost everyone around you don upwards of \$30 worth of skincare products  
And they put it on at the same time every single day.  
And so when I look at myself in the mirror  
Having just washed my face  
I see things I know, logically, are on every human being  
Hair, freckles, wrinkles, spots, multiple tones of skin  
And yet I seem to have forgotten  
Because I'm constantly being fed picture after picture  
Image after image  
Video after video  
Of porcelain faced people popping up in pictures.

And the children are dolls as well

They want to look porcelain too,

So they sneak into mommy's makeup and put some on

And they realize they look like the people on TV

And they want more of it.

This is the new human

This is what everyone looks like now

They have expressions plastered permananetly on their faces

Because there is so much happening all around us we don't know what to feel

Sometimes we're so numb to it all

We don't know how to feel.

And I look at my hands

And the square checkerboard of skin that covers them

And I wonder what they would have been doing nine thousand years ago,

Certainly not writing this

Too many things that must be done

What a small world I would have had

Making fire

Building shelter

Collecting food for my family.

And I try not to stray far from those thoughts.

I don't want to be among the porcelain faced people any longer

I want to be human more often.