



School Awards 2023-2024

Poet Laureate Contest

Poet Laureate Contest Awards

Every year, Providence challenges its Upper School students to pursue beauty in their writing, and one of the ways we do this is by encouraging them to submit their best poems to the Poet Laureate Contest. Poems may be either rhymed or free verse, and they are judged by a committee of faculty members based on the quality of the writing as well as the authenticity of the content.

Congratulations to the 2023-2024 winners! *You can read their poems below!*

RHETORIC SCHOOL

2024 Poet Laureate: Isabel Vorst for "Lost in Grief"

Best Free Verse: Isa Stan for "To the Rhythm of the Rain"

Best Traditional Form: Caris Flanakin for "Adventures of the Night"

LOGIC SCHOOL

Runner Up: Ava Jones for "The Weight"

Winner: Naomi Joseph for "Are You Ready"

Honorable Mention for Best Logic School Poem

“The Weight”

By Ava Jones, 8th Grade

Do you ever feel the weight;
The weight of all their expectations?
Pushing down.
Weighing down.
Crushing slowly.
Squeezing, ‘till you can’t breathe?
I do.

But then something changes—
Something shifts.
And I remember;
I need not worry,
I need not fear,
I have all I need.
The Lord, the Creator, the Designer.
He is my Father—I am His child

Best Logic School Poem

“Are You Ready”

By Naomi Joseph, 8th grade

Are You ready Son
Are You ready to go
To live among these
That You call Your own
To leave the splendor of Heaven
For the pain on Earth
To leave My right hand
For a manger in the dirt
To live inside the walls
Of Your human mom
Are You ready to sleep
And tell storms to be calm
Are You ready to lead
And are You ready to serve
These fools who will

Constantly reject Your word
Are You ready to leave
To become sin's cure
To be underestimated
And to be poor
Are You ready to heal
Are You ready to save
To cast out demons
In My name
To be betrayed by a man
You once called Your friend

To be denied by Your disciples
Again and again
Are You ready to go
And to embrace
A cross sculpted for You
By a tree that You made
To have a crown of thorns
On that heavenly face
To be mocked and ridiculed
And to still show them grace
To die for a gossip
To die for the prideful
To die for a liar
And for suicidals
For the arrogant
And for the afraid
For the very men
Who cursed Your name
To purify broken hearts
And make all things new
To die so that they
Can live forever with You
When you return You'll sit
To the right of My throne
So are You ready Son
Are You ready to go?

Best Formal Poem in the Rhetoric School

“Adventures of the Night, A Villanelle”*

By Caris Flanakin, 9th Grade

The night is young and seems to catch the light;
It welcomes shooting stars that burst so well
And constellations roaming in a flight.
Trees bend and whistle, howling with their might,
The waves in water rumble in their swell.
The night is young and seems to catch the light.
A moonbeam bursts and glows like angels' sight,
When hearing fireworks ringing like a bell,
And constellations roaming in a flight.
When all the world begins to bring delight,
And great brave men stay at the citadel
The night is young and seems to catch the light.
Bombarding planets twinkle in a mite,
With crystals glimmering like caramel
And constellations roaming in a flight.
If I could sit and watch smoke roll in white
And puff and blow on myrtles in a yell,
The night is young and seems to catch the light,
And constellations roaming in a flight.

** A villanelle is a complicated poetic form that consists of 19 lines, with five tercets (three-line stanzas) followed by a quatrain (four-line stanza). It has a specific rhyme scheme and repeating lines, which create a sense of musicality and structure. Two specific lines, known as refrains, are repeated throughout the poem. The first and third lines of the first tercet are repeated alternately throughout the remaining tercets, and then appear together as the final couplet in the quatrain.*

Best Free Verse in the Rhetoric School

“To the Rhythm of the Rain” A free verse poem by Isa Stan, 10th Grade

I walked throughout a quiet wood
Beneath the rainfall’s whisper
Along the path before me
Stood trees of unknown age
And the silver fog around them danced
To rhythm of the rain

And this is what it said, this is what I heard it saying
When I stopped to listen the song
That the rain was playing:

“Wait for them,” it said, as gentle as could be,
“Wait for the things that pass you by- do not let them pass beyond
what your eyes can see.”

“I do not understand,” I said, trembling in the cold.
“What is there to wait for that in my hands I cannot hold?”

With a windy sigh the rain replied:
“As I fall you do not see
Every droplet that makes up me.
They fall past your eyes and to the ground
Without making hardly a sound.
But each one has a role to play,
Some sort of purpose to guide their way-
To give you the trees and the grass and the fields.
But still you do not stop to them to say
How glad you are that they might fall for you.”

I closed my eyes and tried to think,
What sort of thing the rain was describing?

And then within a blink
It came to me
What I was to wait for and not let pass by
The sight of my old and dreary eyes,
And it was this:

“Life,” I said with cheerful glee,
“It is life that I shall not let pass me by!
It is the moments, the little moments,

Where memories are made.
Where a spoken word of love
Or a hushed whisper from above,
Or a stroll along the beach,
Or a race that's run,
And when it's all done,
And the event has passed,
What you're left with is the only thing you keep:
The memory."

And the rain sang with gladness:
"With each droplet comes the storm,
Each drop a member of a unified form,
So is life, with memories,
Each moment treasured is what you see,
When your life has passed you by.
So wait, wait for those moments,
For when they come they will flee like morning dew,
Cherish them so that in your mind,
When in recollection,
The memories are made anew."

2024 Providence Classical School Poet Laureate

"Lost in Grief"

By Isabel Vorst, 12th Grade

I mourned a loss that tore the world
Apart from good and light, and left instead
Within my gaze only eternal night.
White blossoms drenched in salted rain,
Their vibrant coats washed bleak, crumbling.
How strange a world, when stripped of joy,
Veiled by thickening grief, yet stranger still,
The river's chill, which agony bequeaths.
In sweetness, and in laughter full,
I found not one reprieve, nor in sunlight cast
Upon green fields, pure horror in the eve.
Sorrow sank within my mind, clouds of obscuring gray
As every thought to cry for God was slowly washed away.
Lost in loss, I drowned in death, despair my only song;
The heavens and the sea turned black,
A storm on which I trod. How long was life, how far from me my God?
Yet tears' relief was thick and sweet,
Winding o'erhead; and so, I walked among their tide,

A living soul, yet dead. Foam strung along the broken waves,
Salt carried out to sea – a pull that is not of this world,
But vast eternity.