

Honorable Mention Prose – High School

The Man by the Well

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Grade: 10

School: Harbor Springs High School

There is a man by the well

Every day,

And for a week, he takes a part of himself and gives it those who pass by in exchange for a piece of them.

One day, an adolescent boy walks by him and asks,

“What do you have to offer?”

The man by the well responds

“Anything you desire.”

“Power,”

Says the boy.

The man by the well breaks off a piece of himself, and hands it to the boy,

“Here is power, in exchange for what?”

The boy takes a piece of himself, hands it to the man by the well and says,

“Suffering.”

The next day a homeless woman goes to the man by the well and asks for wealth in exchange for poverty.

The man by the well breaks off a piece of himself,

as does the homeless woman.

They hand it to each other.

The town Dalit approaches the man by the well later in the week.

He asks for “fame”, the man by the well hands him a piece of himself.

The Dalit then gives back “pain.”

By the end of the week, the man by the well has nothing left to offer.

Yet on the last day an orphaned child approaches the beautiful
man by the well.

The man by the well says,

“I’m sorry, but I have nothing left to give.”

The child says,

“All I want to see is love.”

Immediately, the child sees every damaged part of the man by the well,

The suffering from the adolescent boy,

The poverty from the homeless woman,

And

The pain from the Dalit.

The child starts to cry,

And

The man by the well pulls his heart from his chest

And hands it to the child.