

Best in Show Poetry, Hanna-Renkes/Jan Smith Literary Award – High School

“Finding Myself”

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10th Grade

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“Be correct.”

“You have to be right.”

And so I try;

I don’t put up a fight.

“Look at her.”

“She’s just fine.”

Suddenly, I’m living a lie.

My life is no longer mine.

I've become someone new,

Someone who's not me.

If I'm not being myself,

Who am I trying to be?

I see the others,

The “perfect” ones.

I see all of them,

The daughters and sons.

I’m supposed to be like that.

I’m supposed to belong.

Why am I different then?

Why am I wrong?

I'm in a battle

That's all in my head.

Now it's too late

The monster's been fed.

My mind is the monster

Controlling my thoughts.

It's made expectations,

Lines not to cross.

Now I’m stuck in a void,

One of blackness and sorrow.
I have to focus on today,
Forget about tomorrow.

Because it'll come.
It always does.
Look at who I am now,
Compared to the person I was.

But now this is my life;
This is what it's become.
Endless struggles,
Crushed under my thumb.

All of the pressure,
Weighing down on me now.
But I have to keep going.
I'll make it through somehow.

So I decide to fake it,
To put on a happy face.
But it all gets to be so much,
While I'm trying to find my place.

Am I just lost?
Am I just broken?
But I stay silent,
Leave words unspoken.

I don't want you to worry.
I don't need you to ask.
Please don't say, "What's wrong?"
Just be fooled by my mask.

I'm playing pretend,
And faking at school.
I realize I'm acting,
That I'm just a fool.

To think I could be more
Than who I am.
I thought maybe I could,
Maybe I can.

But I'm not the person,
That I am supposed to be.
And I can't do anything
That is asked of me.

But now I remember.
I remember I am loved.
And so now I start,
Start removing the gloves.

I remove the mask;
I stop pretending.
This world of criticism,
It's now ending.

I take the reins;
I'll start anew.
And hopefully,
I can make it up to you.

I accept myself
For who I am.
Your opinion doesn't matter;
I'm done with your scams.

I have a life,
And it's my own.
This is my life.
I'm no one's clone.

And now I know
You're telling me lies.
My eyes are open,
Now I realize

I am important,
And I do matter.
Tear down all of the walls;
The barricades I'll shatter.

Now I'm done,
Done locking myself away.
No longer stuck in the dark,
No more being afraid.

I'll embrace my differences;
I'll be myself.
I'll be who I want to,
And no one else.

I am correct,
And now I am free.
I am myself.
I am me.