

1<sup>st</sup> place

## A Thank You Letter To Mr. God

By Iain Wilcox, age 17

Oh Mister God  
You must understand the thrill of sin.  
To be *human*  
To be *alive*  
To be in *control*  
Oh Mister God  
You must understand the emptiness of departure.  
Just as you act upon your mastery of logic  
Humans act upon our mastery of emotion  
For we are born alongside death, our brother, knowing that he is our guardian, watching over us.  
But as time goes on, we drift apart.  
The differences between us and our desire to forget his existence, cause him to linger away and only to return when we are at our highest point, just to spite us.  
Oh Mister God  
You must understand the bleakness of being forgotten  
To be *lost*  
To be *afraid*  
To be *alone*  
Oh Mister God  
You must understand that heartbreak of being left behind  
Just as you are the master of the end  
Humans are the master of the journey  
Our minds are all connected through you and yet we trek to our fates forgetting you  
Staying indifferent to your love that guides us along the way.  
Oh Mister God  
You must understand the frustration of defeat.  
Just as you are the master of history  
Humans are the master of the future  
And because we are as asinine as we are convoluted, we tend to forget and leave what is broken in the past.  
But we will always remember what you have done to help us see the light in this dark world and to lead us all, throughout the era of humankind, to a better place and for that we thank you.

But now it is time to pass the torch  
To the new gods  
To the new rulers of earth and heaven and hell  
To the masters of the beginning, the middle, and what is yet to come  
To the children that play in your sandbox and reshape your toys  
To the ones who have worked endlessly for thousands of years to try and reach you and embrace you and  
surpass you  
To your everlasting lovers and eternal foes  
To the new creators and the old destroyers  
To humans.

2<sup>nd</sup> place  
Swing  
By Christina Tong, age 16

From days of high pigtails  
Playing in sand  
Crawling on trees like lovebugs do  
A red swimsuit:  
A dress with two layers of circle skirt  
And thick red bands hanging around the shoulders.

A tanned girl,  
Smiling  
Salty wild wet hair  
Shining cheeks and nose  
Leaning from a swing.  
Bangs want to hide her  
As she flies through the air.

Old chain fence walls in triple layers  
A red and grey tower  
And a mess of green beneath.  
Across from Higgs Beach  
Across from the ocean  
Was my childhood.

3<sup>rd</sup> place

## Big and Friendly

By Raquel Brady, age 18

Hello! Hello!  
How are you Mailman? Hello!  
Do you carry boxes or envelopes?  
You have something for me, I hope?  
For I am a very good boy,  
Shoes and rugs I no longer destroy.

Good-bye! Good-bye!  
You must have nothing to supply.  
Why did you drop that crate?  
All I did was peer over the gate.

Hello! Hello!  
Today's Mailman is the one I know.  
So welcome home!  
Today where will you roam?  
You do have something for me.

## Honorable mention

By Nicholas Romero, age 13

If you looked in the corners  
You'd find her right there  
Hidden by darkness  
And the curls in her hair  
Her nose in the book  
With her head in the clouds  
Hiding her feelings  
Away from the crowds  
If you sit by her side  
While the world passed you by  
She'll tell you the story  
Behind the pain in her eyes  
If you gave her five minutes  
You'd see how her smile  
Makes even the bad things  
In life worthwhile  
But you don't look in corners  
You don't even glance  
So she sits there still waiting  
To be given a chance

**Honorable mention**

## **Romance Is Everything**

By Tcheniya Brevil, age 13

When I'm with him all of my troubles are gone.  
All I can think is that my love for him will always go on.  
He is my prince, and I'm his Cinderella.  
When it's raining, he is my umbrella.  
When we are together, it's like a calm wind blowing.  
My love for him will keep on going.  
All of my family said that he is a good guy.  
My heart is for him 'till the day I die.

## Honorable mention

By Brenner Logan, age 13

Under that beautiful Georgia sky,  
Is where I long to be,  
Where the air is clean, and the water as sweet as pie.  
Oh, how I long again to be under that Georgia sky.

At the camp, where the weather is mild,  
My grandfather taught me the trades of the wild.  
For it is at that camp where it would seem I was raised,  
The great trees winding and twisting like a maze.

While I enjoy the company of the creatures of the wild,  
I enjoy my Grandpa's company more.  
But when I was out of courage and the going got rough,  
My Dad was always there to make me feel tough.

I remember that hot Georgia day,  
I remember that clear day on the lake,  
I remember getting my line caught on the thorns,  
I remember figuring out how I missed,  
I remember learning how to fish.

## Honorable mention

### Music

By Emily Schneider, age 14

The headphones in my ears  
Fill my head with magic sounds  
My feet move to the beat  
Like the wind dancing through the air  
I embrace the wonders of the melody  
And the tempo of each song  
As I stand here in thought  
I recall the memories  
That fill me up with cozy and warm feelings  
That I relive again and again  
Through the sounds  
That echo through my head

## Honorable mention

### Heartbeat

By Emily Schneider, age 14

One, two, three  
It quickens when you are near  
Four, five, six  
I start to blush when you glance at me  
Seven, eight, nine  
My eyes can't stop gazing at your's  
Ten, eleven, twelve  
I wonder if you feel the same  
Thirteen, fourteen, fifteen  
I then realize  
You do the same to her