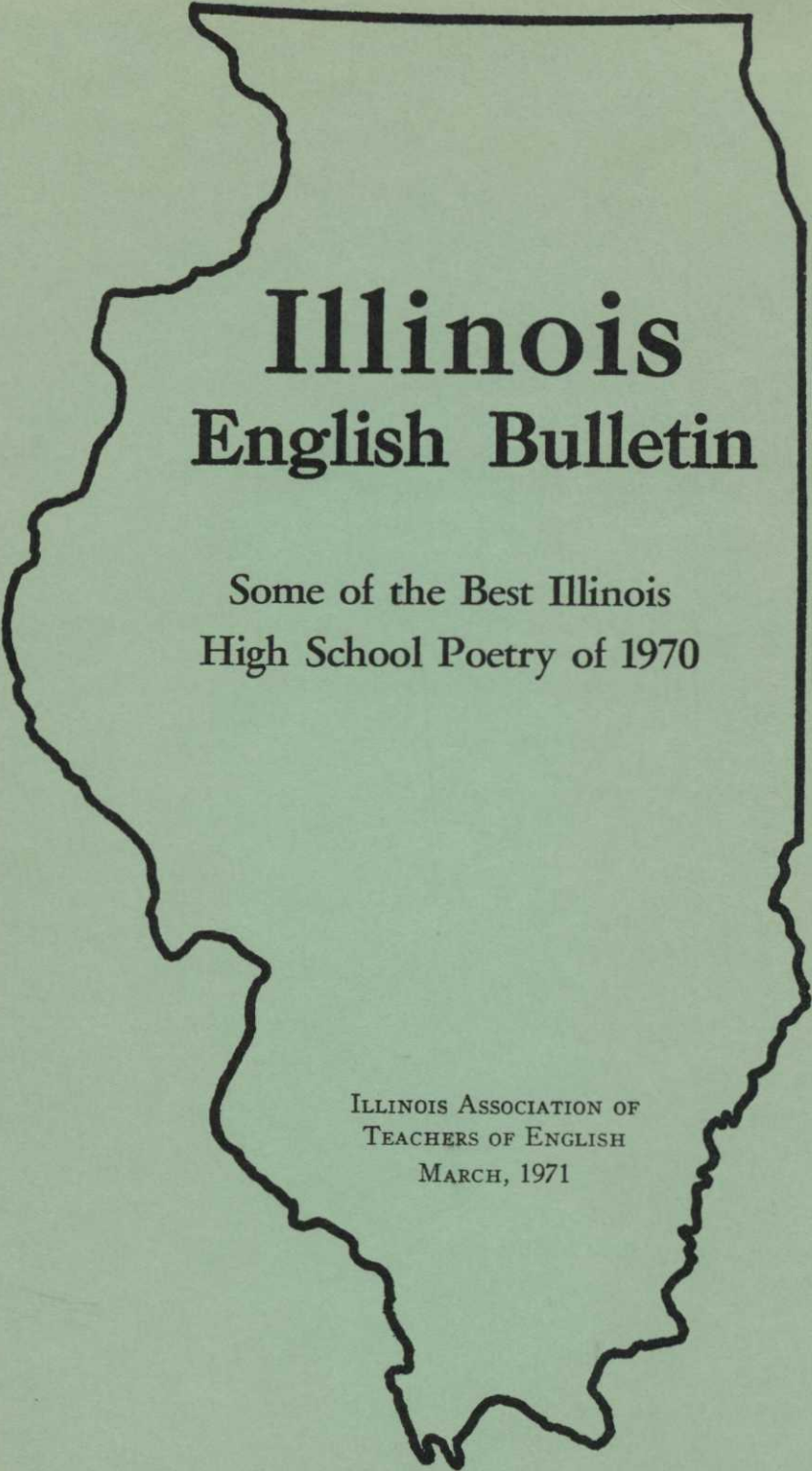




Illinois English Bulletin

Some of the Best Illinois
High School Poetry of 1970

ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF
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Some of the Best Illinois High School Poetry of 1970

Selected by the Department of English of Loyola University of Chicago

Judges: James D. Barry, Betty Beery, David Canepa, John Dolis, Raymond Griffith, Harold Hild, Donna Holy, Matthew Ignoffo, Howard Warchol

This is the second consecutive year in which Loyola has judged this contest, and we confess to being disappointed. At what? At the facts that the number of poems submitted is down over two hundred, that only forty-three schools submitted poems this year, that 41 per cent of the poems submitted were from only three schools. What can be done to encourage more teachers and students to interest themselves in this yearly competition?

What about the 420 poems that we did read? Now there is another story. How can we express our response briefly and meaningfully? Try this! We put aside our concern that other colleges and universities will accuse us of monopolizing this pleasure, and we hereby apply for the honor of being judges again next year. Reading the poetry of the high-school students of Illinois is a great experience.

OL' BLIND BOY

So sits ol' Blind Boy
 led to the street by Jack the cripple.
 Feels his way down, down in the doorway,
 settles himself on the splintered step,
 grabs up Baby and cradles her gently,
 pets her iron body once, then
 walks his fingers around her chromium
 lace until her pick is found,
 bends down his ear and, testing her softly,
 cranks her up and cranks her down
 til she's just right.

Then . . .

HARD!

(Woke up in the mornin')

BANGandup

(Blues dancin' round my bed)

Take 'er uptown and bring 'er down slow

(Aw-ww BLUES dancin' round my bed)

Hang-a-round-a-while

(Went to the table —

the blues was all in my bread)

Hit 'er HARD

bring 'er uP

squeeze 'er down til she hurts . . .

All day long with bus-fume nostrils
 and colorless concrete eyes of black
 and dream-filled ears
 of clanking construction workers
 of cursing taxicabs
 and Baby's ripsaw, bell-bouncing voice
 sits ol' Blind Boy
 wailin' his blues, head thrown back
 talkin' to the sidewalk
 with his duckbill cap 'tween his feet.

JOEL MABUS, *twelfth*, Belleville High School—West
 Audrey Henry, teacher

LEAVES AND ASHES

there goes another one.
it falls lightly; unnoticeable to many others.
i think that leaf was brown.
well, he doesn't seem unhappy;
 so why are some leaves wet with dew?
look at him, he's dry, crisp, and wrinkled.
now there goes just a little green leaf.
the ones that are falling — they're the
 guys who are going to join their mates.
they're looking back now; some leaves drop off,
 some hang on loosely as if
 trying to keep on the tree.
yeah, that's the way it happens.
 the few that fall are raked up and burned —
 soon to be forgotten.
i don't understand it.
some are still dropping while the others are being raked.
and even more are still in the tree — as if
 they didn't even notice
all right. if they all are burned together
 and give off the same message while burning —
then why can't they be thought of the
 same way during their time on the tree?
they've got to be all on one kind of a tree — maple, oak, walnut.
the leaves are different within themselves —
 color, shape, size.
but, man, what's wrong? the family tree,
 i mean, that certain tree is
 only one — like it can't be
 three different kinds of trees
the leaves —
 they burn,
 say goodbye,
and only leave us ashes for memories
of their beauty.

DEBBY DAYTON, *eleventh, Unity High School, Tolono*
Erville O'Beirne, teacher

EXPERIMENT

if all is dormant one night
and your thoughts turn to full moons
and graveyards
and you really want to know what it's like
slide out of bed and take a walk
into the dark corridor against a wall
where nobody will hear
go till you come to a door
go put your fingers on the knob and
turn until it opens
then step inside and reach down
reach down into the inky black
feel your hand into a corner. . . .

CAREN COUNCIL, *tenth, Downers Grove High School—North*
Byron Lott, *teacher*

i wonder

i wonder why no one can see
how futile life can really be —
not life as such, but little things
like war and running round in rings.
circles go but never end;
lines go too but never bend.

i wonder why so many times,
men like circles, men like lines,
were ever born into this earth.
were they mistaken at their birth?
rings go on and on and on,
lines go on, no bend, ancon.

i wonder why no one can see
how futile rings and lines can be.

KIRSTEN MALMQUIST, *ninth, Evanston Township High School*
Gay Berardi, *teacher*

THE TREE IS GREEN

Spurt.
 A seed is planted.
 WOW
 sexual attraction
 But it germinates.
 We talk and like.

Branches spring:
 Remember
 the winter we didn't have a car and had to walk home
 at midnight and I fell in the middle of Ogden
 and car

 BEEPED and you picked me up

 it was your birthday and I made us matching
 tie-dyed shirts and that lopsided cake
 with the brown bananas

 we took your brothers and sisters trick or treating
 and the lady said ARETHEYALLYOURS and I said
 NAWWEHAVEMOREATHOME,
 and you smirked and slapped me on the butt

 you popped out of the closet with a bunch of red
 carnations
 and I cried.

 Now we love,
 and it grows big, deep roots.
 I wonder,
 Will a lumberjack come strolling along and chop down
 our tree,
 or
 Will it grow old and yellow and crunchy
 and die
 peacefully.

MARY SUSMILCH, *twelfth, J. Sterling Morton High School-West,*
Berwyn
 Kay Cotteleer, teacher

FRUIT

You haven't known a woman
Until you've known an apple.
I mean, (that is)
Worms corrupt;
Absolute worms corrupt absolutely
(As opposed to unabsolute worms
with which we are all well familiar);
Conversely,
i.e. on the other side of the apple
(or worm — as it were, of course)
DDT can corrupt just as absolutely
As your most absolute ablutions.
The trick of all this being
(of course)
Or that is — most obviously —
The reason one must experience
Apples in this here *chere* life,
Before the real nitty-gritty-as-they-say
Chances past your horizon
(As they are so well known to do.)

Not meaning to be obscene
Never, on my mother's stack of Bibles
Of which she has not many, but
Would nonetheless like to think so —
Would I be obscene.
Obscenity is next to godliness;
I will close exactly where I opened
Which being exactly where I closed
Is nowhere:
You haven't known a man
Until you've known a banana.

ALICE BECKER, *eleventh, Evanston Township High School*
Brannon Forbes, teacher

BETSY SMITH

When you think about it,
It sort of makes you aware.
What I mean is . . .
Well, she was in her seat last Wednesday,
And here it is Monday . . .
She's not absent.
She's dead.

TERRY LEVINE, *tenth, Niles Township High School-North, Skokie*
Kathryn Chopra, teacher

A FLOWER

She lifts her head
And through half-closed eyes
Sees the Sun.
Yawning and stretching
She awakens
Reaching vainly for the light
That taunts her
Daring her to come nearer and nearer
Until
She reaches him.
He pulls her trembling to himself
And then
Relentlessly
Rips her apart
Giving her beauty to the sky.
She remains open
Vulnerable to the wind and the rain
Until
He frees her
Letting her sleep
Exhausted
Until Spring.

MARTHA BECKSTRAND, *eleventh, Guilford High School, Rockford*
Jeanne Claeys, teacher

ROCKS I

Take a stone from the shore near the lake —
An amber, red, or green stone.
Glistening, it shines with water's
Wet blessing.
Like a flower, it fades in your hand.
When taken from its source,
It becomes a piece of sand.
A man pulled from his beginnings,
Surrounded, alone,
Dried, nude of color,
Is only an indifferent addition to the beach.

ROCKS II

Now I take these stones
And examine them with great care
While they're still wet.
(Treasures like these are so often overlooked.)
I wait, then, to see
How they look after being taken from
Their clear complement of water.
(Wet stones are so often transfigured in the sun.)
I put them on a big flat rock,
Steaming in opposition to the heat,
And I wait till they dry.
The stones that retain their pinkness or greenness
Or shine
(Which is most miraculous),
Are put into my pocket.
The rest are thrown back into the lake
After my puny but decisive judgment
Upon their worth.

SAMUEL HAMMER, *eleventh, Evanston Township High School*
Marcia Adelman, *teacher*

HATE AND ANGER

combine
in a sparked, sizzling stutter
like fire and ice.
Hissing and spitting,
they fight,
always losing,
smouldered, melted, and choked
by Love's warm tears.

KAREN BRUCE, *eighth, Highland Junior High School, Libertyville*
James McCauley, teacher

H I S S E S !

December 7th
Mrs. Adler
Walking down
California Avenue
Startled scared
Heard hiss
Accursed cry
Mournful wail
Lost terrified
Speckled spotted
Supposedly extinct
Beaked bird
Wailed sadly
Police push
Photographers snap
Pathetic bird
Net
Zoo

ANDREW STALLER, *ninth, Highland Park High School*
Laurel Burrows and Anne Sara, teachers

McHOULIGAN'S TREE

(With acknowledgment to Dr. Seuss)

"Young boy," laughed the milkman,
"This just can't be!
You'll never see birds
From McHouligan's Tree!

"The tree is too big
And it has no good leaves;
When some people see it
They laugh but then sneeze!

"You might see a plane
Or maybe a can.
You may see a gopher
But, hear me, young man . . .
You could sit thirty years
And look very purdy,
But fall over backwards,
Before comes a birdie."

"Maybe," answered Jerry,
"You're possibly right.
I've been here five days
And not seen one in flight.
There might be no birds,
But then there just might.

"This could be a tree that I've heard of from friends,
One of those trees that just never ends.
An old crumpled tree that starts here and grows,
Right up through the clouds, and then where, who knows?

"This could be a stalk
That goes ever so high,
Connecting McHouligan's Tree
With the sky.

"I could see a bird
With rotary feathers,
Or maybe a bird
That predicts the weather.

"I might see a young bird
With bony wings,
Or an old gray one
That can hardly sing.

"There could be a bird
With a long drawn-out nose,
Or maybe a bird
That sits down and sews.

"I might see a bird
That just cannot smile,
Or, maybe a bird
That has flown from the Nile.

"There could be some penguins
Up from the North Pole,
All dressed in tuxedos
And shoes on their toes.

"There might be some flying
From Peru today,
To get here tomorrow
Now what do you say?

"There might be a bird,
That moves ever so fast,
That when he's a comin',
He's already passed.

"There could be some flying
From far away Spain;
Then when they arrive
They'll decide to remain.

"A bird from the South
That flies ever so slow,
He will arrive,
But when, I don't know.

"The sky is filled with millions of birds,
You're laughing now, but don't be absurd!
They're all a comin', you wait and see,
They're all a comin', just to this tree!

"I said it once and I'll say it again,
If I sit here awhile and stay loose and free,
Who knows what I'll see from McHouligan's Tree?"

PAUL GUNDRY, *twelfth, Arlington High School, Arlington Heights*
Virginia Harrod, teacher

TO A MOSQUITO

You:
You think you're so great
going around and sucking blood.
Well —
you're not!
You think you can
dominate the world,
zapping around wherever
you want.
Well —
you can't!
You believe you are
super colossal
because you
multiply in the billions.
Well —
we're catching up!

BARBARA PIRANI, *tenth, Evanston Township High School*
Mary Richeimer, teacher

HUNGRY WESTERN

One night, while sitting in a chair,
My eyes transfixed on T.V.'s glare,
The cowboy jumped out from the set,
Asked if his chow was ready yet.
I could only stare . . .
Of fantasies I have my share.

He sat down by the table there
And for his grub began to swear.
I tried to make him leave by belching,
As my courage was quickly squelching.
"It's a figment in the air . . ."
Of fantasies I have my share.

I've always felt that we should care
For guests and others in our lair.
All doubt suspended for the time,
I fixed a pot of tea with lime;
We also split a pear . . .
Of fantasies I have my share.

When done, he threatened: "Feed my mare."
Now that was more than I could bear.
"We have no food here for a horse
And though you are a dream, of course,
That's no cause to be unfair . . ."
Of fantasies I have my share.

The cowboy grabbed me by the hair:
"Now listen, buster, don't be square.
I may be something that you ate,
Your stomach can't appreciate,
But you're getting quite a scare . . ."
Of fantasies I have my share.
"You're giving me a mighty dare
To loose my anger like a bear!!"
Above my head his clenched fist rose,
I turned, preparing for the blows.
They never came.

They never came.

I waited; peeked; he wasn't there.
But on the screen I was aware
Of a cowboy-actor with an evil stare.

... Indeed, my fantasies are rare.

STEVEN HIRSCH, *tenth, Highland Park High School*
Thomas Mellonig, *teacher*

PLOP

the circus flavored candy-coated color
with little red peppermints all over ice
cream is now slowly, very slowly trick
ling down your manicured chin and
seeping thru the hole you bit in
the bottom of your ice-cream
cone and did you ever think
of what a pleasing plop
ping sound it makes
when it hits your
moms new provin
cial blue shag
\$10.35 a

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t

carpet ?

ADRIENNE FARB, *ninth, Highland Park High School*
Laurel Burrows and Anne Sara, *teachers*

LAMP LIGHT

it was my first
chance to be
someone beautiful.
i doubt
i looked the part
sitting on the cold steps
with you
in the lamp light. . . .
some of them
laughed
though it didn't matter
then.
but why should we care —
they didn't —
not even enough
to smile.
you spoke of cops
and hate and dope —
(how the speed had
messed you up
but that wasn't your
hang-up now.)
and of a girl
who once said she
loved you,
but now you wonder
if the world has
enough room
for that kind of
fairy tale lore.
you turned to me
expecting an old man's
naïve comment
but instead
at the ripe age of fifteen
i was more tempted
to touch you.
you shifted nervously

in your armor
of blue denim.
the world could never
get us down
because we had each other.
having someone is
the only thing that matters
anyway.
i'm so glad i haven't
seen you since.
it's good that you
remember me when
i played the role best.
anyway,
life's observed best
in the lamp light. . . .

LINDA WELSH, *ninth, Downers Grove High School-North*
John Fuhrken, *teacher*

WAVES

The day slips behind the earth,
and in its place
comes darkness —
not total darkness,
but a glow that deepens
with the moon splashed soft
across the sky.
The pure clean waves
light the depths of black water
as they rush
to shore in broken lines,
only to fade when their course ends
like dreams fade in minds
and disappear with whispers.
Drops in the waves of thoughts
made meaningless
by countless other drops
in countless other waves
of countless other seas.

If you stand in the thoughts
as one stands in water
And let them break over you
like waves over your body,
you may soak in a dream
without drowning.
And if you try hard to forget
the war, the suffering, the hate,
you can almost filter beauty
through the screen of your mind,
and hold the dream
in the world of reality.
The ugliness is masked by nature
as a bandage over a wound.
A dream can hold the wound together,
helping it heal,
as waves heal cracks
in the dry sand
or thoughts plug holes
in an empty mind.

SARA PRISLAND, *eleventh, Evanston Township High School*
Marcia Adelman, teacher

MORALITY'S QUESTION

I am one in a crowd.
Different people around me
All the same. Buildings loom,
Tower over me, grinning in the shine of
Polished windows. People die
Every day, don't they?

An orphan stands crying in the corner.
"Why seems it so particular with you?"
"I know not 'seems'," he says. And
There is no corner, only
Shadows, a mirror of imagination.
Shut up, who gives a damn anyway?

I walk nowhere and . . .
 No one walks with me. Stop.
 The crowd flows around me; my
 Voice is lost in the scream of the
 Wind that envelopes and obscures me.

There is no form in blackness. A stormy
 Night holds no beauty. Something is wrong.
 In the dark I cry, no truth. Where did it start,
 Where will it end, who's to blame . . .

Who turned off the lights?

BARRY BOYKIN, *eleventh, Kenwood High School, Chicago*
 Lianne Clorfene, teacher

IT DOESN'T PAY

Sing a song of sixpence
 A pocket full of grass,
 Four and twenty hippies
 Have ruined their past.
 What will happen tomorrow?
 Will they smoke some more?
 Chances are they will
 But it might become a bore.

The Dad was in the courthouse
 Talking with his lawyer;
 The Hippies were in the prison cells
 High on Marijuana;
 The mother was in the jailhouse
 Talking to her son,
 She was very worried
 But what is done, is done.

Taken from the Nursery Rhyme
 "Sing a Song of Sixpence"

TERRI BOND, *eighth, Northwood Junior High School, Highland Park*
 Joyce Hazelkorn, teacher

AN ANGLO-SAXON VERSION OF
"JACK AND JILL"

Jack was with Jill; they went for a jaunt;
They packed a small pitcher; for water they wished.
Jack met his misfortune, Jill soon met the same;
Wyrd led the way, to their worsening wound.

CAROLYN YOUNG, *twelfth, West Frankfort High School*
Afton Wolfe, teacher

DAYBREAK

The New Year lifted the window
And I looked out.
A train passed
A milkman passed
A yellow spinster passed.

(Do you hear the angelus bells?
In this light?
Go back to bed,
It's only half-past night.)

Far down this street
One door from "Al and Sue's,"
Sleep two old well-mannered Jews;
On the floor above,
On an unsoiled bed
Weeps a once-known
Mender of Shoes.

The musician, though past his prime,
Places history on a music-stand
And flutes a plea in three-four time.

Further up the street
A laundress stirs;
— Lord, that dream.
It scared me stiff!

Reaching out for his bi-focals
The Reverend finds a young-bird's will
Freshly laid on the window sill.
— O God, not that again,
As he washes his fingers in last night's rain.

Widow Mulberry
Is up earliest.
Dentureless
She glances (nervous!)
Up and down the street.
Seeing no one, she
Grates her throat
And with astounding force
Spits forth.

(lowering the sash
She chuckles to herself
Made an extra inch today!)

Ah! how cooling!
It's the early morning drizzle!
(Placing the frying pan on the fire
She sets her larded thoughts to sizzle.)

So wakes this street
In the lane of the martyr, and of the
Mason, and of the holy most
As it was in the beginning was now.

STEPHEN PRINS, *twelfth*, Downers Grove High School—North
Judith Carithers, teacher

A ZOO

A spider
climbs the wall.
Like a
polished engine
he
scales the bricks
in a
straight
line.
My eyes
glisten as snow
and my mind
prays
for his downfall.
He almost
reaches the
top,
when I knock
him to the ground
where he
starts climbing
diagonally.

MICHAEL WINFIELD, *eleventh, Evanston Township High School*
Larry Olson, teacher

SUMMER GARDEN

Summer garden:
Gigantic flower shop bulging with color,
Patch of serene blue forget-me-nots,
Glistening orange dahlias,
Baby-soft violets,
Blood-red roses,
Blinding yellow zinnias.

Summer garden:
Beauty, life, death —
Death at the fall;
No bees pollinating,
No candy-store fragrance,
No joy in my soul.

A flower is life,
Implanted seed,
Tender, loving care,
Blossom erupting into birth,
Stem of life cut.

Harvest . . .
Bouquet? or
The Fire?

SANDRA MORTON, *St. Teresa Academy, East St. Louis*
Kitty Gleeson, teacher

THE SCUM ON TOP OF THE OVALTINE

an icky floating witch-wrinkled skin
is on top of my milk
covering, canvas-like, the whole top
so i have to touch it to get it off
it's only milk don't be silly
oh, no not milk no sir milk doesn't get all
plastic and gooey
milk is porcelain-smooth and doesn't
glob crawl all the way to your stomach

awful slimy sucky blob on my plate now
(dare to touch it!)
i wonder.
if i left it alone and turned out the lights
would it crawl back into my cup,
spread itself like a smily-spider
riding the waves?

if i forgot and . . . drank the
viscous seaweed
would it creep and slide in my stomach
out through my arteries
waltz along my bones
until it came to my one and only brain
and wrap itself around like wet mold . . .
attach itself and squeeze and squeeze until. . .

no! i'll be good!!

CAREN COUNCIL, *tenth, Downers Grove High School-North*
Byron Lott, teacher

THOUGHTS OF AN OLD FRIEND

Thoughts go streaming through my mind,
Like wind sweeping leaves away,
Then stopping . . . and continuing
The days we spent together were too short,
Too meaningless,
Filled with only one motive: to have fun.
Sometimes we would spend one whole day,
Wondering about
The water and the sea,
And how did the waves form?
Why did the popsicles melt,
When you were only halfway home?

Somedays we didn't see each other ;
Like on rainy days
That filled the streets with mud
And made the park look different,
Almost unrecognizable;
Sometimes we didn't talk at all,
We sat instead,
Like pendulums on the swings.

MARY THOMSON, *twelfth, Evanston Township High School*
Robert Workman, teacher

Honorable Mention

Arlington Heights, Arlington High School: "We All Have Our Little Up's and Downs," by Frank H. Constantino (Virginia Harrod)

Berwyn, J. Sterling Morton West High School: "A True Story," by Kathy Adamovich (Mary Riden)

Carbondale, Carbondale Community High School: "Interruption," by Margaret Ray (Mary Sasse)

Centralia, Centralia High School: "Bicycle," by Chuck Wright (Genevieve Weaver)

Chicago, Kenwood High School: "The Elements," by Harriet Isenberg (Alta Blakely)

Evanston, Evanston Township High School: "The Grasshopper," by Sue Hufford (Mary Richeimer); "Untitled," by Barbara Van Kirk (Robert Workman)

Macomb, Macomb Senior High School: "The Earth's Life," by Carey Lewis (Dixie Skiles)

Rockford, Guilford High School: "Untitled," by De Tyler (Jeanne Claeys)

Streator, Streator Township High School: "Love," by Lori Setchel (Lucille Tkach)

Yorkville, Yorkville Junior High School: "Dusk," by Anita Benstine (Madeline Mead); "English Is," by Ken Hansen (Madeline Mead)

