

## First Place: Poetry

"growing up"

By Upasana Shrestha

I miss being ten  
Of feeling a month stretch out In the summer  
as we lazed around while eating sweet watermelons  
Sticky hands, wide smiles  
Now it feels like the months and years run  
faster than I can keep up  
I miss being small but feeling big  
Of thinking that I could do anything  
Of thinking that eighteen-year-olds were adults  
That adults were people who had life figured out  
When now I know all adults are only still learning  
I miss being a kid  
the hopes and dreams I dreamt  
Of those never being bounded by realism  
Of not knowing any barriers like money or nationality  
I miss seeing everything in black and white  
Now everything is murky  
There are no heroes or villains  
Just flawed people capable of both good and bad

Sometimes the bad shakes me

I miss thinking my parents were invincible

I do not know exactly when I noticed that they were aging

The wrinkles in their faces creeped slowly

In the years that passed by quickly

Until one day I realized that the tables had turned

I miss not knowing that they don't have all the answers

I wish I didn't know that they are only mortals

I miss thinking life as unbreakable

of not knowing

how sudden sickness or death can shake your normal 'boring' life

of not feeling the fragility of existence

of being fearless

I miss the wonder I had in silly things

The joy I felt in my dad buying us French fries at a restaurant

After we'd go hiking on a summer day

What luxury it felt like!

Now I can buy all the French fries I want

But it doesn't taste the same