

**FIRST NATIONS POETRY
CONTEST WINNERS
2018, 2019, 2020**



Volume 4

A collection of our Aboriginal Poetry Contest Winning Poems for the years: 2018, 2019, 2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One: Winners from 2018

Winners from the Primary Grades

Winners from the Intermediate Grades

Winners from the Secondary Grades

Chapter Two: Winners from 2019

Winners from the Primary Grades

Winners from the Intermediate Grades

Winners from the Secondary Grades

Chapter Three: Winners from 2020

Winners from the Primary Grades

Winners from the Intermediate Grades

Winners from French Immersion

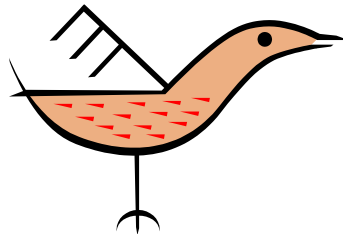
Winners from the Secondary Grades



Chapter One
2018

Primary Grades

(Kindergarten, Grade 1, 2, 3)



1st Place Winner Primary Grades 2018
Elijah Moyah
Grade 1, Forest Grove Elementary School
Teacher: Jenny Dahl

My Kokum

My Kokum is Strong
My Kokum is Brave
She is the Best Kokum
My Kokum wants to Teach Me
All about the Cree
I am Cree like Her
I hope I can be Strong
I hope I can be Brave



**2nd Place Winner Primary Grades 2018
The Kindergarten Class
Marie Sharpe Elementary School
Teachers: Ms. Isnardy/Mrs. Goodliffe**

Dream Catcher

Circle, hoop, string, suede, feathers, beads

Looks like a spider web

Catches bad dreams

Please let me have sweet dreams

Dream Catcher



**3rd Place Winner Primary Grades 2018
Corban Moyah
Grade 3, Forest Grove Elementary School
Teacher: Jenny Dahl**

My Daddy the Bear

My Daddy has the Spirit of a Bear

He is Powerful and Strong

He gives me Direction

Because the Creator made us Strong



4th Place Winner Primary Grades 2018
Emmeline Theriault
Nature Kindergarten c/o Marie Sharpe Elementary School
Teacher: Kirsten Hamm

Blue Sky

Clouds

Shape

Humongous

Pink and Orange Sundown

Blue Sky

Grey clouds

Blue Sky



**Honorable Mention Primary Grades 2018
Logan Sache
Grade 3, Cataline Elementary School
Teacher: Kirsten Hamm**

I Hear

I hear...

The wind howling

In my ears.

I see...

The trees blowing

In winds around me.

I hear...

The music of my people.



Honorable Mention Primary Grades 2018
Elijah Alec
Grade 3, Naghtaneqed Elementary/Jr. Secondary School
Teacher: Dancing Water Lulua

Hunting

Shots, knowledge,

Tradition, the way it was

Grouse, rabbit, lion

Wildlife and wild places,

Celebrations

Outdoorsmen respect Mother Nature

Thanks to Great Spirit

Till next time – Family Fun - Share



2018

Intermediate Grades

4-6



1st Place Winner Intermediate Grades 2018
Soren Brunch
Grade 4, Mountview Elementary School
Teacher: Ms. Peel

The Deer

It was a sunny summer day.

I saw a deer munching green leaves.

Alone, big, brown, round eyed doe.

I felt happy and excited.

It looked so cool.

A twig snapped.

She looked at me and ran away.



**2nd Place Winner Intermediate Grades 2018
Piper Kosolofski
Grade 4, Sacred Heart Catholic School
Teacher: Mrs. Wallace**

A Feather in the Wind

**If I were a feather in the wind,
I would float like I'm in water,
If I were a feather in the wind,
People would watch me as I fly past,
If I were a feather in the wind,
I would float down to the ground,
Like a parachute,
If I were a feather in the wind,
It would be wonderful!**



**3rd Place Winner Intermediate Grades 2018
Lane Carson
Grade 4, Mountview Elementary School
Teacher: Ms. Peel**

Living off the Land

**Ten dead spruce trees,
What do we make?
A cozy shack is what we build.**



**A Half eaten moose's
Bones are full of unmade knives.**



**A Bison grazing is
Just another
Warm cozy
Blanket.**



**Living off the land
Is what
We do,
Us,
First Nations People.**

**4th Place Winner Intermediate Grades 2018
Cash Sellars
Grade 5, 150 Mile House Elementary School
Teacher: Mrs. Burns**

I am Home

I am Home because I can smell the wildlife around me.

I am Home because I can see the Coastal Mountains.

I am Home because I feel the love around me.

**I am Home because I can hear the wind swishing through the
trees.**

I am Home because I can touch the moss.

I am Home because I am around my people.



**Honorable Mention Intermediate Grades 4-6
Eli Warren
Grade 4, Mountview Elementary School
Teacher: Ms. Peel**

Chipmunk Play

**Three tiny, striped chipmunks,
High up in the trees.
Chasing each other,
Looks like fun.
Racing down the trunks and speeding across the grass.
Flinching, chittering and calling to each other.
Reminding me of my brother, my sister and I.**



Honorable Mention Intermediate Grades 4-6
Jayden Fuller
Grade 6, Marie Sharpe Elementary School
Teacher: Mrs. Lonson-Hoffman

Wolf Pack

Wolf pack, wolf pack strong and free
Wolf pack, wolf pack feeding thee,
Wolf pack, wolf pack standing together
Wolf pack, wolf pack strong forever!



Honorable Mention Intermediate Grades 4-6
Jacy Case
Grade 5, Tsideldel School
Teacher: Ms. Moray Kennedy

Family

Exhilarating, happy,

Gweniny,bedz: nezun, sunahn inkwiel, aba beth

Nunisdiny, sequnh

My People.



Honorable Mention Intermediate Grades 4-6
Dorothy Squinas
Grade 4, Anahim Lake Elementary/Jr. Sec. School
Teacher: Mr. Walsh

Squeezed my eyes shut
Taken away
Eat the vomit
“Please don’t hurt me. Lessons.
Grabbed my arm.
Scream. Terrified
Yelped in pain. Thwack!
Devil’s language
Ashamed of yourself!
Tears streamed down my face.
I wasn’t ashamed
I was proud

Never forget who you are

“Show me!”
I’m trying to remember



Honorable Mention Intermediate Grades 4-6

**Austin Toney,
Grade 5, Anahim Lake Elementary/Jr. Sec. School
Teacher: Mr. Walsh**

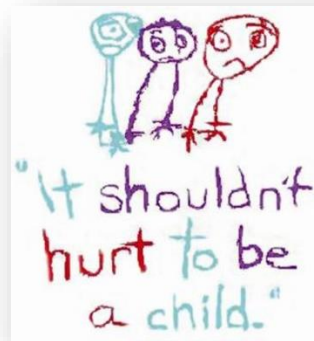
Thwap

Ashamed.

Bedpan with hot coals
No escape
Vomit
Gag
Thwack!
Scream

**“Miigwetch gayegiin”
Devil’s language!**

Shoved hard
Terrified
Ashamed.



2018

MIDDLE GRADES

7-9



1st Place Winner Middle Grades 2018
Olivia Kearney
Grade 7, Horsefly Elementary/Jr. Secondary School
Teacher: Mrs. Ivey

Tell Tales

The tales tell of many things
Of raven stealing boxed up sun
The sea wolf helping
Hunt for cod
Of clams with men inside
All of these passed off as lies
But what if they are true



1st Place (tie) Winner Middle Grades 2018
Olivia Kearney
Grade 7, Horsefly Elementary/Jr. Secondary School
Teacher: Mrs. Ivey

The Raven's Sadness

Men are logging
The raven's trees
He sees this knowing
In his heart
He should not have
Freed that light



2nd Place Winner Middle Grades 2018
Colby Ostrom
Grade 9, Lake City Secondary School (Columneetza Campus)
Teacher: Ms. Hill

Changes

Europe colonized
We have left you with little
It's time to fix it



3rd Place Winner Middle Grades 2018
Lauryn Marklinger,
Grade 7, Grow
Teacher: Bev Dawes

Beavers

Beavers are special,
Cutting down willows and trees,
Patience is key



4th Place Winner Middle Grades 2018
Rachel Shaw,
Grade 7, 100 Mile Elementary School
Submitted by: Penny Reid

The Wind Sings

As the wind sings its song
My paddle hits the water
Drifting on the silent sea
To nature's beautiful melody

With the beat of the drum
And all the voices filled with love
The trees sway to the music
And the stars shine above

You can hear us from far away
So many nights and days
The songs from long ago
Passed down so we know.

When the wind sings it's song
I remember the music
That me and my family sign
Even though I am far away
I can still hear home



**Honorable Mention for Middle Grades
Nathan Cisecki, Grade 9
Lake City Secondary School (Columnneetza Campus)
Teacher: Ms. Hill**

“My Day”

*I don't really want to write this, but I guess I don't really have
a choice*

I sit in class all day but I don't feel like I have a voice,

*I try to do my best, but when I'm not focused I lose myself in
thought.*

I think about running in the fields and hunting in the woods,

I dream about the skies and flying up high,

Of playing in the trees and splashing in the streams.

To sum it all up, I miss my home and playing with my teams,

*I miss playing with my dog and running wild through the
world, and most of all I miss hunting with my grandpa who I
may never see again,*

*I miss him because he is the only one who might love me until
I see my own bed.*

**Honorable Mention for Middle Grades
Wrenn Yano, Grade 9**

Peter Skene Ogden Secondary School
Submitted by: Penny Reid

Dear Government

Dear Government,

Do you have blankets to spare?
For those with black and braided hair
For they look at you and do not see
Someone who can be trusted with their needs
For those who look at you with sorrowful eyes
Because like eagles, time flies
And their needs are not looked at
Like the problems of blue eyed blonde haired babes
And they are taught to live with the conditions you give them
And where will we be then, when bright minds are spoiled by
substances around
My people want to be proud

Sincerely

The Broken, Missing, Invisible



2018

SECONDARY GRADES

10-12



1st Place Winner Secondary Grades 2018
Selina Farkas
Grade 10, Lake City Secondary School (WL Campus)
Teacher: Mrs. MacKinnon

The Old Ways

Watch the wind blow gently through the trees
Hear the whispers of our ancestors on the evening breeze
Remember the old ways

Watch the patterns of nature, cherish all the seasons
Hear the ancient stories; learn the lessons and the reasons
Remember the old ways

Watch the yearly cycles of the birds, fish, and beasts
Hear the drum and voices blend at the lavish feasts
Remember the old ways

Watch the Elders smile as the children play and sing
Hear the children laughing at the first signs of spring
Remember the old ways

Preserve the natural world that has allowed us to survive
Recall the lessons we have learned to keep us all alive
Remember the old ways



2nd Place Winner Secondary Grades 2018
Emma Stanchfield
Grade 11, Lake City Secondary School (WL Campus)

Teacher: Mrs. MacKinnon

Our Past Does Not Define Us

Equality.

That's what everyone is preaching.

Is it possible?

Not with our society today.

We share the same land.

We are a Nation.

Why does race have to define who we are?

We all aim to achieve better.

We can be better.

Our past should not dictate our lives today.

But it does nevertheless.

What makes it okay to judge people for their lineage?

Nothing.

We should be treated for how we are today.

Not for our reputation.

Not for our color.

Not for our choices.

Not for the ones of those before us. (Cont'd)

We are our own.

We are equal.

Why can this not be seen?

Open your eyes and see what others do.

Step into our shoes.

For then you may come to see our side.

Blind you will no longer be.

Our past shall not return.

It shall only be learned from.

We share the same land.

We share the same Nation.

We can accomplish equality.



3rd Place Winner Secondary Grades 2018
Jack Zavitz
Grade 11, Lake City Secondary School (WL Campus)
Teacher: Mrs. MacKinnon

Past the Reserve

Quiet.

Moonlight reflects off slightly rusted tin boats.

Dogs bark every few short seconds.

Three to be exact.

I use them to count the minutes.

Headlights blind me periodically as I trudge with not sorrow nor
glee past the diversity of houses and sheds.

Staring at the array of calm yet intense billowing of yellow
Leaves ripe with the distinct smell of autumn.

As long as I'm gazing over fields and dirt roads lit only
by the stars above; I feel at peace.

I know it's not perfect there, but at night it looks quite stunning.

A whole community surrounded by trees and hills and culture.

It's quiet.
Quiet and Reserved.



4th Place Winner Secondary Grades 2018

Amber Watson
Grade 11, Lake City Secondary School (WL Campus)
Teacher: Mrs. MacKinnon

He called himself a “Redskin”....

Although I found it alarming I mostly found it charming. To be fair, his skin was mostly red you could say, not like a sunburn, more like a pigment of his past, the color of his genes.

“Lone Star” A nickname from his love for wolves.

Some nights he’d stand in the backyard and howl at the moon.

Although I thought it was kooky I never found it spooky for it lulled me to sleep on nights the moon was too bright.

A “father” to many not only his children.

“There’s no bad children just bad parents” he used to tell me.

Although a tough accusation it brought me to a realization that he was probably right.

“Lonnie Widows” was his name.

Although he’s passed he asked that he’d never be forgotten.



Chapter Two

Winning Poems from

2019



1st Place Winner Primary Grades (Kindergarten – Grade 3)
Asher Drift,
Grade 3, 150 Mile Elementary School
Teacher: Mrs. Bernier

The Bonfire

Dancing around the bonfire
The flames make flickering shadows
The moonlight falling upon us.
The owls hooting like mysterious voices calling for help
The wind rustling the trees like they want to join in the dance
The fire warming me up
While the dance continues



2nd Place Winner Primary Grades (Kindergarten – Grade 3)
Olivia Guichon,
Grade 3, Marie Sharpe Elementary School
Teachers: Ms. Goertz & Ms. Goodliffe

Moccasins

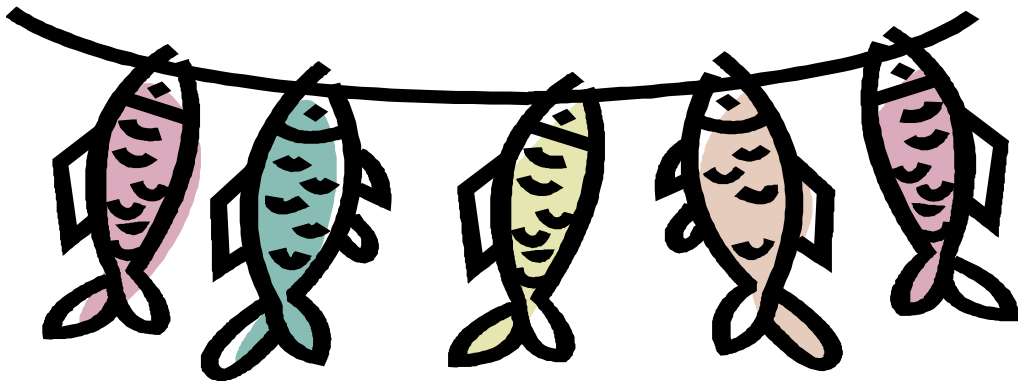
They feel smooth like fur
My little sister's moccasins
Colors are red and green
And blue and yellow beads
It sounds like peace and quiet
And being sneaky
And she scares me.



**3rd Place Winner Primary Grades (Kindergarten – Grade 3)
Chase West,
Grade 1, Tatla Lake Elementary/Jr. Secondary School
Teacher: Clare Gordon**

Salmon

Salmon are good to eat,
Salmon are juicy, Forks and spoons,
Bones on the plate,
Grandpa eats Salmon,
He lives in town.



4th Place Winner Primary Grades (Kindergarten – Grade 3)
Keisha William,
Grade 3, Marie Sharpe Elementary School
Teachers: Mrs. Goertz & Ms. Goodliffe

Drum

At Stoney I hear drumming out of nowhere
It is like someone is dreaming
Sometimes I sing to it.



2019

Intermediate Grades

4-6



1st Place Winner Intermediate Grades (Grade 4-6)
Alan Gibson,
Grade 5, Mountview Elementary School
Teacher: Ms. Peel

Feathers of Pride

There is a feather that our Chief
Has on her gown
Wearing it at all ceremonies, all year round
It's our symbol
Our hope
It's our pride.
As long as we have it
We are made bold
It's the feather of our young and old.



2nd Place Winner Intermediate Grades (Grade 4-6)
Milah Sellars,
Grade 4, 150 Mile Elementary School
Teacher: Mrs. Bernier

Pow-Wows

Pow-wows are nice
My jingle dress feels very special
When I dance it is special
And at night I feel frozen in the darkness
I get saged by an Elder
I spend time with my family
I dance together with baby Lewis.



3rd Place Winner Intermediate Grades (Grade 4-6)
Jujhar Chhina,
Grade 6, 100 Mile Elementary School
Teacher: Mrs. Simcox

Residential School Poem

Cruelty is dangerous
You are scarring some person's future
It is a puncture
That cannot be fixed

They were all so scared
Each one of them would pray
Before they had to stay
At a Residential School District 27

It was not a school, it was a discrimination centre
Some would cry away in a corner
Some would try to fly away to their homes
It was not a school, it was a discrimination centre



4th Place Winner Intermediate Grades (Grade 4-6)
Maia Sales,
Grade 4, Mountview Elementary School
Teacher: Ms. Peel

A Journey of Colour

Aboriginal spirits guiding us
The heart beat of drums
Nature, the place most call home
Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
Mighty eagle keep us safe
Mighty raven stand on guard
May spirits of nature protect us
Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
Every day education blooms
Dreams will come true if you want them to
May spirit bears protect us
Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
Love with all your heart
Happieness takes you places you've never seen before
Laughter is a sound to which we can all relate
Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
Mighty eagle keep us safe
Mighty raven stand on guard
May spirits of nature protect us
Spirits run free
Canada stand on guard for thee.



Honorable Mention Intermediate Grades (Grade 4-6)
Damian Inglis,
Grade 5, Mountview Elementary School
Teacher: Ms. Peel

First Hunt

*I am hungry and cold,
At first light we leave the teepee.
The lake is quiet.
Heavy antlers,
He is huge and dark brown.
Shhhh!
My father and older brother
Watch and wait with me.
We give thanks to the moose and Mother Earth.
Full bellies and warm clothes.*



Honorable Mention Intermediate Grades (Grade 4-6)
Rhylee Silva-Brady,
Grade 4, Mountview Elementary School
Teacher: Ms. Peel

Forest Trail

It was still dark on the cliff side trail,
I had my bow and arrow.
Sign on the florest floor,
Snow
There he is,
Strong antlers,
His head comes up.
I give thanks,
Draw my bow, And let it fly



2019

**Middle Grades
7-9**



1st Place Winner Middle Grades (Grade 7-9)
Malcolm Goertzen,
Grade 7, 100 Mile Elementary School
Teacher: Mrs. Simcox

Untitled

Sitting upon a green log in the fog
Weaving away the day into a basket of ponderosa pine needles.

Tight enough to hold water
Big enough to hold salmon
Small enough to catch bugs

Sitting under the ponderosa pine trees
Thanking them for every single branch it has given over the years

Weaving away the perfect ponderosa pine basket.



2nd Place Winner Middle Grades (Grade 7-9)
Shailynn Brommit,
Grade 7, Lake City Secondary School (Columneetza Campus)
Teacher: Mrs. Watkinson

Haiku

I am not native,
but I love their ways of life.

I live on their rez.

I love to listen
to the journies they have had;
to learn about them.

I love the drumming and listening to their songs, and the dancers
too.

I love net fishing
and gathering the big sticks for the bed of fish.

I love the stories that the Chief tells me about; telling of his long
past.

My favourite story, is called "The Great Creator".

I love to listen.



3rd Place Winner Middle Grades (Grade 7-9)
Ivyanne Heppner,
Grade 7, Big Lake Elementary School
Teacher: Holly Zurak

Sedna's Hair

Frigid crystals above...cold.
Yet also below...frozen.
Broken bones but, not my own.
Caving in, yet still craving.
Craving the release of it.
The comb that frees souls.
Letting the animals go free.
Of blood of the sea's soul.
Maybe, today we go?
For we're the blood of the sea.
Finally, the comb sets us free.
From her we swim freely.
Glaciers frozen with no care.
The creatures that lay down there.
They are the ones, From Sedna's hair.



4th Place Winner Middle Grades (Grade 7-9)

**Emily Bruniski,
Grade 7, Big Lake Elementary School
Teacher: Holly Zurak**

Spirit Animals

Orca navigates

She belongs to her family

Orca knows the way.

Bear protects her young

She listens so she knows when

It is time to sleep.

Wolf communicates

With her pack to let them know

Where there is good prey.

She achieves her goals

Raven thinks outside the box

Imagination

Salmon is watching

Waiting for the right moment

He is critical.

He always has work

Beaver is a hard worker

The work never stops.

These six animals

Each have their different traits

And they each help us.

2019

Secondary Grades

10-12



1st Place Winner Secondary Grades (Grade 10-12)
Tanvir Vaid,
Grade 12, Lake City Secondary School (WL Campus)
Teacher: Mrs. MacKinnon

Red Dream Catcher

Red in it's color

Hidden in it's defects

Feathered through European

Greed as it's goal

Yarn to conquer and hold

Decorated through nun-schools

Beaded in chilling dreams

Marking each segment of Canadian History

Symbolizing the nightmare on residential street

For those who died amongst the dirt

We salute them today

For altering our fixed Canadian Reality



2nd Place Winner Secondary Grades (Grade 10-12)
Ameilia Ives,
Grade 12, Lake City Secondary School (WL Campus)
Teacher: Mrs. MacKinnon

A Call Home

The wind carries a distant sound
An isolated call
To those who have lost their way
Whispering the remnants
Of an ancient language
Long before taken

As the rivers Beckon for
The return of footprints
That caused the land to shiver long ago
Along the banks that have been abandoned for so long

Trees shake in despair
Waiting for the moment they will welcome home their people

The land silently watches as wind, river and trees form an alliance
to create a balance between old and new traditions
So tongue and soul can come together for a culture to be reborn



3rd Place Winner Secondary Grades (Grade 10-12)
Mackenzie Cree,
Grade 12, Lake City Secondary School (WL Campus)
Teacher: Mrs. MacKinnon

My Stomping Ground

*We take a break from the drumming
The way it stops so suddenly,
As it never began.
We wait
We wait for something to start
The dancing of a thousand strong independent free men and women
Gone
Like dust in the wind.
We gather to be heard
To feel like we belong
To have a second chance
The drumming begins
It comes at us in wave, like water reaching the shore
So suddenly
So unexpected
Yet so blissful
The dancers begin
They pour each and every bit of their heart into what they love
A sigh only imagined to be seen, but very much real
We gather to be heard
We gather to be free
We gather because we are free*



4th Place Winner Secondary Grades (Grade 10-12)
Briar Wiebe,

Grade 12, Lake City Secondary School (WL Campus)
Teacher: Mrs. MacKinnon

Unshaken

Harsh is resilience, but stronger yet are the people.

Time is but a bitter poison of sorrow, regret, and healing.

Wait, wait patiently, stand tall as you always have.

Dawn is near.

When the mighty bison basks once again in golden sunlight;

*When the elixir of your mother tongue spills from the crevices of your
memory;*

*When money and greed are long forgotten and blood runs thicker than
oil;*

*When Mother Nature herself once again trembles as you walk; only then
is it clear.*

People; yours, theirs, ours, us.

Although peace may hide in the night sky,

*They soon shall realize, the people of our generation, our youth, our
loudest, came from the havens, forged in stars,*

Created to rewrite History.



Chapter Three

Winning Poems

From 2020



1st Place Winner Kindergarten (tie)
Katherine Ogle,
Kindergarten, 100 Mile Elementary School
Submitted by: Penny Reid

IGLOO

You can build it out of snow

Sometimes it turns to ice

There has to be a door

Inuit people had to live in it because there wasn't houses

If it was freezing outside, they would go in their igloo



1st Place Winner Kindergarten (tie)
Avery Finlayson,
Kindergarten, 100 Mile Elementary School
Submitted by: Penny Reid

Métis Sash

They could use it to wipe their face
They could use a string from it to sew
They used it to tie up their coat
They used it to pull their sleds
They could use it for a scarf to keep warm
They would wear it in a parade
I saw Bon Homme wearing a sash



1st Place Winner Primary Grades (1-3)
Lilia Sawyer-Ned,
Grade 3, 100 Mile Elementary School
Submitted by: Penny Reid

Kukwstse'mc Means Thank You

Thank you for dancing
Kukwstse'mc for drumming
Thank you for loving
Kukwstse'mc for my family
Thank you for trees
Kukwstse'mc for our stories
Thank you for Earth
Kukwstse'mc for US



Lilia says Kukwstse'mc to Eliza Archie Memorial School for help with spelling.

2nd Place Winner Primary Grades (1-3)
Konner Testawich,
Grade 3, Sacred Heart Catholic School
Teachers: Mrs. Wallace/Mrs. Smith

SPIRITS

Spirits in the wind
Spirits in the air
Spirits
Everywhere in our minds
In our body and heart
In the healing salves we make
In our herbs we pick and grow
It is our medicine
It soars in the air
And in our hearts



**3rd Place Winner Primary Grades (1-3)
Alea Sales,
Grade 1, Mountview Elementary School
Teacher: Lacey-Dawn Testawich**

I saw a Bear

**I saw a Bear
He was eating apples
He was feeling good
He wanted more.**



**4th Place Winner Primary Grades (1-3)
Cole Woods,
Grade 3, Big Lake Elementary School
Teacher: Holly Zurak**

Salmon

Salmon inspires me to persevere through hard stuff

Like swimming up a river

Or going against the Fraser River

Trying something new

Or doing new math

That would be challenging

First Nations caught salmon out of that river

It was challenging for them



*Honorable Mention Grades 1-3
Owen Shetler, Grade 3, Sacred Heart Catholic School
Teacher: Jane Wallace*

Bears

Huge claws
Sharp teeth,
Rip into salmon,
Tear into rabbits,
Big and fat,
Now they hibernate,
Bears.



*Honorable Mention Grades 1-3
Emalie Deforge, Grade 3, Big Lake Elementary School
Teacher: Holly Zurak*

Prairie Chicken

The prairie chicken, wary chicken.

Be my chicken dinner.

Show me dances and prances.

Foot after foot we dance together.



*Honorable Mention Grades 1-3
Avery Jonasson, Grade 2, 100 Mile Elementary School
Submitted by: Penny Reid*

The Day

As the sun rises in Canada
The Inuit rise with First Nations and start their day with Canada

They hunt and fished all day before we came to Canada

They lived in teepees and fire was their lights in the dark

But I am not First Nations



2020

Intermediate Grades 4-6



1st Place Winner Intermediate Grades (4-6)
Amy McKinnon,
Grade 6, Cataline Elementary School
Teacher: Ms. Bob

My Heart Belongs to Art

My heart belongs to art the way the pencil moves like the wave near the ocean shore. The way it curves and sways. The way the paint brush streaks leaving thick cool long strokes like a smooth soft river swirling around the forest calm and quiet.

The way the marker bleeds through the paper like the way the rain soaks through the earth wet and damp.



2nd Place Winner Intermediate Grades (4-6)
Delilah Emile,
Grade 6, Forest Grove Elementary School
Teacher: Ms. Tunnacliffe

Down in Canim Valley

*Down in Canim Valley
Where the spipyuz (birds) sing
The eagles call and
The lone wolf howls.
I can smell the freshly grown, wet grass lightly
Hovering over the valley.
I can hear the soft quiet
Wind whispering and whirling.
At night as I sit around
The fire place, I can hear
The seklep (coyote)
Whimpering and yelping.
As I fall asleep, I listen
to my elders tell stories of our ancestors.
What a beautiful life,
Down in Canim Valley.*



3rd Place Winner Intermediate Grades (4-6)
Ryder McLennah,
Grade 4, Mountview Elementary School
Teacher: Ms. Peel

My Prayer Staff

In the fall I saw fir cones on every branch of the tree,
In the winter the tree is strong as a mountain against the
snowstorms,
In the spring the tree has thousands of new twigs,
In the summer I see a healthy and strong tree,
In my mind this tree is my prayer staff!



4th Place Winner Intermediate Grades (4-6)
Aurora Rocheleau,
Grade 4, Mountview Elementary School
Teacher: Ms. Peel

Call of the Sea

Far out to sea
White water crashes and clouds are dark
Cold wind stinging my skin



*Honorable Mention Grade 4-6 Category
Millie Nohr, Grade 4
Sacred Heart Catholic School
Teacher: Mrs. Wallace/Mrs. Smith*

Totem Spirit

I was born when you were
I was strong as can be
I soar over and in you
As I heal you and teach you and show you how to dance and
protect you and heal you.

And when you die I bring your soul with me and you will never die
again. You will be forever and as you go to sleep at night
As you think about your totem animal,
I will never leave your side.



*Honorable Mention Grade 4-6 Category
Hailey Johnson, Grade 6
Cataline Elementary School
Teacher: Ms. Bob*

Emory Creek

*Emory Creek, where the lakes are so blue.
Green trees, honey bees and a subtle chirping sound in
the distance.*

*Glistening stars appear at night - while looking at
them just feels so right.*

*Soft sand beaches and green nature trails.
Emory creek means happiness, love and memories.*



*Honorable Mention Grade 4-6 Category
Charlotte Harrison, Grade 6*

*Cataline Elementary School
Teacher: Ms. Bob*

Winter

*Winter, a cold icy white blanket covers the ground.
The sun shines on the snow as if it were glitter.
Bare branches, ice crystals hang from houses.
Slowly the sun comes out, the snow melts away, birds fly back,
leaves start to grow, flowers bloom, lakes unfreeze, fish splash.
The sparkling sun glistens on the dark blue surface of a pond.
Butterflies zip around bright blue skies with beautiful white
clouds passing by.*



*Honorable Mention Grade 4-6 Category
Danny Harry, Grade 6
Tsi Del Del ?Esgul Elementary School
Teacher: Ms. Kennedy*

The Birds Returning (Haiku)

*Birds are returning
To the places where they nest
Their sweet sounds calling
The month of May is for planting
Now the ground is finished melting
It's time to put the seeds in the ground
There is no time to fool around
The bees buzz while flowers are blooming.*



*Honorable Mention Grade 4-6 Category
Roman Inglis, Grade 4
Mountview Elementary School
Teacher: Ms. Peel*

The Bad Sea

*Crashing waves
Dark clouds
Danger on the horizon
Big waves
Wet canoe*



*Honorable Mention Grade 4-6 Category
Tarn Zirnheld, Grade 4
Big Lake Elementary School
Teacher: Holly Zurak*

How Chipmunk Made the Trees

*Chipmunk loved nuts
The nuts that Chipmunk did not need
He threw to the ground.
Those nuts turned into soil.
That soil made a tree sprout.
Chipmunk watched that tree grow bigger,
And bigger,
Until it got REALLY big.
And Chipmunk got older too.
Chipmunk turned into soil.
Years passed.
Chipmunk's grandson gathered more nuts,
And another really big tree grows.*



*Honorable Mention Grade 4-6 Category
Brynn Hansen, Grade 6
Cataline Elementary School
Teacher: Ms. Bob*

My Family

*My Mother,
She taught me to be kind. To love and believe.
She taught me to have hope.*

*My Brother,
Taught me what a friendship is.
He taught me how to fight and share.*

*My Father,
Taught me how to work for what I love
And to treat myself every once in awhile.
He taught me how to laugh.*



Honorable Mention Grade 4-6 Category

*Kiera Shewchuk, Grade 6
Cataline Elementary School
Teacher: Ms. Bob*

My Safe Place

*My safe place is with him.
He is my best friend, who I can trust till the end.
I call him by his name.
His name is said with pride. Pride that is earned by staying
by my side.
I know I am safe when he is by my side, even when it is dark.
He keeps me safe, away from the dark side of life.
He leads me to the light when I can't see.
He lifts me up when I am feeling low.
I look up scared but see him there. I rest with no fear. I wake
up with him guarding me; scares all the monsters.
Walks with me every step of the way.
A dog will be with you forever.*



Honorable Mention Grade 4-6 Category

Ethan Hatt, Grade 5

*Cataline Elementary School
Teacher: Ms. Bob*

Hockey

*I just got a new hockey stick and all I hear is bang, bang; the
puck is on my blade
and all I hear on the ice is swoosh, swoosh goes my brand new
skates.*

*Then bang, bang my stick is broken.
Swoosh, swoosh my skates are broken.*

Oh no more hockey!!!

The end



*Honorable Mention Grade 4-6 Category
Micah Fehr, Grade 5
Cataline Elementary School
Teacher: Ms. Bob*

The Leaves are Blowing

The leaves are blowing in the trees.

Leaves are blowing by the creek.

Leaves are blowing like the waves.



*Honorable Mention Grade 4-6 Category
Isaac Heitmann, Grade 5
Cataline Elementary School
Teacher: Ms. Bob*

Crickets

Crickets cricketing in the wind.

Rabbits in their hares

Bears in their dens

Bees buzzing.

Eagles flying.

Salmon splashing.

Worms worming.

Berries growing for the bears to eat

And

Eagles looking for food.



*Honorable Mention Grade 4-6 Category
Trent Billy, Grade 5
Tsi Del Del ʔEsgul Elementary/Jr. Secondary School
Teacher: Ms. Kennedy*

The Month of April

*The Birds are returning,
Pecking, diving,
Building, chirping, eating,
Happy to see spring again.*



*Honorable Mention Grade 4-6 Category
Deneige Zimmerman, Grade 4
Sacred Heart Catholic School
Teachers: Mrs. Wallace/Mrs. Smith*

FISH

FIRST NATIONS FISH FOR FOOD,
IN THE ROUGH WATER,
SCRUMPTIOUS SALMON,
HERE FOREVER I HOPE.



Honorable Mention Grade 4-6 Category

*Alora Fraser, Grade 6
Sacred Heart Catholic School
Teacher: Mrs. Bertolli*

Flying Feather - The Mustang

*Fast as the wind
Lovely colours dance on his coat
Yearning to run the open plains
Intelligence sparkles in his eyes
Nothing can stop his flying hooves
Galloping under Mother Sun's watch*

*Frolicking with his fellow wild mustangs
Earning his name by his unstoppable speed
Alone together, him and I
Together and inseparable
Him and I, two spirits bound
Eternity will see us
Riding through the sky*



2020

Middle Grades 7-9



1st Place Winner Middle Grades (7-9) 2020
Livia Seabourne, Grade 7
Lake City Secondary School (Columneetza Campus)
Teacher: Mr. O'Keefe

What I could be

I was the tallest tree in the forest. I could see everything from the setting sun to the tallest mountain. The view was endless. I survived through the glacial winds, the saturating rain, and scorching sun. I felt weathered but I still stood tall. I met friends everywhere I looked. I let the eagles perch on my branches while hunting for prey, I let squirrels gather my cedar cones. Now when I look back to when I was a tree but never thought of what I could be

AAAAAAA when I woke, I felt a dreadful pain near my roots. I gazed downward and remembered mama hushing me not to rattle...then one day she disappeared. So, I stood tall for a time. But soon I slammed the ground with a great thud. A rope was swung around me and tied in a knot. I started to slide across the forest floor. I was dragged to a village where my branches were cut off. I almost cried as all my bark was stripped. Almost in a second, I felt naked, there was a sharp knife that cut into me as I lay flat as I could. The pain is over after nights and days. I felt a sandy thing rubbin on me, it ticklet a lot. And then slathered with gloopy slime all over. While I was a pillar laying on the ground, I never thought of what I could be.

I woke up one morning high in the sky in the middle of a village where I once could lie. I looked down and saw all my friends but not in my brances or on the ground but carved into me. I saw the eagle that once was perched on my brances hunting for prey. The squirrel and the hare that would graze on and near me. But now I can see. I can see the setting sun again and the tallest mountain, I listen to the eveing drums. Now I'm a monument now I'm a figure and now I look back to when I was a tree and I never thought of what I could Be.



2nd Place Winner Middle Grades (7-9) 2020
Adam Wijma, Grade 7
Lake City Secondary School (Columneetza Campus)
Teacher: Mr. O'Keefe

Superb Salmon

The salmon swims swiftly surpassing stones

Soaring simultaneously side by side.

Swaying seaweed surrounds the salmon.

The salmon slowly scales the Skeena.

Surviving seals and suffering.

Some suffocating sadly.

Some slayed and some slaughtered.

Sadly, only some salmon spawn.



3rd Place Winner Middle Grades (7-9) 2020
Kiera Dyer, Grade 7
Lake City Secondary School (Columneetza Campus)
Teacher: Mr. Brandt

Together

We run together

We run as one

If one falls we all fall

If one hurts we all hurt

No one ever catches us

No one ever sees us

We run, we steal, we fight, we howl, we hurt,

But we all do it together



4th Place Winner Middle Grades (7-9) 2020
Evie MacDougall, Grade 7
Lake City Secondary School (Columneetza Campus)
Teacher: Mr. O'Keefe

What Makes Us

Everything we breathe everything we see is what makes me.

Every single little brush every single little gust is what makes us.

Every time we've felt our mothers touch every time our father has helped us
when we're stuck, we have felt our truest luck.

Every light that shines at night has showed us just as much as the sorrows of
twilight.

Every time I've been shoved but have chosen to love it has made proud those
from up above.

Everything we write everything we fight has given us our true sight.

Everything we make, everything that's been put at stake has made us strong
enough to not break.

For everything we breathe everything we see is what makes me.

But every single little brush every single little gust is what makes us.



Honorable Mention Middle Grades (7-9) 2020
Arianna Edwards, Grade 7
Lake City Secondary School (Columneetza Campus)
Teacher: Mr. O'Keefe

Aurora Borealis

*I feel the wind upon my face
As I lie in wait
For the show the sky will bring
When the sun has finally set*

*I watch the eagle catch a fish
As I lie in wait
I watch the fish swim in the creek
As I lie in wait*

*Finally, the sun has set
And the spirits start to dance
In the sky the colors prance
Telling stories with their chants*

*I hear my ancestor's wisdom as I watch the colors dance
I am glad I lie in wait for Aurora Borealis*



Honorable Mention Middle Grades (7-9) 2020
Julia Zirnhelt, Grade 7
Lake City Secondary School (Columneetza Campus)
Teacher: Mr. O'Keefe

The Mountains

*The mountains so high
Merely spearing the sky
Sometimes I wonder what lies inside
The result of lands which collide
They look as though they're lonely
Their tips so snowy
So lifeless yet mystical
The mountains are beautiful.*



Honorable Mention Middle Grades (7-9) 2020

Eloise Hobi, Grade 7
Lake City Secondary School (Columneetza Campus)
Teacher: Mr. O'Keefe

Freedom

*As a small cub I would run and play,
But now I'm alone looking for prey.
I looked down the forest, feeling awake.*

*My ears start to twitch,
Then my tails starts to shake.*

I have found a rabbit, just hoping around, little did it know I was getting ready to pounce.

*Just like that I got my dinner,
as I looked at the stars of a beautiful silver.
The night has passed, and the morning rose,
As I got ready for my daily stroll.*

*The air was humid, and the sun was bright,
I just kept walking with such delight.*

*I felt the dirt under my claws,
I fel the grass slipping by my paws.
The birds were signing a wonderful tune,
It has reminded me of the song of the moon.*

*A while later I had reached the river,
I took a sip of the cold water, which gave me a shiver.*

I tried to catch a fish, which made a quick swish.

It made me wet, so, I left.

*That night was the night of the moon,
The wolves had gotten together and sang a lovely tun.*

*I looked at the sky, and I smaile,
Because I felt such freedom, as a wild.*

2020

Secondary Grades
(10-12)



1st Place Winner Secondary Grades (10-12) 2020
Sabre-Anne Elkins, Grade 10
Skyline Alternate School
Teacher: Dena Geysel

It will Pass

I am a beautiful native indigenous woman who is strong and independent. I am worthy of many things and I will attract positivity that brings good confidence. I have the power to control my life and who I am but yet I have the patience to grow and become who I'm meant to be.

Yes I have my bad days where it feels like the rain will never stop pouring but as they say, the storm will pass and a rainbow will shine. All the awful things that have happened to me and all the pain I have endured made me into someone beautiful and passionate about life. I am loved by many and even when it doesn't feel like it, the elders are watching from up and above routing for the success I will achieve and deserve.

Every mistake I made, every tear that has dropped from my face shaped me into being the woman I am and now I can wipe my own tears and get back up and fight with resilience because I am a warrior, and I am worth it.

When I fall, I won't just sit there, I refuse to let my crown be knocked down, if I can fight with resilience, I can fight with strength. I'm not afraid to fight battles on my own and walk through no man's land.

When the rain will pass I know I have crossed no man's land, hostility and fear can no longer haunt my past. Rainbows and flowers will flourish around me as I know I have finally let go of what is no longer with me onto what I have now. Life is full of love and when we realize we were put here for that reason everything will change.

Baby steps will be the biggest steps you can achieve in life, you are worth it and whatever you go through you grow through, chin up and don't let your crown fall.

The road to recovery is one of the most beautiful journeys you can ever go on and I hope you remember those exact words.

Sabre-Anne Elkins



2nd Place Winner Secondary Grades (10-12) 2020
Connor Sutton, Grade 11
Lake City Secondary School (WL Campus)
Teacher: Melinda MacKinnon

Father and Son

*The sun was bright,
The lake glistened,
A Father turned to his Son,
Showing him how to gut a fish,
It's silver scales gleamed in the light,
Nothing was heard,
Save the splashing of fish, and cheery birdsong,
That night a fire burns as they ready to sleep,
Stars beyond count fill the sky,
Crickets chirp,
The Father turns to his son and speaks,
"We are home"*



3rd Place Winner Secondary Grades (10-12) 2020
Ali Waterhouse, Grade 12
Lake City Secondary School (WL Campus)
Teacher: Melinda MacKinnon

I Choose

*You come and I have no choice
No choice but to go,
Leaving my love and laughter behind
I am given no choice, and yet I choose
I choose to be happy
To remain that sunshine singing yellow daisy amid a sea of red roses
To be the lone one out and stand tall, proud, and beautiful
And when they try to cut me out,
Remove my roots and take me away
I will fight I will unleash my bashful butterflies and buzzing bees
I will fight tooth and nail
Like I was an entitled two year old throwing a tantrum
and by the time I am subdued
And you have taken me away
It would be too late - my roots have taken hold
My seeds have been sent adrift
And your temporary solution is only temporary,
But my story will be told forever*



4th Place Winner Secondary Grades (10-12) 2020
Trevor Jacques, Grade 12
Lake City Secondary School (WL Campus)

Teacher: Melinda MacKinnon

Before and Now

Before, there was conscious awareness

Of not speaking out

Of passive compliance

Of false politeness

Of obedience without thought

Of sexual assault

Of cultural oppression

Of residential schools

Now, there is conscious celebration

Of unity

Of peace

Of forgiveness

Of trust

Of diverse culture

Of the First Nations people



*Honorable Mention Grade 10-12 2020
Madalyn Watts, Grade 12
Lake City Secondary School (WL Campus)
Teacher: Melinda MacKinnon*

Missing and Murdered

Indigenous woman
Where did you go?
Indigenous Sister,
You disappeared.
I saw you just yesterday,
We laughed and sang.
You waved goodbye as
You started home.
Indigenous mother,
Where did you go?
Indigenous woman
Please come home



*Honorable Mention Grade 10-12 2020
Ty Robertson, Grade 11
Lake City Secondary School (WL Campus)
Teacher: Melinda MacKinnon*

HOW COULD EVERYTHING GO SO WRONG?

How could everything go so wrong?
There is so much sorrow amongst indigenous people
Sorrow, after sorrow, after sorrow
Stolen lands, resources destroyed, and children forever marked by residential
schools
In our courts they are found guilty more often
The fish and wild game that they flourished off of are forever gone
Families that were once proud and flourishing
Are now rotted by alcohol and violence
If tears could build a stairway and sadness were a road
We could walk up to heaven and bring you back again



*Honorable Mention Grade 10-12 2020
Chelsie Jensen, Grade 12
Lake City Secondary School (WL Campus)
Teacher: Melinda MacKinnon*

Our Fire

(Must read top to bottom and then bottom to top)

As we dance around the fire,
Our hearts are warm,
Although the words are different,
The culture is the same,
Our feathers around our skirts jump,
The elders chant with freedom,
We do our best to show respect,
In return we hope to be respected,
We share our land,
We speak our beliefs.



*Honorable Mention Grade 10-12 2020
Drew Woodford, Grade 12
Lake City Secondary School (WL Campus)
Teacher: Melinda MacKinnon*

Woods

Ancestors

Calling through the wind.

The middle of the night.

Swaying through the trees.

Calling.

Through the day, the trees sway.

Anger.

Red in the heart.

The disease comes into play.

Death comes to see life.

Anger, Fire, Air,

We get taken out.

In with the new.

Green grass

Learning

Our ancestors come out to play

*Honorable Mention Grade 10-12 2020
Teanna Melville, Grade 12
Lake City Secondary School (WL Campus)
Teacher: Melinda MacKinnon*

STORY OF LIFE

WE HEAR THE BATTLE CRY;
SEE OUR PEOPLE AT THE READ.
WE KNOW IT'S TIME
TO LEAVE.
FOLLOW THE FOOD,
IT KEEPS US ALIVE.
THE BISON HERD HAS MOVED,
AND SO SHALL WE.
THE HUNT.
THE KILL.
LIFE.



Honorable Mention Grade 10-12 2020
Name withheld, Grade 10
Nenqayni Wellness Centre
Teacher: Kristi Hamar

MISSING INDIGENOUS

THE WOMEN, OUR SISTERS
THE MEN, OUR BROTHERS
MISSING ...INDIGENOUS
NAMES CALLED, NAMES LOST
LOVED ONES GONE
FAMILIES CARRYING PAIN
ALL LOST TO THE HIGHWAY OF TEARS
LOST AWAY...
BUT NEVER FORGOTTEN



Honorable Mention Grade 10-12 2020
Gavin McKimm, Grade 11

Lake City Secondary School (WL Campus)
Teacher: Melinda MacKinnon

The Bear

Strong
Family
Health

This is the bear,
It shows what they've been through,
What they have put up with,
What we regret doing to them.
These are a few things we can see in them,
What we don't see are things like sadness

Addiction

Pain

Suffering

Assimilation.

We don't see the brave hunters,

The fishers,

The storytellers and the elders,

The drumming, the dancing

The laughing,

The powwows,

The fires,

The proud.

The hardships.

The resilient.

The ones that never gave up.

This is the bear.

THEY are the bear.



*Honorable Mention Grade 10-12 2020
Alyson Hoy, Grade 12
Lake City Secondary School (WL Campus)
Teacher: Melinda MacKinnon*

The Hunt

*The wind blows,
The river flows,
The deer walks gently
We walk,
The birds mock,
I pull my bow string tightly.
A twig snaps,
The deer looks back,
I blink,
Only slightly.
My hand lets go,
The arrow flows.
The deer falls,
Quietly.*



2020

French Immersion Category

(new in 2020)



*1st Place Winner in French Immersion Category 2020
Tenley Glanville, Grade 2
école Nesika Elementary School
Teacher: Tami Leblanc*

Musique

II aime son tambour

On aime écouter et danser

On Danse beaucoup avec les aînés Autochtones

On chante et Danse.

II a un tambour et une baquette

On fait beaucoup de choses

II aime son hochet beaucoup

II est un aîné Autochtone

II nous aime

II aime la nature



2nd Place Winner in French Immersion Category 2020
Lilly Reedman, Grade 2
école Nesika Elementary School
Teacher: Tami Leblanc

Musique

La baquette frappe le tambour
Les personnes chantent les chansons
Les petits donnent les choses aux anciens
Les Autochtones font de la musique
Les personnes écoutent la musique des Autochtones



3rd Place Winner in French Immersion Category 2020

*Name with field, Grade 2
école Nesika Elementary School
Teacher: Tami Leblanc*

Premier Nation

*Premier Nation
Respect la nature
Esprits
Musique
Il aime jouer le tambour
Enseigne les chansons
Respect les animaux*

*Nature
Attrape rêve
Tambour
Il aime la musique
On aime les animaux
Nous écoutons les chansons*



*4th Place Winner in French Immersion Category 2020
Anna Burkey, Grade 3
école Nesika Elementary School
Teacher: Tami Leblanc*

Nature

Nous respectons la nature

Aime la nature

Toute la nature est belle

Utiliser tout l'animal

Regarder la nature

Explorer la nature



Thank you to all the teachers and support staff who encouraged their students to participate in our annual poetry contests in 2018-2019-2020

Compiled by School District No. 27 First Nations Education Department