

The Muses' Gallery

The Muses' Gallery - Winter 2009

We are very pleased to include the poetry of several 6th grade students from Sager Solomon Schechter Middle School. These students worked with Carol Miller and Lynn Graham, classroom language arts instructors, and poetry specialist, Arlyn Miller of Poetic License (www.poeticlicenseinc.net).

Highland Park Poetry welcomes submissions of poetry and photography for this gallery. Please send poems or photographs electronically to Jennifer@highlandparkpoetry.org. Currently there are no themes - poet's (or artist's) choice.

And to all poets - keep on writing!

Check out our new feature - poetry review - by scrolling to the end of the page!



Jennifer Dotson, Photographer

By A. Bergson

6th Grade Student
Sager Solomon Schechter
Middle School

I am a rubber band.
Relaxed most of the time, but
When you stretch me enough I can
Snap
Right back at you

I am a lamp.
When nobody is around to turn me on, I am dark and dull
But when there are people around, they need me to help them
They need me to make life easier for them
Then I am bright and shining and cheerful

I am a comic strip.
Funny and joyful
I can cheer you up when you are down
I have a separate square for each separate idea
I make sense and have a point
Although I don't have an ending yet

By Adi

6th Grade Student
Sager Solomon Schechter Middle
School

My mind works like clock wheels.
I rewind my body in the morning.
I set my alarm clock at night.

In the afternoon when I come home to my family
I feel like a returned ship from voyage,
a ship that throws its anchor into the ocean.

My eyes are sharp as eagle eyes.
I aim for my goals as if I'm shooting a target.
I work as hard as ants before winter.
Learning to me is a new adventure.



Miranda Dotson, Photographer

Get To Know Me

By Jonathan

6th Grade Student
Sager Solomon Schechter
Middle School

I'm short but sweet.

I'm fast like a horse but can
sslllooww
down
like a
leaf
falling
from
a tree.

I am buzzing in a blur like a bee
but I don't hurt people with a sting.

I'm quick like a squirrel
and travel smoothly like an eagle.

I am a rabbit;

I jump high

with pride before I test the air.

Sam's Feeling

By Samuel Subar

6th Grade Student
Sager Solomon Schechter
Middle School

I am as complicated as a camera on manual filled with
memory and pictures. I flash when I
see something that interests me.
I explore out of my view
finder.

I am a sensitive snail, and my shell changes color
depending on my mood. My shell shelters me
from danger. I push my shell through the
thickest and toughest waves. When I
change shells I'm sad and I know
I'll be sad when I have to
change shells again.

I am a professional football player ready to go on the field.
Sometimes I need help from my coaches but other times,
I know what I'm doing. When I'm angry I feel like
tackling someone hard. Although I'm
sometimes the one being tackled
I never give
up.



The I Am Poem

By Shai

6th Grade Student
Sager Solomon Schecter Middle
School

In the mornings of sun I am quiet
like the waves of the ocean.

And I am sad like a leaf who suddenly
falls off from its tree.
And I am the tree that is sad and alone.
I am wondering when the leaves
are going to grow back.

I am a bird who flies all day
in the bright blue sky in its happiness.

IN the evening I am tired
as a man who worked all day with no break.
But at the end, I am resting peacefully
after I have tried my best.

I am different every single day,
as a leaf who flies
with the wind any which way.

Yael

By Yael

6th Grade Student
Sager Solomon Schecter Middle
School

I am -
a silent fire slow to warm up,
yet staying warm longer than imagined.
Look beyond my flames and see deeper-
than the simple fire I was thought to be.

I am a cloud
taking in all the rain at once,
my rain doesn't come down silently
tapping on your windowsill -
it creates a storm that keeps you up all night.

I am a snowflake.
The sticky kind that stays on cars
and that people don't bother scrubbing away.
I'm seen but not always carefully looked at.
Look at me closely and see how complex a snowflake I am.

I am the flower no one has ever heard about.
When I'm heard of, people are surprised.
I am the flower that only interests those who are curious.

I am a furry dog.
The kind that isn't loved as much as others.
The dog that has many needs.
Yet warmhearted-
people only realize how great a companion I am...
when seeing me play with someone.

Arielle

By Arielle

6th Grade Student
Sager Solomon Schecther Middle
School

I am a ballet dance, waiting to be performed.
I am a classical dance with pirouettes and leaps.
I am a dance that will take your imagination on a journey.

I am a dance shoe,
waiting to help someone dance,
and when they make a mistake,
I correct it for them.

I am a jet of sparks,
I never stop dancing.
I whirl around like a leaf in the wind.
Always in action, never still.



Kenny Sommer, Photographer

**April at North and
Clybourn**

By Wendy Anderson

The thin trees by the train tracks
are in bud again,
their delicate shoots aquiver.
Fewer than last year
and barely begun,
they show off for no one --
not the fast faces
that thunder through
on the Northwestern line.
Metal-ring fence to their west,
billboard forest to their east,
cement overpass just north of them,
they are bound by plastic,
butted by beer cans,
imprisoned on all sides.

Still, they manage this spring spectacle,
as if to say,
*We were here before all your mess was,
and we won't go quietly dead.*

Something deep and ancient compels them
to open tiny green lips

along their branch tips,
to offer faint sunshine
their wonderment to kiss.

Two Tanka

By Charlotte Digregorio

selling the home
of my childhood,
cleaning every speck
of dust
before i disappear

moving from the coast
to the heartland
i wake in the morning
to the calm of the lake
seeking the pounding waves

The Bells of St. Clemens

By Robert Klein Engler

I dislike those words ending in "ing."
The gerund moves, but does not res-
onate, except for the perfect, "ringing."
That word does exactly what it says,
a little bell, struck with a little rod,
that imitates the lightning words of God.

*To read more of Robert's poetry, visit his
store at www.lulu.com and search for his
name.*

Afternoon Break

by Cynthia Hahn

Still looking for that handle
To get a good grip
Against reality's pull
And my mindlings
 Like seedlings
 They grow if tended
 And I tend to grow them

Weedlings too
 Underlings more tenacious than any reason
 They slip through every time
 And leave their roots to spread
I feel them tugging my heart today
Trying to dislodge its beat
I am eyesore from the struggle

So I regain my stride by

Coffee walking
An old form of exercise with a destination
A kind of holding and breathing
And out again
Carrying my afternoon in a cup

View From The Hill

By Herb Berman

See the wall?

Of course. it's impassable.

*See the rainbow at the base of the wall?
Climb the rainbow to scale the wall.*

*See the horizon just behind the rainbow
where earth meets sky?*

*Go to the horizon
the deep blue horizon
and there it will be.*

What? I ask.

Whatever you desire.

But no one can climb a rainbow or reach the horizon.

Exactly, he replies.

Emergency Poetry

By Lois Barr

Poetry is always an emergency. Herb Berman

Pomegranate juice crashed on our helicopter pad
splattered in the whirling blades
leaving patterns
bereft of nutrients or nebulae
we had no chamois
no way to recover.
Couldn't revive
the impetus or the reasonable force to
contain it.

Words fell sputtering,
swirling in a vortex
hot molten globes of planetary syllables.
Lava without form or function.

Sweltering orbs,
ergonomic divisions armored

against elementary odds.
Wholly and utterly distinct
from forces beyond the pale
of judgment and kilns
firing white-hot pustules,
rooftops ablaze and numbered doors
corridors of chokeweed and ash
clogged frontal lobes.

No exit. No defiance.
No balm, no source,
No wisdom, no wild
crying tigers to tame.
Just parchment
undecipherable
after the fall.



Tomas Farrell, Photographer

Meteor Night

By Michael Brownstein

There is an ease in the way meteors breeze into flame
like the sudden change in leaf one night, late autumn
when their lives bleed into yellows, bright reds,
sometimes the frail tint of nightfall. Space is alive then,
one star afire, one solid bit of ice, something traveling
from one place to another for a brief visit.
We welcome them the way we welcome the Fourth of July,
the expected color change every October,
the way stars tickle the sky, the way the sun
hides everything alive in the dark

Broken Wrist Villanelle

By Jennifer Dotson

This is the story of the breaking of my wrist
When a simple misstep led to slipping on ice
Sudden impact on bone is this chronicle's gist

The hand's many functions are sorely missed
And a sling as a thing is an awkward device
This is the story of the breaking of the wrist

Signing my name is at the top of my list
And dressing without struggle would also be nice
The fractured results are this chronicle's gist

The bone's crack isn't healed when lovingly kissed
For immediate relief I would pay any price
This is the story of the breaking of my wrist

I would undo the damage if only time could untwist
But living means constantly rolling the dice
This is the story of the breaking of the wrist
The fragility of bones is this chronicle's gist.



David Dotson, Photographer

Bipolar

by Kenny Sommer

You clean up the trash on the streets and don't tell anyone.
You had a huge party at your parent's home and left a mess.
You visit your dying grandma in the hospital everyday.
You love to key 2 cars 2 times a week.
You help your sister with her homework and give her cool clothes.
You get all your reports for school online and write answers on your hand.
You do charity work for the homeless and donate to fight crime.
You steal CDs from Target and many things from Walmart.
You go to Church and Temple and pray for peace and love.
You do lots of drugs and take money from your mom.
You compliment people's looks and hold open the door.
You sell fake ID's and gamble at the casinos.
You talk with respect, act and dress proper.
You go downtown partying all night and miss work.
You keep your home clean and pay your bills on time.
You break into stores late at night for the money and thrills.
You drive the speed limit and wear a seatbelt.
You hit parked cars and just drive off.
You treat ladies with respect and romance, an old fashion guy.
You call up escorts for a sexual time.

You plant trees and flowers and nurture them to grow.
You grow pot at home to use and sell.
You are bipolar, a Jekyll and Hyde.
You live one life but really are a hypocritical, 2 faced guy.

**What Is The Purpose Of
A Ship That Does Not Sail**

By Bruce McNutt

What is the purpose of a ship
That does not sail
Never leaves port

Built
To withstand the harshness of the high seas
Nature's fury

A Captain schooled in the nuances
The vagaries of challenges
Prepared for the monotony of the calm sea
The sudden hell of a perfect storm
Constantly vigilant
His heart, his courage
Reflected in the eyes, the actions
Of a well trained crew

What is the purpose of a mind
That never takes on tough challenges
Keeps its insights, opinions silent
Fearful of taking a chance
Ridicule avoided
Preferring soft targets
Never stretching its sea legs
Adventure lacking

All minds
Primed from birth
Hungry for adventure
To move beyond the senses
To be put to the test
To sail upon the high seas of the body's humors
For as long as the mind sound
The energy of life abundant
Seeking to do battle

Becoming the Captain of her destiny
Discovering the challenges in the peaceful moments
Prepared for the dramatic turns of life's journey

Without fear
Standing tall to all struggles
Their life's promise kept

Life's
Battles won and lost at sea
Only as the trip almost complete
A lifetime nearly over
Does the ship return to port

What is the purpose of a ship that does not sail
What is the purpose of a life never lived
A mind never challenged
The impossible never confronted

Clear Rain

By M J Gabrielson

I feel alive in the rain
I walk through wetness
skin melting

I hear a train and
pounding
rain

the splatter of wheels
against asphalt
echoes through my veins

the rush of rich red
motion surges

down ridges I thought
eroded
now a valley

pebbles
dripping
sweet, cool terrain

I merge in the pouring
rain
feet drenched in cold
grey puddles

My umbrella
a mushroom large
I carry with arms

pulled from good earth
a tall, gill cap
holds my head
above waters.

I float in a deep sea
with gnomes,

so many
wet, stone years
of now.

Full Moonlit Sonata

By Edward Kaufman

Sept 5, 2006

Beethoven Sonata No.6 in F Major, Op.10 No.2

Garrik Ohlsson, Piano

The ebony mirrored elevated top
reflects the heart of the matter,
and that is all that matters;
save the struts and frets which
play upon the stage and thenB,
oh yes, is heard some more,
and some more in the encore.
Traversing tomorrow and tomorrow,
the sound frees us from cares and sorrow,
so the night is buoyed and life enjoyed.
What is the sound of one hand clapping?
The silent, ever present applause,
the enwrapped audience is signing,
unvocalized ahs and awes,
till the moment of oneness
of left and right,
joyously explode
on this full moonlit night.

Book Review: The Bending Limbs
By Don Markus

Reviewed by Charlotte Digregorio

Don Markus, a Chicago actor, comedian, architect, artist, musician and poet, has self-published a slim volume of poetry, **The Bending Limbs**. This is a worthy effort for his first chapbook. It includes generous poems of self-realization in his quest to find solace and peace.

First, the chapbook has an interesting, artistic cover. Although one can't be sure, perhaps the beautiful photograph of a tree is one taken by Markus himself.

The Introductory Page has a revealing William Stafford quote: "The signals we give—yes or no, or maybe—should be clear: the darkness around us is deep." This portends to what we will find in Markus' poetry. The first poem, which I enjoyed, "The Color of Trees," has a tone that very much haunts the reader. It's a good beginning. I also enjoyed poetry about his mother. In particular, "A Dream of My Mother."

In places throughout the chapbook, there is too much narration in his poems, and some of them seem disjointed. Further, at times, Markus loses his opportunity to use evocative images—he merely relates his profound feelings. As a latter example, I refer to "Moving," which lost its potential beauty with images that needed to be developed. Personally, as a haiku poet, I feel a thoughtful person such as Markus might try reading haiku to develop a sense of writing evocative images.

Further, I was puzzled by his prose piece, "Former Nooner." I believe it belongs as a preface to his chapbook, rather than placed toward the end of the book. I wouldn't categorize it as a prose poem. It is merely prose.

There are some typos in the chapbook that should be eliminated before a second printing. And, in any subsequent volumes of poetry, Markus should work more on connecting with his readers through imagery. That is, showing, rather than telling the reader how he feels. This is especially evident in "Freedom."

All in all, it takes a lot of courage for any writer to put so much of himself on paper as Markus does. After reading his poetry, it's as if he is thinking out loud, and therefore, his readers can fully appreciate who he is. He's a person that most readers can identify with, and whom they would like to get to know. I would like to hear Markus read his poems at a poetry reading. Readers can learn more about Don Markus and sample his poems at his web site, www.donmarkus.com/Poetry