PHOTOGRAPHERS ARTISTS WRITERS VIDEOGRAPHERS





From the Chair,

Vaughan Public Library Board

Each year, Vaughan Public Libraries (VPL) looks forward to seeing the amazing works of the Vaughan teens who participate in the Early Harvest Competition. The quality of the entries never fails to impress us — it demonstrates the abundance of creativity and passion of the teens and shows how much talent we have in our community. On behalf of the Vaughan Public Library Board, I am pleased to introduce you to the winners of the 2014 Early Harvest Competition and I invite you to explore the winning entries featured in this year's Early Harvest magazine.



This year marks the 25th annual Early Harvest Competition. Since 1989, the Competition has evolved in many ways but has always been a key outlet for the teens of Vaughan to showcase their artistic skills and express themselves through different forms of art including poetry, short story, sketching & painting, digital photography, video and graphic short story.

On behalf of the Competition organizers, I extend a sincere thank you to our judges - Victoria Coretti, Deborah Kerbel, Natalie Rawe, Rob Tari, David West and Elana Wolff. Thank you for volunteering your valuable time to review and select the winning entries. I would also like to thank our sponsors, Library Bound Inc. and PowerStream Inc. for their generous support to help make this year's Competition possible. Finally, the Vaughan Public Library Board would like to thank the staff at VPL for all the hard work and dedication they have put into the planning and organizing of the Competition.

VPL is proud to **enrich**, **inspire** and **transform** the lives of Vaughan teens through the Early Harvest Competition. I invite you to join me in recognizing the accomplishments of this year's finalists. On behalf of the Vaughan Public Library Board, I congratulate all finalists, contributors and participants of Early Harvest 2014.



Michael McKenzie, Chair, Vaughan Public Library Board



Vaughan Public Library Board

Front Row (from L): Lorraine de Boer, Michael McKenzie (Chair), Grace Locilento. Middle Row (from L): Suri Rosen, Rosanna DeFrancesca, Devender Sandhu (Vice-Chair), Marie Chiaromonte, Isabella Ferrara, Marilyn Iafrate.

Back Row (from L): Vivek Gupta, Gino Rosati, Margie Singleton (CEO), Steve Kerwin, Rocco Capone, Pradeep Puri, Michael Di Biase.

Meet the Winners

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Special thanks to our sponsors:







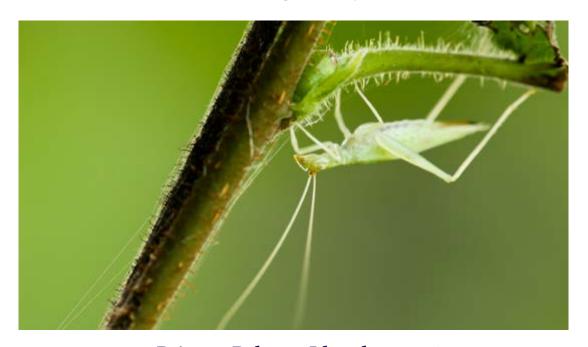


Cover Artwork: Rebecca Idzerda





Still Photography



1st Prize — Rebecca Idzerda, age 18 Toronto District Christian HS

2nd Prize - Matthew Girn, age 13 St. Stephen C.E.S.



3rd Prize - Katie Li, age 15 Westmount C.I.



Digitally Manipulated Photography



1st Prize — Rebecca Idzerda, age 18 Toronto District Christian HS



2nd Prize - Rebecca Smith, age 17 Toronto District Christian HS









Poetry

1st Prize — Avigayil Margolis, age 15 TanenbaumCHAT Kimel

Redefining Eden

You sip cider It's apple, You think. But it tastes strange Too sweet And yet Too bitter. The room is dark Pierced by neon green lights A venomous and deceptive color. The music is slow Hissing. You feel far too drunk And find yourself struck By a midnight clarity, The kind that makes good and evil So distinct So clear. The club is called Eden Your waitress -A silent woman -Goes by Eve She often holds her torso tightly As if something Inside her Doesn't fit.

‡ Poetry entries have been reproduced as submitted.

Poetry

2nd Prize — Rainey Guo, age 13 Glen Shields P.S.

One With the Sea

We find ourselves

Calm, Like the ocean when it's smiling up at shades of blue Painted in the sky above And greeting the birds And butterflies And all alike Floating carelessly amongst the clouds.

We find ourselves

Angry, Like the waves crashing furiously against the sharp shore Flailing wildly, unpredictable And cursing at the heavens And the storm And all it sees In a rage and blind to all but red.

We find ourselves

Lost, Like the confused currents riding aimlessly against the tide Unsure of where to belong And where to go And who we are And what to be Amongst the crowds or with the sea.

For, it's always ourselves that we find in the sea.











Poetry

3rd Prize — Natasha Ovchinnikova, age 16 Vaughan S.S.

Princess of Deserted Books

She was a library child... With her ivory hair and a dress of cornflower blue, She resembled a statuette of faience.

There was something wild in her lemon green eyes, which saw through All the layers of lies, all the layers of fears and defiance.

She sat there every day, on the plum-coloured rug, wearily leaning against ice-cold walls, Framed with serpentine mint-tinted marble.

Like bright butterfly wings books were filling the darkness of twilight-pearl, narrow halls, In the dust-sheeted shelves finding harbour.

And her thoughts were like flames, flames of raspberry red, flames of ritual fire, Hiding under the surface of silence and taciturn peace. Books were there for her, loyal hounds on her guard, always ready to help and inspire, To protect, to solve riddles, to answer the slightest caprice.

Tender library child, with her dream-clouded smile she could find any answer On the yellowed pages of desperate, deserted books.

As she read she imagined herself – lion tamer or live coals dancer,

Much aware of how foolish and utterly useless it looks.

She felt sorry for them, for the novels with non-ragged covers, For the stories forgotten, for words that had never been read. And her mind filled the black-and-white papers with wildflower colours, Letting stories to whistle, to grumble, to roar and to sing in her head.

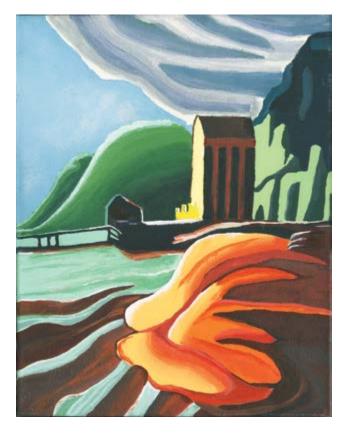
So strange, in her curious soul those books saw their own reflection, Face of creature unheeded, unneeded, bewildered and lost. She had helped them by care, by kindness and deepest affection. They had helped her by saving from numbness of hard-hearted frost.

In the evenings she walked all alone – far above shone the guiding Great Wagon, Lilac pond in the park looked like wind-blown northerly fjord. Bright car headlights resembled the fiery eyes of a dragon, And long shadows of street lamps pierced ground like Excalibur sword.

And when she came back home to sleep on the half-putrid mattress, When she closed her lemon green eyes – she imagined quiet library nooks. She heard whispers of fantasy novels and large mythological atlas... She – the library child, city pauper and Princess of deserted books.

‡ Poetry entries have been reproduced as submitted.

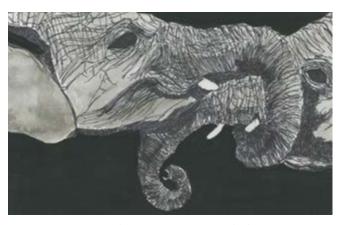
Sketching & Painting



1st Prize —
Daniel Morelli, age 15
Father Bressani CHS



2nd Prize - Lila May Tran, age 17 Woodbridge College



3rd Prize - Yara Flahat, age 16 Holy Cross Catholic Academy



VAUGHAN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Short Story

1st Prize — Ruby Liu, age 17 Vaughan S.S.

Ikimono-gatari

Amber poured in through the windows, casting a warm glow on the classroom floor. Once in a while, the scent of lavender was carried in by the occasional breeze, innocently mixing with the smell of dust; it was the fragrance of memories cradled by summer haze.

When I tipped my head back and closed my eyes, I could hear the laughter again. I could hear the words and the whispers—our guilty pleasures during the few precious moments when the teacher turned around—and the scraping of chairs against the floor. I could hear the morning greetings and the disappearing footsteps in the hallways when dusk settled in, as it was settling in now.

I told myself I wouldn't come back again, but here I was—still the person that could never completely leave anything behind. Or maybe I had purposely left something behind, giving me an excuse to come back. Images of the graduation ceremony had slipped in and out of my head so often, had weaved itself so frequently into my daydreams, that it seemed to be beckoning me back, as if there was still something I had to do.

Perhaps it was the lingering sense of responsibility from when I had been part of the *ikimono-gatari*, the students selected to care for the school's plants and animals. Or perhaps I was just unwilling to let go.

I strolled quietly through the neat rows of wooden desks and chairs, letting my fingertips trace the edges of tables and curves of chairs. Each chip in the wood, each clumsy doodle at a corner, was reminiscing of the secret glances and stifled giggles that had once filled this room; once, when we had so much time we thought we were eternal, so much time we bathed in it, rolled around it, let it slip through our fingers like grains of rice.

We had drowned in the refuge of our youthful naivety and spring innocence. By the time summer rolled in, we were immortal. The days grew longer, but our patience grew shorter, until the time came when we struggled to keep our eyelids from drooping. Those afternoons when the voice of the history teacher droned on and on, each word stretching out so long that it faded into white noise, our surroundings became a blur, and the cry of cicadas in the drowsy warmth was enough to lull us to sleep.

By habit, I seated myself at the familiar desk next to the window—fourth from the back and first from the left. When I glanced around, I realized how small the classroom seemed now, even though the emptiness should have made it feel larger. It was hard to believe some thirty or forty students had once crowded this room to write *Tanabata* wishes and paint banners for Cultural Festivals. When did we outgrow these corners that once seemed so big? Now, our corporeal presence was replaced with memories.

‡ Short story entries have been reproduced as submitted.

EARLY HARVEST 2014

The nostalgia that filled the classroom spilled out from the window and into the courtyard, where it clung desperately on to the fading light. My eyes followed it out the window, to the center of the courtyard where the great cherry tree stood. Under that tree, countless love confessions had been blurted out clumsily; some blossomed and some withered, some remained and some faded, with time and with distance. The cherry blossoms had once rained upon lovers, drifting onto hair from which a partner would timidly brush away with their fingers, but now the blossoms stained the seasons in a soft pink, sending feelings from one longing heart to another.

I remember thinking these love stories, and our lives, were like the plays we held at school. After each performance, I had always wondered, when the curtains above you fall, when your take your bow and everything comes to an end, who will remember you?

It was strange for this question to come back to me now, but there's something about touching old things that seems to carry you back in time. Sitting in my old seat, I remembered the deaths of classroom pets, the fading of the doodles carved on the desks, the withering of old flowers and the planting of new ones. I saw the large "Goodbye" scrawled on the blackboard, surrounded by colourful chalk doodles of *chibi* faces and farewell messages, and was faced abruptly with an answer.

For us, infinitesimal beings in this universe, like a speck of dust in this classroom, we will not be remembered by anyone. Not even by time. It would not be long before old memories are replaced with new ones, as surely as the blackboard will be washed clean, leaving behind no trace that we had been there at all.

An overwhelming sadness filled me and tried to escape from my eyes.

Someday, I knew, everything would disappear. But there were some things that I didn't want to be forgotten just yet.

So I swallowed the sadness as best I could and walked to the blackboard, picking up in one hand the eraser, and in the other the last remaining piece of chalk. As I lifted my hand, a light breeze drifted through the window and tickled my skin. The blue skirt of my uniform brushed gently against my legs. Soon this uniform will disappear into my closet, never to be worn again. Time was coming, flowing, slowly but surely.

A sudden surge of confidence gripped me, and I erased the huge "Goodbye", letting the chalk dust disappear into the air. Then I began my new piece of art. Swift, clean strokes left the tips of my fingers, carrying my feelings with them.

I let my hands run for about five, perhaps even ten minutes, before stepping back to admire the new artwork. A mix of satisfaction and accomplishment and hope washed over me.

The blackboard read, in brilliant colours: "Itsuka mata aeru."

Until we meet again.





Short Story

2nd Prize — Stephanie de Bem, age 17 St. Joan of Arc CHS

Operating Theatre

My palms are dripping wet like condensation on a glass on a scorching summer's afternoon. I wipe them off once more on my apron, but to little avail of drying them. The room is filled with white noise, but I cannot make any sense of it. I should be hearing the primitive fan droning in the background, the incessant voices – some urgent and others mundane – doubtlessly coming at me from all over, the inevitable coughing, the resonating of screeching and banging of metal throughout the structure, but it does not register. I feel sick: how ironic. There is a bland taste in my mouth: a mixture of inescapable coffee aftertaste, spearmint, and illness. All I smell is antiseptic and toxins.

Before I become like the other group in this godforsaken structure, I gingerly start walking, only to pick up the pace as I've taken too long at my pit stop and there are other angry motorists in a hurry too. All too soon I have made my way downstairs and stand before my destination.

The doors are plain – much like all the others in here – and you would be curious to discover what is inside, but I know all too well. Inside is a stage and I am the lead. A full house has gathered. Screwing my courage, I bust my way through to see my relieved – but only slightly – co-stars. In a flurry I get to work with others saying the same predictable lines and someone in the back barking orders as I do what I know I should.

Move this here, this needs to go, that needs to be fixed, watch out for that. And on and on it goes. It is tiresome work and my only hope is it will be rewarding, if not for myself, than for the true star of this show. The one the audience really cares about.

He is a great man, has made some mistakes in his life, as we all do. He coaches a baseball team. He hasn't had enough time. And there's work on Monday. And laundry to do. Who's going to mow the lawn? What about the soccer team? Who's going to cook dinner now? Or clean the house? What about the groceries? We have plans on Friday. The support group isn't going to run itself. His birthday's next week...

We work for what feels like hours and there is no intermission. The audience observes from afar with reports every so often and eventually it ends. I go out to deliver the final lines. As I speak the words I knew were coming and the spectators start to breakdown, it is then that the shock of what I knew all along hits me: tonight I engaged in the production of a tragedy.

‡ Short story entries have been reproduced as submitted.

Short Story

3rd Prize — Ingrid Llambi, age 18

Father Bressani CHS

Tick

I dashed down a dim corridor, no windows and no doors and no end and no end and no end until the walls caved in all around me, they fell inside me, but I couldn't feel a thing except the way my chest rose and fell in time with the ticking that I'd been following, you see that's why I was there in the first place, I'd come for the tick tick tick tick ticking 'cause it wouldn't stop and I have a fear of clocks, you see, and shutting my ears wouldn't shut up that ticking so I had to shut it up myself, it was coming from the end of the corridor, but now there was no corridor, now there was nothing at all and the ticking was still there, and it had gotten louder, do you hear me, it had gotten LOUDER, CAN YOU HEAR ME above all that noise, I'm saying IT HAD GOTTEN LOUDER, so loud that it drowned out my breathing and my heart beating and my scars bleeding, oh God I had to look twice, my scars bleeding, yes, my scars bleeding, they were bleeding 'cause the tick tick ticking made me scratch, it made me scratch again for the first time in months, or maybe seconds or years because time doesn't pass the way it should when you're nothing and there's nothing around you, but it doesn't matter all I'm trying to tell you is that it was like someone had cut me open all over again, but it didn't hurt and I couldn't hear the dripping because the tick tick ticking was getting louder again, and this time I didn't want to yell above the noise, I just wanted to become a mouse and sneak between the cracks until I found my way out, but you see, I'd been in this corridor for years, in the nothing even longer, and I'd been a mouse before, yes, I'd been a mouse a hundred times before, but (lean in closer, I don't want to yell again) the thing is (lean in, goddamn it) I still haven't found the exit or even a place to hide, I SAID LEAN IN I SAID LEAN IN, I can't even find a place to hide in here from the tick ticking, because you see, I have a fear of clocks and shutting my ears wouldn't shut up that ticking so I have to shut it up myself, or become a mouse and find a place to hide, or a place to escape, like the windows or doors, THE WINDOWS OR DOORS THAT'S IT, I dropped my bleeding body to the floor and crawled into a new one, then I turned a corner and I dashed down a dim corridor, no windows and no doors and no end and no end and no end.



Video



1st Prize — Ari Matchen, age 16, Westmount C.I. Lori Maresky, age 16 & Claudia Boon, age 15, TanenbaumCHAT Kimel Live a Little



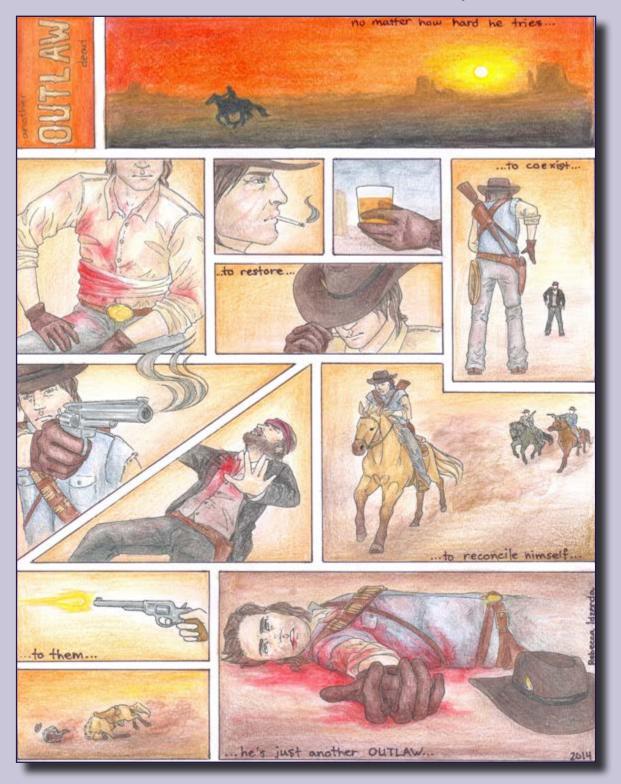
2nd Prize – Matthew Aitia, age 17 & Emmanuel Townsend Westmount C.I.

Release



3rd Prize – Magdalena Rudiak, age 16 St. Jean de Brebeuf CHS These Walls We Build

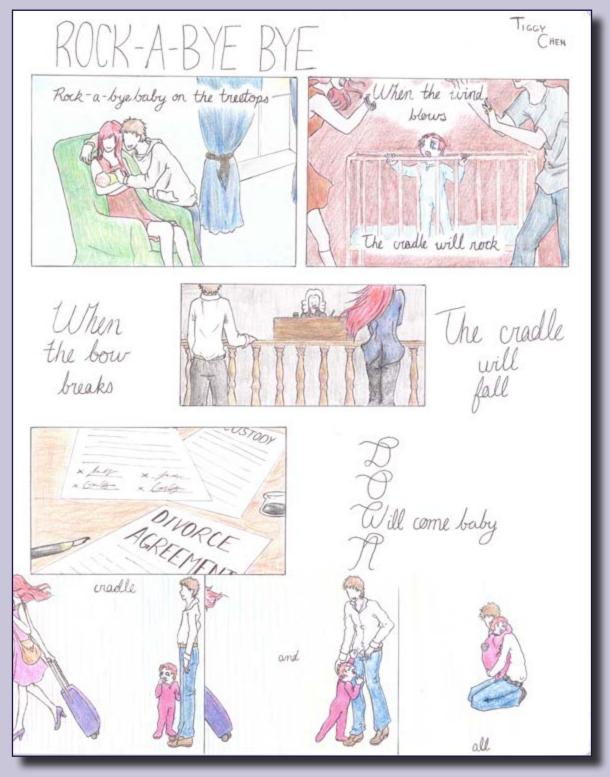
Graphic Short Story



1st Prize — Rebecca Idzerda, age 18

Toronto District Christian HS

Graphic Short Story



2nd Prize — Tiggy Chen, age 15 Marc Garneau C.I.

Graphic Short Story



3rd Prize — Sarina Xue, age 15 Vaughan S.S.





Meet the Judges

Victoria Coretti — Video

Victoria Coretti is the host and community producer of *York Region Spotlight* on Rogers TV. Entering her third season on this dynamic youth show, she is proud to be an avid member of the community and highlight the successful youth of York Region. As a passionate member of the entertainment world, Victoria has numerous accomplishments including writing/creating her own musical as well as winning the "Leadership of the Arts" award from the York Catholic District School Board. She has been an intern at Rogers TV for over seven years and has worked with other media outlets such as Z103.5 and Bell Media. She has also been the president of multiple councils including the Arts Council, and Dance Teams at her high school. This is Victoria's second year as a judge for Early Harvest and she is thrilled to be returning for this incredible event.

Deborah Kerbel — **Short Story**

Deborah Kerbel is an author of young adult and middle-grade fiction. Her novels include *Lure*, *Mackenzie*, *Lost and Found*, *Girl on the Other Side*, and *Under the Moon*, which was a finalist for the 2012 Governor General's Literary Award. Her latest novel, *Bye-Bye*, *Evil Eye*, was published in May, 2014.

Deborah is also the co-author of the *Quizmas* series of family Christmas trivia books, *Money Savvy Kids*, and her personal essay, *The Curtain*, is included in the young adult anthology, *Dear Bully: 70 Authors Tell Their Stories*. In 2011, Deborah was honoured with a City of Vaughan R.A.V. E. Award in recognition of her work as a mentor and educator in the Literary Arts.

Natalie Rawe — Sketching & Painting

Natalie Rawe's work has been featured in five galleries across Canada, including the Anna Leonowens Gallery in Halifax, the McIntosh Gallery in London, and The Khyber Centre For The Arts in Halifax. Inspired by elements around her, Natalie aims to creatively blend a narrative into artwork that revisits her childhood, encapsulates society and is flavoured with humour. Natalie won a prize in the drawing category of Robert McLaughlin Gallery's 43rd annual juried art show and has been commissioned for various projects, which include portraits, logo design, illustrations and paintings. She received a Bachelor's Degree in Fine Arts from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design.

EARLY HARVEST 2014

Rob Tari — **Graphic Short Story**

A graduate of the Animation program at Seneca College, Rob Tari has been drawing since he was three years old. He has worked steadily in the animation/live action film industry. He has served as everything from a writer, director, concept artist, storyboard artist, layout designer, animator and graphic designer for various companies in Toronto. In 2012 he wrote and directed his first short film "Soul Mates!" which is currently in post-production. When he is not doing that, he works as an Art Instructor for the City of Vaughan, teaching a range of art classes.

David West — Photography

David West is the owner of West Photo and has been the principal photographer at his studio for the past 30 years. David has received numerous provincial and national photography awards, and has also received a Richmond Hill Chamber of Commerce Business Achievement Award. In 2010, David was the recipient of a Vaughan R.A.V.E. Award for Educator/Mentor for Visual Arts. David has also been an active member of his community and he was recently appointed as a Municipal Councillor in Richmond Hill's Ward 4. He feels passionate about the art of photography and the importance of arts education for young people and always makes time to promote these passions to others.

Elana Wolff — Poetry

Elana Wolff's poems have appeared in journals and anthologies in Canada, the U.K, and the U.S. She has published seven books with Guernica Editions, including *You Speak to Me in Trees*, awarded the 2008 F.G. Bressani Prize for Poetry, and *Startled Night*, nominated for the 2012 ReLit Poetry Award. Elana's poem sequences placed First in the 2011 GritLit Writing Competition and in *Echolocation Magazine's* 2013 "The Chase" Contest. A bilingual edition of her selected poems, *Helleborus & Alchémille*, was released with Éditions du Noroît in December, 2013, and a collaborative translation from the Hebrew of *Poems and Songs of Love* by Georg Mordechai Langer, including an elegy and letter to Franz Kafka is forthcoming with Guernica in fall 2014. Elana lives in the City of Vaughan, where she writes, edits, and designs and facilitates therapeutic community art.



