

**Honorable Mention, Poetry**  
**Grades 10-12**

***“A Dangerous Weapon,” Devora Cohen***

We all have a dangerous weapon  
    Wrapped as a beautiful gift  
It can hurt someone, it can build someone  
    It can cause a person to go adrift  
    We don't understand its power  
    Until it is already too late  
    We can't fully grasp the concept  
    That it can change a person's fate  
    This weapon is extraordinary  
    Something different than the rest  
    Something innocent yet deadly  
Something that will put us to the test  
    This loaded weapon is our mouth  
    The words we speak are its bullets  
    How we use it defines us  
    What we say has no limits  
    Our speech is a tool  
    Used every second of our lives  
    It makes us who we are  
    Shows how we feel inside  
We talk talk talk with no thought of the words rolling off our tongues  
    We talk of each other no matter if we are old or young  
    We talk to raise ourselves up and put others down  
We talk without realizing we might be the cause of changing a smile to a frown  
    We talk unaware of the danger it brings  
    We talk unsure of where it will lead  
    We talk for the fun, something to do  
We talk talk talk of any what where when how or who.  
    Why do we talk about others?  
    Judge them and say what we think?  
    Do we feel it will actually help?  
We must realize that really it will just make us sink

Lower and lower, deeper and deeper until all we see are the bad in others  
The positive gets lost after those words are said  
How can we feel this way about our fellow brothers?  
Not only ruining ourselves  
Anyone who listened now believes  
We think one small rumor can do no harm  
But we're wrong. A chain effect of an inference has now been achieved  
We can never know what goes on  
It's someone else's life  
Not ours for a reason  
Don't get confused by all the world's hype  
Let's take our powerful weapon  
Only use it for the good  
No need to fight with one another  
Rather protect this precious gift as we should  
Be the brave ones be the strong ones  
Take it one step at a time  
We will be ready to win with our weapon in control  
This is our time to shine  
No negative words about others  
Let's not turn happiness to fear  
Together we unite on a problem so big  
Together we fight, together we cheer

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