

Honorable Mention, Poetry
Grades 7-9

“We change just to change again,” Esme Michaelson

We grew up in this world.
Grass green and sky blue.
Birds chirping, wind whispering.
We could be friends with anyone, be ourselves, not be judged.
But as we grow up we stop, we change.
Not for us but for them.
And we say no, this is what we want.
But underneath, we are crying, because we are changing for them, and we are still being judged.

We say we want to grow up when we are little, and when we grow up we want to be little again.
We want what we cannot have.
Because we think we are not good enough.
Not because one is better, because we feel we don't fit in.

We try so hard to be good enough, because we feel we aren't.
Because we think that they don't like us.
We stop doing what we want.
And we think we are the only ones.
But others are thinking that we don't like them. So they change too. And suddenly everyone is the same.

We lost that younger self, who didn't care what others thought.
Who would be themselves, and not change.
Who would go out into the world, and run around and just love life.
We lost that.
For what?
To have others not think we are different?

We try so hard to be the same, thinking it will make us happy.
But it doesn't.
We say what would make us happy is to be little again.
To be able to be that kid who runs freely, and happily.
We say we can't but we can.

Why let them judge us, when they aren't important.
Why let them get inside our head.
We can be that free and happy kid.
But only if we stop caring about what they think of us.

Esme Michaelson is in 7th grade at Lake Harriet Community School. Her interests include baking, writing, dancing, nature, cooking, and taking photographs.