

Sarah Mook Poetry Contest, 2018
First place, grades K-2
"The Beautiful Day"

"The Beautiful Day" earned first place in the 2018 Sarah Mook contest largely due to its mastery of metaphor and diction. The poem deftly compares natural elements of a lovely day to the sounds of musical instruments. It is the outstanding, creative paring of the visual with the auditory that makes this poem a first place winner.

The first line, "The sunrise is a flute that at its highest note" captures the brightness and almost piercing beauty of a sunrise. The poet then moves to water, specifically "the tide" and uses the sound of "harp's strings" to suggest the water's "in and out" movement, while the "swaying grass" sounds a "slow and high melody."

My favorite two lines are "The silent ice is slippery like strings. / It is January, bright like a viola." With economy of language, the speaker uses the slippery quality of "strings" and the "bright" sound of a viola to mimic the qualities of ice on a clear January day. Being able to use sight and sound in such a gifted way demonstrates this poet's talent with diction.

The ending of the poem continues this original description as the poet moves from elements of nature to people. When "trees and houses are in the distance" and "everybody's asleep," the poet describes "their hearts, / deep inside, beat like a drum." It is the specific phrase "deep inside" that makes this simile work so well. The poem also moves from sunrise to nighttime, completing the day's progression.

Also noted is the poet's expertise with alliteration and consonance, especially with the letter 's.' Lines such as "starting at its highest going to its lowest," "The swaying is a slow and high melody," and "the silent ice is slippery like strings" emphasize the poem's focus on sound.

"The Beautiful Day" is an inspired look at how elements of the natural world 'sound' like musical instruments, compellingly giving the reader a precise way to 'hear' their sound. This inventive poem demonstrates a keen poetic gift and maturity beyond this poet's age. Many congratulations to this imaginative author!

Thank you for the pleasure of reading your work!

Marie Kane
Final Judge
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