
The Write Stuff



Virginia High School League Creative Writing Competition

*2015-16 BOOKLET
OF WINNERS*

2015-16 VHSL CREATIVE WRITING CONTEST RESULTS

Folder

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Oakton HS | 5. Maggie Walker Gov. Sch. |
| 2. George Washington HS | 6. James Robinson Sec. Sch. |
| 3. Appomattox Reg. Gov. Sch. | 7. Harrisonburg (tie) |
| 4. Woodbridge Senior HS | Thomas Jefferson HS S & T (tie) |
| | Tazewell HS (tie) |

Essay

- First: "Rules", Camille Moore, Appomattox Regional Gov. Sch.
- Second: "From Your Friendly Neighborhood Feminist", Marriya Schwartz, Oakton
- Third: "Shadow Boxing", Katherine Brown, Woodbridge Senior HS
- Honorable Mention: "The Journey of Self-Searching", Savannah De Cid, Sherando HS

Short Story

- First: "Rough Revolution", IsMonie Davis, George Washington HS
- Second: "I Love You, Peter Harper", Brenda Hayes, Maggie Walker Gov. Sch.
- Third: "Gee Whiz", Carling Ramsdell, James Robinson Sec. Sch.
- Honorable Mention: "A Note on the Nature of My Experience with Gods", Courtney Cline, Tazewell HS

Poetry

- First: "Accent Marks", Aline Dolinh, Oakton HS
- Second: "When You Say PTSD", Taylor Petty, Woodbridge Senior HS
- Third: "Mother Tries", Rachel Snyder, Harrisonburg HS
- Honorable Mention: "Schoolgirls", Emma Banks, Appomattox Regional Gov. Sch.

2015-16 VHSL CREATIVE WRITING CONTEST RESULTS

Total Entries – 28 S = Superior, E = Excellent, G = Good

<u>School</u>	<u>Sponsor</u>	<u>Essay Ratings</u>	<u>Story Ratings</u>	<u>Poem Ratings</u>
Appomattox Regional Gov. Sch.	Cindy Cunningham	S & G	G & E	E & S
Blacksburg HS	Matthew Spring	G & G	E & E	S & G
Castlewood HS	Dominique Traverse Locke	G & E	G & G	E & G
Charlottesville HS	Brian Kayser	G & G	G & G	G & E
Dinwiddie	A. Scott Brockwell	G & G	G & G	G & E
Graham HS	Debra Tabor Brewster	G & G	G & G	G & G
Harrisonburg HS	Richard Morrell	E & E	G & E	S & G
Thomas Jefferson HS for S/T	Jennifer Seavey	S & S	E & E	S & G
Liberty HS-Beaeton	Timothy Bambara	E & G	G & G	G & E
Manchester HS	Rebecca Lynch	G & G	G & G	E & E
Mountain View HS	Melony Star Kiesau	G & G	G & G	E & S
New Kent HS	Alison Pushie	G & E	G & G	S & E
Oakton HS	Susan Sullivan	E & S	G & G	S & G
Prince Edward County HS	Rachel Overstreet	G & G	G & G	G & E
Ridgeview HS	Robin Charles	E & E	G & G	G & E
James Robinson Sec. Sch.	Crosby Mouzavires	E & E	G & S	E & E
Salem HS-Salem	Fred Campbell	E & E	E & G	G & G
Sherando HS	Trevor Johnson	S & G	G & G	G & G
South County HS	Troy Ketch	E & E	G & G	E & G
Tabb HS	Melinda Schenkkan	S & E	G & G	E & E
Tazewell HS	Robert McGraw	S & E	S & E	G & E
Varina HS	Matthew Cullen	G & E	E & E	E & G
Maggie Walker Gov. Sch.	Lisa Williams	S & S	G & S	G & G
George Washington HS	Sharon Leigg	S & S	G & S	S & S
Westfield HS	Kimberly Watkins	E & G	G & G	E & E
James Wood HS	Rhonda Lancaster	G & G	E & G	G & G
Woodbridge Senior HS	Cathy Hailey	E & S	G & G	S & G
George Wythe HS-Wytheville	Lorna King	G & G	E & G	S & E

Comments from Poetry Judges

I was so pleased to be one of the judges for this wonderful contest. The variety of subjects chosen by the students was wide ranging, sometimes making it difficult to compare them. But what was most impressive was the maturity apparent in each student's approach to his or her chosen topic. Many portrayed situations far beyond the usual concerns of teenaged students and each was handled with eloquence and sensitivity. Most of us tend to focus only on our own lives and activities. It's a gift to be able to see the world so clearly through the eyes of others. With so many thought provoking entries, choosing the top poems was difficult. I hope all the entrants will continue with their writing. As good as these poems were, it would be exciting to see what these students might write in the future.

###

It was an honor to be a part of the VHSL 2015-16 Creative Writing Competition. The talent represented among these young poets is astounding! I found myself critiquing some of these pieces as if they were work from colleagues instead of students – the caliber of the poems was that good. While many students tackled topics traditional to youth – heartache, self-doubt – others reached out and showed a mature empathy with the world we live in, trying to untangle through words some of the thornier issues of our time. For me, this is where great poetry always strives.

Rules

By Camille Moore

I was an excitement addict. In sixth and seventh grade, I won the IB "Risktaker" award. An old man chased me down the street for ding-dong-ditching his house. I balled up a sandwich at lunch and threw it at a boy across the table. I got a note home and three days of lunch detention, and I skipped two of them. I was carefree, a daredevil, and I came as close to death as I could without reaching it.

) nice line

* * *

"Look how hairy you are," the doctor said. I stared at her. I couldn't believe she had been so rude. I always noticed my father's blonde gorilla arms, and felt incredibly self-conscious of my own. I thought they were genetic. "Don't you see?" she said, pointing. "And look at your back; it's so fuzzy." I hoped I was dreaming. "It's your body's mechanism to keep itself warm, like a blanket. You don't have enough body fat, so it's taking survival measures."

I didn't care what the doctor said, that she claimed my body was eating itself alive. I needed my rules for reassurance that I was good enough. They made me feel safe. I didn't know who I would be without them, if I could live with myself, in my body, every day. I feared what I'd turn into, what I would look like. For the first time in my life, I wanted to be left alone.

OK...
what are
repetitions?
explain

My fears kept me from healing, and anorexia turned me into a liar. I lied about what I ate, what I didn't. I drank five pints of water before weigh-ins. I ignored the dizziness, the sodium imbalance, the fact that my kidneys might fail. I ignored that my lungs felt like water jugs filling up. Out of touch with my body, I didn't realize how unhappy I'd become. I settled into my routine, and getting up in the morning guilt-free after a day of routine-following made up for the

) wow

rest of the miserable day. Those days passed in a fog. I went to Kings Dominion and fainted on every roller coaster. Whenever I stood up, I had to hold onto a wall until my vision returned. When I went for a run, my heart skipped beats. I spent days on the couch, waiting until 3:30pm, when my rules finally gave me permission to eat twelve pretzel rods. I lived in that haze, going through the motions of life, but disconnected from reality.

Holy cow
when did you start doing this & why?

When my parents and doctors told me I must break my rules in order to live, I didn't care what happened to me. I didn't want my parents' rules, or any doctor's. I swore I would do anything to break them; I vowed I would use my body to talk, to show them how stubborn I could be, instead of my words. Anorexia turned me back into a rule-breaker.

What was this about?
Nice turn of phrase here

A few weeks later, on the way to therapy, I jumped from my father's moving car. I hadn't thought I would actually leap out, but my feet hit the ground first and pulled the rest of my body out after. At a force of thirty miles per hour, I landed, broken in the road, crying, my feet stinging. Expressionless, my dad picked me up, not saying a word. I no longer felt like his daughter, just some object that he was responsible for tending. He put me into the passenger seat and continued driving, like I was only a piece of paper that had flown out of the window, one that he had to retrieve because he might need it some day. I didn't fight him; being in his warm arms for a few seconds comforted me.

this is a very moving scene

In the session, I stared at the wall.

"You're not talking because you're hungry," my therapist accused me.

I'm not talking because I hate you, I thought, but didn't break my silence. It seemed like a waste of energy to even listen to her unreasonable advice.

explain why did you hate her? why was it unreasonable?

* * *

The next day when I got home from the dietician, I ran away. I hadn't been allowed to run for a week, and I didn't know how else to feel better. She had taken away my running, my single happiness. I didn't know who I was anymore. I couldn't remember the ambitious, rule-breaking girl I used to be, and I missed her. This kind of rule breaking wasn't fun, but I couldn't stop.

"Don't do it, don't run," my father said, holding my wrists. We stood in the doorway of the house, he still in his work clothes, and me in my running clothes.

"Just leave me alone," I said, breaking his grip and falling out the front door when the tension disappeared. I stumbled a few steps then turned around and ran.

"Let's go to Target," I heard my mother tell my brother as I left. "Let's get out of the house." *was this real?*

I didn't know how far I'd make it, but I kept running and vowed not to stop until someone made me. Rebelling felt good again, but deep down, I feared that whoever stopped me in the darkness might not be my parents, and scared that my heart might stop first.

After a few street-lit blocks, I saw our car on the other side of the street. I turned into the parking lot of the YMCA. The car followed me, and I ran toward the closest exit.

"Camille, stop!" my mother yelled out the window. I didn't look behind me. I just wanted to finish my run. "Just stay in the parking lot," she screamed, "where it's safe." I knew my brother was in the car too; they hadn't made it to Target. I ran past the exit, circling the inside, keeping my distance from the car. I made hundreds of loops around the building, cars, and bushes. I felt like the whole city was watching me go crazy. Forty-five minutes later, I was still running, but the night turned too cold and the parking lot too dark. I screamed into the car's direction that I was going home, and left the lot, my mom and brother following me through the quiet neighborhood.

*good details
your parents
must have
been
tempted
desperate
to help you*

* * *

I accepted my sickness that night. Crying and sprawled on the floor, going in and out of consciousness. Nobody's rules worked, and all I could say through my tears was, "What do I do? What do I do?" and my parents kept saying, "Just trust us, we all want the same thing for you." "But I can't," I sobbed. Then it would get too much again, and I couldn't calm myself down, and the room would turn into blackness.

I wanted my old life back. I remembered when I didn't correlate food with how I felt about my body. I remembered being conscious the whole time at Kings Dominion the year before and laughing about how tiny people looked from the top of the rides. I remembered when my father and I were best friends. I remembered dancing in the kitchen with him when dinner was cooking. I would stand on his feet, and we would stumble around, taking giant steps. His warm hands held mine, and I felt safe. I wanted to feel the same way again, but not from being lifted from the middle of the road.

This is a very nice paragraph esp. the part about your dad.

I had no voice anymore. The disorder had manifested itself into my bony body, and the words I spoke were not even my own. *good*

"No thank you," I would say when someone offered me food, but everything in my body screamed, "Yes, please, I'm dying." My head was in charge, and my weak frame listened when it was told to shut up. I didn't know why these strict rules existed, or where they originated, but I didn't question them.

when did you start using them? what were the rules?

I spoke a different language from my brain. This illness was defeating me, hurting me, keeping me in that fog. It told me that I was invincible if I stuck to the rules, hiding the truth that I would die if something didn't change. My body showed how much I hurt through my thinning

hair and gray skin; however, I couldn't keep communicating like this because soon, I wouldn't be communicating at all.

* * *

A few weeks later, when I checked into treatment, they took away everything, except for the clothes I wouldn't outgrow.

"Do you ever get dizzy when you stand up?" the exam nurse asked. I wore a thin yellow gown, and sat on the metal table.

"No," I said, "Not really."

"Are you on any non-prescribed medications?"

"No," I answered through my dazed Adderall high.

"Camille, this isn't a game," the nurse said. "We have your medical records and know the answers. I'm going to ask you again. Do you ever get dizzy and are you on any non-prescribed medications?"

"Yes."

She handed me my pink pajama pants and asked for my Nike running shorts before I changed. Then she led me down the hall where I signed the piece of paper that made me aware of everything they confiscated-- my pens, pencils, erasers, and even my school agenda because it had healthy living tips in the front.

"You can talk to the other patients before lunch," the nurse said, pointing to a couch in an empty room with a fireplace. "They'll come out of the lounge after their community meeting. You can read the rules in your binder while you wait."

I opened my binder, and as soon as I read the first rule, I was glad I had taken the drugs that numbed me from crying.

*by choice? how old are you?
who is they?*

*what does
this place
look like?
describe
tell us
more.*

1. *Meal plan compliance is mandatory. If food is refused, the patient will be given Boost, a supplement with nutritional equivalence. If Boost is refused, the patient will then be given a feeding tube to deliver nutrition.*

I recognized these rules as nonnegotiable, unlike my parents' contracts that I signed and ^{broke} ~~knew~~ I ~~would break anyway~~. I wasn't in charge of anything anymore, and the people in charge wanted to help me become the person I had been incapable of turning into on my own.

* * *

The days passed, with meal plan increases, therapy sessions, and doctors' appointments. I became medically stable enough to walk across the street for school--the highlight of my days. I had gotten so tired of solitaire and coloring. When we went outside, the nurses carried our school books and made us walk in slow motion. I had never appreciated fresh air before and felt bad for all the times I had taken advantage of being outside. Even in the Colorado winter, the cold only made me feel alive; it felt nice not to be numb anymore.

* * *

My roommate's name was Teigan. At night, we lay in bed in silence, with the door cracked for the nurses' fifteen-minute room checks. Usually, I would drift off to sleep, eavesdropping on the staff talking and charting in the hallway. But their conversations were boring, and I was sick of hearing about who needed to clean the exam room or send an email. My therapist had challenged me to try to start a conversation with Teigan, as a way to confront my social anxiety.

what was her story?
was she your age?

"When your primary coping skill, which was restricting, is taken away, anxiety increases. It's important that you show yourself that you can be confident and outgoing without an eating

disorder,” my therapist said. I knew she was right-- I couldn't imagine ding-dong ditching that man's house now without having an anxiety attack over what he thought of me.

“Where are you from?” I asked Teigan.

“San Antonio.”

There was a pause as I tried to think of another question to ask her.

“I want to do something fun,” she said. “I'm so tired of doing nothing all day. I'm going even crazier just from being here.”

“Wouldn't it be funny to hide? When they walked into our room for their checks, they'd have no clue where we were.”

“Yes,” Teigan said, “That's perfect. Let's get in the closets.”

Nerves shot through me, imagining the inevitable “Girls? Where are you?” to come. No Adderall, no running, no restricting, and I was feeling something. I wanted to be reckless again, to take risks, to live in excitement.

“And when we get in trouble, we can say it was exposure therapy-- we did something spontaneous to break our usual routines.”

We were both sitting up in bed, our bradycardic hearts beating at normal rates. “What have our lives have come to--” Teigan began, her voice replaced itself with laughter, and she fell back onto her bed. “The funniest part of our day is hiding in a freaking closet.”

“Don't laugh too hard,” I grinned, “You'll burn too many calories and you know what'll happen next.”

“Boost!” we both shrieked, sucking in breaths and holding our aching stomachs-- my first involuntary ab workout in a long time.

*maybe end differently?
This feels abrupt.*

*Camille,
This essay is powerful - lots of showing, not telling. A few more scenes might make it even better. I loved (and was terrified by) the one of you jumping out of the car, and I could picture you running in the parking lot. After writing is hard + alive & great job! A hoot, perhaps? :))*

Rough Revolution

by

IsMonie Davis

Good - Establishes setting clearly

I grew up in that neighborhood, the one between Clairlin and Beth Streets, with the cracked asphalt streets covered in broken bottles and old cigarette butts. I grew up in that neighborhood where the crooked old men with the dirty brown skin smiled at the young chocolate girls, like myself, as we crossed the street to go to Mr. Holden's Snack Shack, the convenience store at the corner of Clairlin.

"Mm, y'all some fine young girls," one scruffy man, named Rufus, the only light one of the group, called out to us. His daughter Ruth was my oldest friend; we'd been friends since pre-K at Wanda's, which wasn't really a school of any kind, just a neighbor's apartment that all the neighborhood kids went to learn how to say our ABC's. Ruth was

also my prettiest friend, you know, with the light brown, flawless skin and those pretty hazel eyes that all the boys love. She was my opposite and I think that's why we clicked. We looked at each other wide-eyed and hurried across the street with our eyes turned toward the dark street littered with Styrofoam and those noisy red plastic cups that surrounded the shack.

I grew up in the household where my mother allowed my stepfather to look at me like I was that fresh tenderloin in the meat aisle at the Food Lion on Hill Street. I was the girl who accepted that I was just going to be a "big booty and a smile" for the rest of my life without any regards to my intelligence; well, at least that's how the older guys at my school

made me feel. I was just going to be that stereotype because I was darker, and therefore the darker my skin the lower my IQ.

I always had a small feeling that felt differently, and that small feeling grew. I was tired of the little snickers in class when I would answer the hard questions right in Mrs. Allred's advanced geometry class. It felt like I couldn't know the right answers because I was me. I felt like something was wrong with me that meant that I just couldn't be smart, and each passing day in high school I felt that this lack of respect was only because I was a girl. I was on the academic competition science team, one of two of the only girls on the whole team, and the only black one. When we were at competitions, I answered all of the questions I knew correctly, almost every time, and when I didn't get the answers right, my own teammates snickered and howled with laughter because I didn't deserve ever to be right in their eyes. I was even dating a guy, Hakeem Jones, and while he was pretty average, I liked him. At least, I thought I liked him until he broke up with me because he began to suspect I was smarter than him, and I couldn't be smarter than him because I was a girl and girls were supposed to be dumb. He concluded I must be a freak of some new kind.

I decided I wasn't going to allow anyone else to ridicule me and sexualize me any longer. I wasn't going to be the black, scruffy sheep in a world of white, fluffy sheep. I was a woman now, almost halfway finished with my first bachelor's degree at Saint Peter's Polytechnic University, and I deserved to be treated as an adult, and if that wasn't enough, then maybe those clowns weren't worth my attention. This was what I felt, until I had to meet the real world on the other side of Mr. Holden's Snack Shack. Yeah, ^{I'm} ~~am~~ talking about that little stroll or jaunt from the street that I came from to the world where I would have to prove myself. I was only twenty when the real world hit.

*Contractions
less formal,
More fitting
for the
voice*

"You remember me, girl?" A deep, scratchy baritone voice spoke from across the room, and while I didn't consciously remember the tone, I felt the familiarity roll over me in waves. I didn't look up to find the source of the voice and kept my head tucked as I walked to the elevator, as I did every morning since starting my internship two weeks ago at a BermaCorp, Inc., a genetic engineering company.

I walked into my metallic haven with the boring brown paneling and pressed the circle that correlated for floor number 6 and kept my head down, hoping that no one would attempt to catch the elevator and interrupt my quiet time. I was wrong.

"Girl, I knows you heard me," Rufus, older and colder in his blue work uniform, but still Rufus-from-the-block ~~says~~^{says}. "You too bougie acting now to remember where you came from?" He laughed then. Why was his voice so familiar? I looked up then and my heart fell.

No. Not here. Why now? Why him? Why me?

"Am I supposed to know who you are?" I hoped the recognition hadn't registered in my eyes as I feigned naivety and ignorance. I stared at the elevator's shiny brown paneling not really seeing it and trying to avoid familiar eyes.

"You still just as fine, Mama, I remember how those smooth legs used to look in those small shor.... Just mm girl." His voice slid over my skin like fog over the creek down the street from my old house, and he smelled like old memories of cigarette butts and St. Ides 40 ounces. Yeah, microcosm in an elevator.

He wasn't always like this, Rufus, not always. He was the guy who lived beside Miss Shirley, the old lady who gave out Dr. Seuss books instead of candy for Halloween; we hated this, but his mother always gave us enough candy to make up for what we would have gotten at Miss Shirley's. He wasn't always like this. Finally the door opened to my

floor, and I couldn't get out of there any faster than I got on. That was the first time it happened.

The second time it happened I stayed over at work to catch up on some lab reports that I hadn't finished, and I'd made a huge mess at my station and had toxic chemicals all over everything and had to call the cleaning crew. And God, a most humorless entity, sent Rufus. Rufus smiled at me as he came to my rescue, the kind of smile that snakes give prey before they eat them. I stepped out of the way to give him space, basically stepping to another lab station and as far out of arm's length as I could get.

"I don't bite unless you want me to, sexy." Rufus had to be at least 54 now, and he was staring at me, his slick skin glinting weird under the light of the desk lamp on the table. I stared at him then, my heartbeat pacing from being so close yet so far away from this man, and I left. Forget the damn lab reports.

I was fed up by the third time. I couldn't deal with him. I couldn't put up with this.

We were alone in the elevator this final time, my floor still forever away and he had just reached the point in our relationship where he was trying to peek under my shirt or would stand under stairwells that I would walk up to see, you know... me.

"I love the way your legs look in skirts, Mama. Your legs would look really great wrapped..." He led off into a garbled jumble of sexual gimmicks and the hair on the back of my neck stood up. I felt sick and thought briefly of barfing on him, but supposed he liked it.

I felt embarrassment and sadness when I thought of Rufus, especially around the friends that I was making at the internship, friends who I imagined wouldn't understand my past and their futures interconnecting. If Rufus wanted to pretend we were friends or that at his age and position that we were compatible, well, then I wanted to pretend that I fit in

here, that this safe and sterile world was possible. I couldn't let the Rufuses of the world cost me that.

Because Rufus was the kind of guy that could never finish what he started; he was the kind of guy who worked dead end jobs but couldn't keep them because of his attitude. Rufus was the kind of guy that worked at Bojangles and got fired because he'd give the pretty girls free cheese biscuits. Rufus was the kind of guy that showed up an hour and a half late to a packing plant where he was the Assistant Manager on his third strike and expected not to get fired. Rufus was just that kind of guy.

Good
Characterization

And I had worked hard to make it where I made it, and wherever that was going, it wasn't with Rufus. And if that made me bad, snobbish, too high and some mighty, then that was just rough. I had plans.

Ruth, my best friend, was Rufus's daughter and we'd been raised together basically; her mother and my mother were the best of friends and we just fell together into the natural order of things. Even Ruth didn't really associate with her father anymore because she always felt like she knew things about him. She told me that this knowledge about him felt like the burning plastic of his cigarette pack wrappers, just waiting to go up in smoke around him. I understood how she felt now. Staying too close around him could get you burned.

"How's Ruth?" I said through clenched teeth, staring at the paneled wall of the elevator, hoping to steer the conversation from how my lipstick fit my skin tone and how my lips fit for the type of woman I was meant to be.

Rufus loved Ruth; it was because of Ruth that he kept trying and trying to be good, but because of himself he tried and failed all the same. Rufus tried to connect with Ruth, bringing her those sweet cones she loved so much and trying to help her with her third grade

math homework, but it didn't work. Ruth, now a third grade teacher upstate with a kid and two dogs stayed away from him like the ends of a fraying rope.

That moment was rough.

He paused his verbal assaulting assessment of my outer appearance and stared at me wide eyed, like he'd just remembered he'd had a daughter, like he couldn't remember that we used to play in the park together after ABC school, like he couldn't remember that at one point of time he'd loved someone so much that he tried to be a good man for her. He looked at me like he couldn't remember; too much unfamiliarity clouded familiar eyes.

The elevator stayed silent then, the air a crackling scene of tension and disbelief, and I could smell Marlboro cigarettes on his dirty grey work uniform.

I didn't understand how the smell of cigarettes would haunt me in my dreams after dealing with Rufus and I don't want to understand. In another month, I'll be back in school and gone. And he'll be here.

But at that moment, he looked at me not as a man looks at a woman, or how bad TV says black men look at black women, but me like a girl and he a man that should be looking out for me rather than looking me over. He looked smaller then as he looked at me, but I didn't say anything to make him smaller. That moment was rough, too.

Yeah, I remember you, Rufus.

I'll always remember you in that elevator, lips silenced, your eyes bleak and letting go of another girl. Or maybe after Ruth, maybe after the first, we're all the same.

And I'll remember you, Rufus, in that elevator in our last moment. How you didn't hurt me when you could, and how you let me walk out the door before you for once without

I thought narrator and Ruth same AGE? No?

Ruth wouldn't be old enough to

have finished her

teaching degree, right?

Or is Ruth a

few years older?

Good Rhythm

comment, how some dignity was restored by this grace. How your grace to stay quiet for once was one small chapter in this rough revolution.

I will always remember you, Rufus.

This is a very powerful story, and
the author does a beautiful
job of capturing the rhythms of
the setting and the cadences of
the dialect. I would strongly
encourage this author to keep
~~the~~ writing.

accent marks

by Aline Dolinh

They agree on this, at least –
a Vietnamese name
is out of the question. She won't have
any of the high soaring tones marked by a *dau sac*
or the hooked curiosity of the *dau hoi* –
accents are too greedy,
too foreign in their pitched notes
when they form words
that demand to fill up mouths.

She'll be an Emily,
a Kate, an Anna –
something safe
in its sweet ubiquity. The kind that melts in your mouth,
easily swallowed in a single gulp. It'll soften
the sharp blow of that surname;
you're supposed to hide it like a secret.
Leave your long languid syllables dead in the throat
and take scissors to the corpses. It won't take long
to trim rounded edges into their syntax. Like any good parents,
they will soon stow these ghosts away
in exchange for something softer.

"too foreign" might be a
bit of an overkill here, but the
personification of the accents
as greedy is brilliant.

Nice use of consonance.

This poem kind of blew me away.
A name that "melts in your mouth, easily
swallowed..."

"Take scissors to the corpses."
- everything in that second verse is
sharp and fresh.