

# 2014-15 VHSL CREATIVE WRITING CONTEST RESULTS

## Folder

1. Thomas Jefferson HS for S/T
2. Woodbridge Senior HS
3. Blacksburg HS
4. George Washington HS
5. Charlottesville HS (tie)  
McLean HS (tie)
7. James Wood HS (tie)  
Tabb HS (tie)

## Essay

- First: "My Song of Bangladesh", Ahnaf Khan, Thomas Jefferson HS for S/T
- Second: "A Thousand Dresses", Pooja Chandrashekar, Thomas Jefferson HS for S/T
- Third: "Namaste", Sara Fergus, James Wood HS
- Honorable Mention: "Sorry", Zoey Fox, Harrisonburg HS

## Short Story

- First: "Dark Fruit", Renee Brittigan, Woodbridge Senior HS
- Second: "Excavation", Katherine Mullet, McLean HS
- Third: "Passed Things", J. Ashley Clark, Charlottesville HS
- Honorable Mention: "The Blue One", Isaac Pickett, Blacksburg HS
- Honorable Mention: "Bubblegum Brain Cancer," Emilee Hackney, Tazewell HS

## Poetry

- First: "Ballad for Pretty Girls by Their Lockers Too Scared to Love", IsMonie Davis, George Washington HS
- Second: "Nefarious", Lauren Cook, Tabb HS
- Third: "Anatomy of a Coffin", Sheng Kao, Blacksburg HS
- Honorable Mention: "Kevin Revisited", Mary Chandler, Appomattox Regional Gov. Sch.

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Total Entries – 33

S = Superior, E = Excellent, G = Good

<u>School</u>	<u>Sponsor</u>	<u>Essay Ratings</u>	<u>Story Ratings</u>	<u>Poem Ratings</u>
Albemarle HS	Charlotte Wood	E & E	E & E	E & G
Appomattox Regional Gov. Sch.	Cindy Cunningham	E & E	G & G	G & S
John S. Battle HS	Jennifer Daniel	E & G	G & G	G & G
Blacksburg HS	Matthew Spring	S & E	S & S	E & S
Chantilly HS	Nichole Lehman	E & E	G & S	G & G
Charlottesville HS	Brian Kayser	S & E	S & S	G & E
Graham HS	Debra Tabor Brewster	E & G	E & G	E & G
Harrisonburg HS	Richard Morrell	S & E	E & E	S & G
Haysi HS	Robin Charles	G & G	G & G	G & S
James River HS-Buchanan	Melissa Eckstein	G & G	G & G	G & G
Thomas Jefferson HS for S/T	Jennifer Seavey	S & S	S & S	G & G
King William HS	Pamela Sanders Beatty	G & G	E & G	G & G
Liberty HS-Beaeton	Timothy Bambara	E & E	G & G	G & G
Loudoun Valley HS	Julie Hildbold	E & E	S & S	E & E
Madison County HS	Phillip Nobblitt	E & E	S & G	G & G
Manchester HS	Rebecca Lynch	G & G	G & G	G & E
McLean HS	Tara Dwyer	E & E	S & S	G & G
Mountain View HS	Melony Star Kiesau	E & E	G & E	G & G
Oakton HS	Susan Sullivan	G & G	G & G	E & G
Prince Edward County HS	Rachel Overstreet	S & E	G & G	G & G
James Robinson Sec. Sch.	Crosby Mouzavires	E & E	G & S	G & G
Tabb HS	Melinda Schenkkan	E & E	G & G	S & G
Tazewell HS	Robert McGraw	E & G	S & G	G & G
Virginia HS	Brad Hutchinson	E & E	G & G	G & G
George Washington HS	Sharon Leigg	E & E	G & G	S & S
James Wood HS	Rhonda Lancaster	S & E	G & E	E & E
Woodbridge Senior HS	Cathy Hailey	E & E	S & S	E & S

## Comments from Essay Judge

I am so very thankful for the opportunity to judge writing from these budding (and very talented) writers. I was universally impressed by these stories-- and by the whole group of work put in front of me. Most impressive was the variety of aesthetics pulled off with aplomb. And by the range I found in the packet: stories about space, about loneliness, death, the aftermath of loss, about violence, regret, war and apocalypse. All of them a pleasure. That being said, judging and choosing winners out of so many good stories was one difficult task. The winning stories each feel 180 stylistic degrees from each other and yet are so successful in achieving their goals. It's clear that these writers are talented, but also that they're diligent in honing their craft and getting impressive guidance in doing so. Super, super impressive.

**1st place:** In "Dark Fruit" I was most impressed by the great voice/narrator, and also the writer's deft use of vernacular combined with stunning images and often lyrical prose: "those things brayed and barked louder than anythin' I'd heard in my life, louder than the sound of the cane hittin' your bare back, or the sound of the whip when someone you love was at the whippin' post...this was the sound of death nippin' at our heels." The events in it are tragic but handled with care and skill, the writer always in control.

**2nd place:** "Excavation" stood out for being a story that is told through litany, a life story communicated via objects found in a rarely visited attic: "You reach into the box again, each time dredging up old memories and thick cobwebs. First, it's a plane ticket to Boston, then a stationary set you'd gotten for your birthin' when you were five, then your mother's sewing shears and a dented old flask of your father's." The prose is beautiful, full of startling images--the writer has a knack for them.

**3rd place:** "Passed things" is a very touching story about loss, the protagonist attempts desperately to hang on to what no longer is, while people around him urge him to move on: "He wanted to breathe, breathe, breathe, and never let the air go. If he let anything go, he would be just like his daughters--desperate to leave everything in the past." The writer, via precise detail and keen observation, has created a world and Edward (the protagonist) is very real: his pain, his longing, his anger and impotence.