

Madeline Gorman  
John F. Kennedy Middle School  
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I float through the wind like a parachute  
or a bird with its wings outstretched, feathers blowing.  
My memory began in a blinding room  
filled with food that glinted from fluorescent lights.  
I was made from the minds of humans, the hands of machines,  
Until, suddenly, the world whizzed with colors  
while I danced along in the wind.  
I was tossed and turned like floating leaves  
through canopies of green.  
It only took a little bit before I felt water filling me up so full  
that I sunk sunk sunk and sunk.  
I thought I was done for when I caught onto something--  
it swam up to the surface and I was saved!  
Sleeping on this creature I felt secure.  
I held onto the rough back for days.  
though finally it came to pass,  
a wind so mighty blew me by  
and I sunk down to the depths, lost forever more.  
Yet don't worry, I found another friend to hold so dear...

I am a turtle,  
Swimming through crystal blue water clear as glass,  
waves that ripple old songs and memories.  
I float day by day, humming my song  
until all that changed.  
Plastic now covers my eyes from light,  
So sheer yet so dangerous--  
I swim and fight though I know the end is near.  
I rest upon a rock with barnacles clinging for dear life,  
My stomach yells for food  
yet my mouth is unable to open.  
I was ready for the end...freedom.  
I swam and swam...safe at last.

Alma Rondina / John F. Kennedy Middle School, Northampton, MA 01067  
5/29/19

Period. 6

Plastic poem

### The little duckling and the tasty plastic bag

Wading boats rOckINg in the subtle ripples  
of the pond,  
an agile dragonfly *skimming* the surface  
of the water, like an aeroplane landing on the smooth concrete  
of the runway.

Gorgeous morning!

Barmy leaves bb ll oo ww ii nn gg from the rheumatic branches  
into the endless depths,

fragile dandelion tufts flying in the whistling wind,  
landing on the glistening water.

Lovely day...

and look at that delicious looking seaweed running across the  
street, like a gazelle fleeing a bloodthirsty lion.

*Boy, am I hungry.*

Little duckling, waddling towards the mouth watering "seaweed".

Just one bite...

and...

**BAM!!!!**

Run over, flat as a pancake.

At least the wee duck had the chance to taste the number one  
killer in the world.

Rosa Sullivan-Merrick/John F. Kennedy Middle School, Northampton, MA 01060

Period 6

May 29, 2019

Oak entangled

I am the oak, tall and brilliant, looming over the other trees of the forest

Grand, proud and strong

Forever unbeaten

Deep emerald leaves dancing about my branches.

Suddenly, something catches in my branches.

A bag.

Ensnared

Caught

Hanging on to my trunk.

Not enough to vex my strength.

But then a second comes

And a third

More and more until I am

Overcome

Overwhelmed

Incapable of continuing

I forfeit the battle

Beaten by something so weak

And yet earth changing

Rayzie Benjamin  
John F. Kennedy Middle School  
Northampton, MA 01060

i remember it  
deep pearly-clear some days  
some days dark blue mysterious  
frothy, bubbling, rushing.  
hadn't been around to visit in awhile, forgot how much i'd missed her.  
went over to the shore, but i couldn't recognize her  
reminded me of the sensation of  
reuniting with a friend who fell out of touch, or  
a pet who ran away  
and showed up awhile later on my red-brick doorstep  
but we no longer shared the special bond.  
it was like that, when i decided to take a swim after years of not  
and i realized, as my toes fell beneath the glowing sand, that  
good things can often disappear before your eyes  
but loyalty comes in disguise  
loyalty: something that never lasts forever if it isn't returned  
can you blame the ocean, really?  
wouldn't you get tired of doing favors  
for everyone except yourself  
and nobody gives you anything in return.  
now the ocean, she is tired of it, and who wouldn't be?  
it's bad enough, people taking you for granted  
but it's worse when people treat you horribly  
when all you've done is given them favors.  
but alas, we've ruined her  
we assumed she'd always be there for us, but she wasn't  
after what we'd done to her, i'm surprised she was ever  
so kind to us in the first place.  
anyway, my visit isn't going too well.  
i can't swim or frolic in the sand with all my children  
who will never, ever know  
the first place i called home.

Yelena Caldanaro / John F. Kennedy Middle School, Northampton, MA 01060

5/29/19

Pr. 5

Plastic Poem

## I Am The Ocean

I am the Ocean.

A shining sapphire gem

Cradling the Earth,

Gripping many wonders of the world.

Every day,

You humans destroy me little by little

But I know

You can also stop this

Every day an assemblage of plastic and trash  
gets dumped onto me.

Soon enough,

all of this non-decomposable debris will cover me in a giant blanket,  
like you who snuggle into your comforters at the end of the day,

And do not recognize this painful headache

It seems alright to you to do this, but you are killing.

Killing the sea animals and rocky coral reefs

even though their lives are just as important as yours.

Your microplastics and non-biodegradable objects are toxifying me,

and all the plastics that look like a pleasant school of fish  
are taunting and confusing.

Your pollution, making me a vile place to be,  
when once I was so pleasing and useful to you.

What is the point of me talking about this to you now?

I want you to hear me,

and to know how hard it has become

for me to

be the

Ocean.

Colette Piotrowski / John F. Kennedy Middle School, Northampton, MA 01060

Period 5

5/29/19

Plastic Poem

The Death of Mother Nature

Everything is plastic.  
From a middle school perspective, that is.  
From people to emotions,  
From plastic water bottles to the sad smiles.  
But we still have the green of the earth, beckoning us to  
just sit in the shade of our favorite maple tree and read.  
But we can't,  
Because underneath that old, old maple tree,  
Lay an abundance of different plastic and other materials  
People  
"Forgot"  
To throw away.  
Or that classic  
Excuse  
"It's not mine!" with those  
Colossal  
Bright  
Doe  
Eyes that always seem  
To work with  
People,  
But never with Gaia.  
So I suppose we don't really still have  
Good ol' mother nature.  
No, I suppose we only have the  
Landfills with newspapers from the 1950's and that  
Plastic bag your mother  
Used at Whole Foods, 2006.  
So we just sit inside,  
Mocking  
The people who try to  
Help.

Zachary Elder  
John F. Kennedy Middle School  
Northampton, MA 01060

I am a tree,  
majestic,  
unmovable,  
a wooden giant  
who has withstood  
the elements  
time and time again.  
Watch me dance  
with the wind  
swaying,  
to a nothing tune.  
Watch the rain  
bend my limbs,  
as if I  
could not support myself.  
Yet as the years go on,  
I find myself unable to breathe,  
unable to feel  
anything other than  
the plastic bags  
that now cover my once  
exquisite branches.  
My leaves have no room  
to grow,  
and I am slowly dying.  
Plastic sands  
cover my roots,  
crawling over them  
with an unfillable need.  
I am fighting a futile war,  
against the ever growing  
plastic army.

Ada Griffin/John F. Kennedy Middle School, Northampton, MA 01060

5/29/19

Per.4

## Intertwined

What disheartens me most

Is to walk in nature.

To see the brilliant sunlight filter through a pellucid plastic bag

Finding a home in the branches of a tree.

The great umber stalks of oaks

Surrounded by dust filled amber bottles and silver cans,

They beg me to free them of this mess.

Save them from the fate that seems imminent.

The aurelian sands of crowded beaches

Littered with the remains of visitors past,

Like corpses on a battlefield.

Which in a way they are

Warriors have gone to arms

To protect the earth we know and love,

Armed with garbage bags and gloves.

Prepared to fight.

But not all people are like this.

Rivers of detritus still flow by

Debris still builds up across the globe.

Our way of life is

Unsustainable.

It seems

Unconquerable.

But I won't give in just yet.

I refuse to watch the earth crumble.

We can fix our mistakes,

Right our wrongs,

And let our broken world mend.

Oona Weaver / John F. Kennedy Middle School, Northampton, MA 01060

5.28.19

P:4

### Candy Flowers

I see mallards floating along the surface of the pond,  
Letting the wind sail them around.

I take a closer look,  
It is not a flock of mallards,  
But a group of colorful soda bottles  
gliding around the edge of the water.

I spot golden dandelions speckling a hill.

I take a closer look,  
It is not a patch of luscious yellow flowers,  
But neon candy wrappers scattered along the grass.

I notice the long billowing  
branches of a nearby willow tree.

I take a closer look.  
It is not leaves swaying in the breeze,  
But plastic bags caught on one of the branches.

Candy flowers, plastic trees, and decoy ducks.  
Is this really us?

Florine Mulcahy / John F. Kennedy Middle School, Northampton, MA 01060

Per. 4

5-30

The tree stands on the beach,  
At the junction of worlds,  
Where the rocky grass fades  
Into smooth, golden sand,  
Crystal blue waves lapping at the shore.

It stands firmly,  
Hundreds of lifetimes buried in its roots,  
Thousands of secrets hidden in its branches.  
It watches quietly, contentedly, as the world spins on,  
Grateful for the roots and soil keeping it bound, safe.

Things begin to shift.

Strange, brightly colored objects  
Begin to invade the once empty sand.  
Crystal blue waves turn dark, murky.  
The tree watches, a bad feeling growing in its roots.  
The only visitors are the birds.  
They peck at the objects, curious.  
The tree's bad feeling grows.

One of the birds edges closer  
To a bright red hunk that glints in the sun.  
The tree watches,  
Frozen.  
The bird shifts, its beak opening.  
The tree strains,  
Cursing the roots and the soil keeping it bound, trapped.  
Trying to call out  
NO!  
But the words don't come.  
The bird lunges.

Time seems to stop.

And then the bird  
Swallows.

Sophie Calkins / John F. Kennedy Middle School, Northampton, MA 01060  
5/29/19  
Period 2

Trapped in Plastic  
The Life of a Sea Turtle

I push my beak up against the wall that's surrounding me  
Smooth and moist, like dewy morning grass.  
I fight the pressure pushing back on me,  
**CRACK!** The shell gives in  
I peer out the small opening to see a blanket of blue-gray sky hovering above me.  
This egg is no longer mine.

I *wiggle* out of the gap  
And climb out of the sandy hole I was tucked in,  
Revealing myself to this new world.  
I feel grainy sand brush up against my wet fins.  
It sticks to them like glue.  
Hundreds of other baby turtles burst out of their eggs, exposing themselves to the scary world  
that's waiting for them.

Together, we waddle our way to the water  
We reach the sea,  
but we've lost many turtles along the way,  
to hungry predators eager for a meal.  
The waves grab the survivors and send us plunging deep,  
Into the cold, salty, water that will be our new home.

**Strong, powerful, waves** force us to spread apart  
And we scatter like a flock of birds, when a human gets too close.  
I'm all alone in this new habitat.  
Watching my new world open up to me.

Curiosity takes over my mind.  
And a colorful shape surfing the waves catches my attention.  
I glide across the water chasing the object, like a game of tag.  
Finally, I catch up and see that it's a bright and friendly green.  
My stomach growls, and now I know it's food.  
I swallow it down without a second thought.  
Little do I know that this is a marine entanglement.  
A piece of plastic lost in the ocean.  
An object that will end my life.

ARLO GREEN

John F. Kennedy Middle School

Northampton, MA 01060

**T**eaming with life  
rippling waters  
imagine my horror, my disgust,  
as I watched sparkling emerald water  
grudgingly consume our waste.

**O**mnipotent river  
groaning as  
the plasticine rubbish  
thudded into the deep,  
a thorn, stuck in the depths of the river's soul. Like a

**X**enolith, it will stay  
embedded in the riverbed  
until after years of agony  
the mighty river withers  
into a caked collage of synthetic bones.

**I**mmortal bits of HDPE  
may remain longer than the  
skeletons of our friends and family,  
existing in corners no human could reach.

**C**reated by our ancestors,  
and has taken on a life  
of its own.  
Now only we  
can save the river before  
it becomes... [See Large Font]

Roan Dunkerley  
John F. Kennedy Middle School  
Northampton, MA 01060

Dear Plastic,

Why?

Why do you drift, blowing in the wind?

Why do you move, going, but going nowhere? You constantly seek what is always out of reach, like the sun almost, but not, touching the moon.

Your origins are scarred with terror, a tumultuous pummeling as you emerged into the sunlight, ripped out from beneath the earth's crust. But there is no excuse for the torture, and torment you've caused your own mother, and all creatures of the light and dark alike. Unwanted, but needed, there is no future where you are gone, so you stay, still drifting, still going.

You always end up with your kind, on land or sea. Heaping piles of waste, for that is all you are.

When the end of time has come and our beings and bones are gone, you will still be here, still drifting, wandering, like my thoughts, but still, going nowhere.

Sincerely,

Earth

James Stauder

John F. Kennedy Middle School

Northampton, MA 01060

### I am Big Blue

The vast ocean that stretches across all corners of the earth.

I am the habitat for billions of creatures and billions more depend on the bounty of resources that lay in my waters.

Some worship me. Some fear me.

But some do not care for

My importance. Their foul machines

pollute my waters dumping chemicals and

Trash into my waters. My heated waters are

Spewed with every object imaginable. The time is overdue

to remove this trash from are Great Blue--act now before I disappear

and plastic withers away on my littered floor.

Christopher Huntley  
John F. Kennedy Middle School  
Northampton, MA 01060

## I Am the Wasted

I am the wasted  
The hated  
The lost  
Caught in the wind  
Carried far  
Stuck in a tree someone--pulls me down  
I blow away  
And help make a baby whale drown  
I was thrown in the trash  
And sent to a landfill  
I did not stay  
I blew away  
And that's all that I can say  
If I were recycled I could be free  
And maybe  
Just maybe be,  
A bench  
A slide  
A bike  
A car,  
Or a fan  
A fence  
A desk  
Or a wall  
I could be a ball  
Or a toy that is small,  
But instead I am  
The baby whale killer  
The landfill filler  
And the global warming fulfiller  
I am a plastic bag

Dalia Dembling  
John F. Kennedy Middle School  
Northampton, MA 01060

The old folks tell tall tales... of whispering trees.  
The trees used to speak, and listen with their leaves.  
Travelers would never be alone in the forest,  
For critters dwelled there...  
Bright colored and many-legged.  
Leepos and Cherry Ants and Five-Eyed Fireflies,  
Would dance, and sing songs 'round the fire,  
For the trees to sing along.

But soon as did perish these petite little bugs, along with the trees  
As the forests caught fire  
before they were discovered.  
Sapiens came along, but wise they were not.  
They trashed their planet  
With distinct rudeness and flare,  
And the trees did not speak, they never did dare.  
But their eyes still follow weary visitors of the forest  
Hoping one of them will help them  
And start treating earth fair.

So someday, perhaps,  
A little boy or little girl,  
Will pass through the forest  
Looking for squirrel or for bear,  
And find instead a small beetle  
The color of the sun.  
A small orange creature,  
Buried under a rock  
The last of its kind,  
Alone and forgot.  
And unless these children  
Have been raised to really care,  
This child will leave the poor beetle

To rot.

Clementine Mulcahy/John. F. Kennedy Middle School, Northampton MA 01060

Period 5

June 8

Poem Project

The lighthouse watches on its rocky perch

As Mr. Sun begins to lay his sleepy head.

His eye sweeps around the island

Watching.

Baby birds coo softly nestling into their mother.

A faun, fast asleep,

Nuzzles against her father.

As the inky blackness of night

Spreads across the sky,

The wolf gives one last howl.

Ocean waves lap up against the shore

Slapping the stones.

Another night.

The watchtower closes its eyes

Dreaming of seabirds

Scooping up wriggling,

Silver fish in their strong beaks.

But then

His eye snaps open.

Something strange

Has hit his rocks.

A plastic bottle thunks against the cobblestone.

A shopping bag caught in a tree

Waves limply like a flag in the wind.

The ocean spits out colorful bottle caps and straws.

The lighthouse watches in horror

As a turtle swallows

A bit of plastic cup.

A strong wind whips through the trees.

*I'm sorry*

It whispers.

*I'm sorry.*