

Honorable Mention Junior Poetry
Micah Baum
Norfolk Academy, Dr. Jennifer Gildea

Whispers

A room.

There is a light, happy, joyous light, but I cannot see the source

Nor can I shake the feeling of artificiality.

There is something nagging at the back of my brain

Whispering to me to be cautious.

I call out

I call out what I know, what I believe, what I think

I call out who I am, who I was, who I want to be

I call out to no one in particular, for no reason in particular.

And I listen.

I listen to my cries echo off the walls

Those falsely lit walls

And I hear the echoes.

Echoes that reaffirm my outburst

Echoes that assure me of my correctness.

Echoes that profess to me that I am not wrong

Whispering to me that I am right.

There are other noises too.

Whispering to me that my opinion is insignificant.

Why should I care?

There are people who agree with me. They know that I am right.

They must be a more reliable source.

I realize where the light is coming from.

I hear more voices.

These are not echoes, though.

They seem somehow out of place

And artificial, more artificial than the light.

The voices tell me of the horrors that others have committed

Urging me to reject them

Shun them

Cast them off.

I attempt to ignore them, but they grow louder

Gaining confidence the more I lose it

Incessantly preaching propaganda to advance their schemes.

Whispering to me to accept the truth.

However, I know that it is not *the* truth, but only *their* truth that is being pounded into my brain

I see now why the light seemed artificial.

I need to break out of the room

I need to stand up

I need to speak out to all.

“I” must become “We.”

Like the White Rose, we will not be silent.

We will not let the misinformation wash over us like water over a riverbed

We will not act like nothing is happening.

We will be the voice

Whispering to innocents to think for themselves

Whispering to the pure to spread the word

Whispering to all to act based on fact

That is what we must do.

The future of truth rests in our hands

We cannot allow it to slip through them

For truth depends on us.