

# Neighbor



## Creative expressions

### Art and writing contest: Third place

This week we are publishing the winners of the Arts Unlimited Daily Herald and District 214 Art and Writing Contest.

On Thursday, we ran the first-place winners. On Friday, we featured the second-place winners.

Today, we feature the third-place winners.

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• Prose honorable mention

The annual contest was open to residents of all ages who reside in Northwest Suburban High School District 214. To view all winners, visit [www.dailyherald.com](http://www.dailyherald.com).

### Third place, poetry: 'Fire and Ice'

**BY ALEXIS PETRIELLI**  
Rolling Meadows

*Judge's comment: There is a lot of emotion and passion in this poem; this helps readers connect, because the poet must trust us to share these powerful feelings with us! At the same time, there is a bit of mystery presented in the poem's contradictions — from the "fire that almost doesn't want to be found" to the "icebergs in the path of the Titanic." I like that the poem ends with a question, so that the mystery lingers.*

Close the drapes  
but leave the windows open  
to let the cold seep in

because I don't mind it.  
Let me feel the icy shards  
of darkness  
searching for the fire in the storm  
that almost doesn't want to be found.  
Let me feel you, but not contract you;  
your tune ever so sweet,  
melody pouring out of your strings,  
getting to me, but not infecting me.  
Let me breathe the inevitable power  
Of the night:  
parties at two,  
writing at four,  
driving at six  
to chase the first signs of light.  
Pulsating, piercing

through my skin,  
the light diminishes,  
feeling like  
an icicle  
melting.  
I was fine until I met you.  
You were the queen  
and I was your princess,  
begging to be free  
from your icy palace  
when I wanted my own  
in the evergreen forest  
where I can light the match  
and breathe.  
Not harming, but healing;  
lighting the way for the green around me:  
flowers blooming,  
blossoming their delicate petals

and beaming like freckles  
in the mirror  
of the clearest pond  
I've ever seen glimmer.  
Until you froze it.  
And extinguished my flame.  
And the world weighs heavy on my shoulders  
because I'm not allowed to find balance.  
Because they force me to keep silent,  
as if they are afraid.  
But they don't have to be icebergs in the path of the titanic.  
And so I've been wondering,  
when will I feel that flame again?

### Third place, prose: 'A Breath of Air'

**BY JANANI VENKAT RAMANAN**  
Wheeling

*Judge's comment: It's the sounds in this story that captivate the reader, beginning with wailing sirens and ending with a click. And there are sounds throughout the piece from both the past and the present: voices of teachers, friends, parents, a hospital staff. The ending leaves us wanting more conversation. I imagine teachers turning that click of the phone and the conversation that might follow into a writing assignment for their students.*

The wailing sirens sound like music.  
"I don't know what happened," someone says. "She was just talking with me, and

she fell over." It's a voice I recognize, but I can't remember who.  
"Don't worry. We'll take care of her," an unfamiliar voice says.  
The sirens increase in volume, drowning out the response. Someone drags me onto a flat, hard surface. My fingers graze cool metal.  
My vision blurs as they move me. I must be on some kind of stretcher. Dark spots dance in the corners of my vision as they pull my stretcher into an ambulance. Someone slams the doors, and the vehicle starts moving.  
"Where — " I try to sit up, and a stab of pain pierces through my body.  
Someone shushes me and pushes me back onto the

stretcher. "Relax, sweetheart. You're safe."  
I squint more. There's a nurse sitting next to me. The steady sound of the ambulance moving fills my ears. As I watch, she grabs a tube and brings it toward my arm.  
Pain shoots up my arm. I must've made some sound, for she squeezes my hand.  
I got vaccine shots when I was younger. My parents holding my hands, I'd wail and sob. They'd shush me and tell me I'd be OK. I'd squeeze my eyes shut.  
Relax, honey. It'll be over in a second. Ready? Good! Here's a sticker since you were so brave, the doctor said.  
The ambulance stops

See **PROSE** on **PAGE 2**

### Third place, 'Italian Birds'



"Italian Birds" by Emily DePaz, Arlington Heights

*Judge's comment: The ability to see potential in nonconventional materials can be very powerful when done with creativity. This piece utilizes found imagery and cut paper to gracefully depict complex forms simply and lovingly; the weightlessness of the birds transcends the heavy earth that adorns the pastel feathers.*

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