

2009 - 2010
CBC Writing Competition
Junior Entry
Category: Poetry
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The Drive to Succeed

My life hangs in the balance
between ink and adoration
epigrams can't help me now
in suspended animation.

Words a black and belching storm
my mind's a barren plain
Success is my *noblesse oblige* —
and life's enduring bane.

Perfection at the minimum
is rare, like hot-house flowers
yet white bread's molding,
so silver spoons against
my dirty grades are clacking.

I've stared into the Gorgon's mouth
on the cliffs of Win and Null
and seen in vast and joyless depths
my future – inane and cold.

White picket fence,
housewife, trailer park,
inexorable monotony –
all await me in the Gorgon's throat,
the bowels of mediocrity.

I've come so close to tumbling down
her rabbit hole of teeth.
Yet always I run scrambling, scuttling back,
an amaranthine leech.

Somehow I always lag behind
in this labyrinth of letters
A, B, A, B, A, B, STOP! –
an F, obese,
forever.

Just one tiny, transient glimpse
of failure's monstrous years
has shown she doesn't steal my sight,
but rather dries my tears.

A lack of strength,
not Lilliputian sense
is what holds me here confined.
Oh how oh how oh how can I
procure an iron mind?

A lazy, lagging, cancerous will
is like my ball and chain.
Failure whispers "cut it out!
Or don't wake up again."

High atop a mountain's peak
or in an ivied glen
Greatness waves a glimmering hand
"Just catch me if you can!"

Letters blaring "ok-go!"
she holds within my grasp –
but the ground is quaking!
Fingers – why do you forsake me
and let time breach the hour-glass?

When I am stuck, how can I compete
with legacies, smarts, and skin?
Pressing on the jugular
my future's moldering in.

So tell me something I don't know
as my childhood's set to sever.
I must, I must, I must succeed!
Or be
irrelevant
forever.