



Honorable Mention Teen Age Group

Anxiety's Spiderweb

Beads of sweat prickle my skin
from that neverending sound of
the pencil sharpener.
It spins round and round, sharpening
and scraping at my mind, leaving an
unsettling lump in my throat.

The delicate skin that frames my nails
gets peeled back like a chisel on wood.
My mind spins and spins at the loudness
of it all like a carousel at a jammed carnival.

My ears ring like deafening church bells
and my enmity grows as repose seems
more and more fleeting.
I'm like a ribbon, stretched out and tongue-tied,
wrapped up tighter than a noose.

The pencil sharpener hums a roar
and continues to turn like a broken record player,
going in an endless cycle where time stops.
As my pulse begins to quicken,
so does my breath.
I'm playing tug of war with that wretched
Sensation buzzing away from the sharpener.

All I feel is the tip-taping of my pencil,
Perfectly in sync with my heart and soul
Tik-tocking like a metronome.
Small pats turn into booms echoing around the room.

This feeling I so abhor is the felon behind
all my loathing of the world being masked
by nauseating fear.
It crawls up slowly
like a spider on my back,
ready to spin its thread
around its innocent victim.

By Daniela Vallarta