**
1st place: Lily Parker**School: Colgan High School
“Creatures of the Night“

What is a poet’s purpose

When she dips her quill in her keyboard’s ink

and scribbles across the screen?

Is she to inspire wandering souls?

Entertain as if she were a jester in a king’s court?

Teach some worldly secret or 8th wonder of the world?

Or does she write for herself and pile her work in her attic

until her words are found and published once she is dead?

She writes the truth and passes her words to those who listen

Lists her struggles with living a cruel life

and laments the difficulty of seeking happiness

She finds inspiration from simplicity

and writes nothing more than a simple piece taken at face value.

But does she decide what her purpose is?

Or does society decide it for her?

Does she choose the fate of her lyrical composition?

Or did the descendant who scoured her attic take it from her?

Did the king she jests for make her a laughingstock of the kingdom?

Or is her simple piece about nothing but a little pink flower

taken as a metaphor that she never meant her words to be?

A poet’s purpose isn’t definable until she has written the poem to completion

Until an audience, her intended one or not, finds her poem

And collectively, they decide what to make of it

They decide if it falls in the ocean depths where angler fish swim

or created from a basic mind that cannot move past the cliché

A poet’s purpose isn’t formulated by her own design

but by those who feed on it

like creatures of the night.