

**Judge: Lori Weber**

**Winner:**

Kate Irwin, "The Emerald Eyes"

This story impressed me by how well it is written. The voice of the narrator is very strong and the descriptions of the circus in India vivid. The reader feels the pain of the young girl watching the elephants being mistreated, and the pain of the elephants themselves. The structure is clever. The narrator is an old woman at the start, then she tells the story of how she rescued the elephants in grade 3 as a long well-developed flashback. At the end, the story returns to the old woman's current life (and the special elephant). The story fits in well with the theme because the courage of this child is enormous and she was able to change the fate of the elephants. This story pulls the reader in from start to finish with the smooth prose and flawless writing. The final image of the emerald eyes of the elephant is striking.

**Honourable Mentions:**

Kashtin Woodhouse

This personal narrative is very moving because of the story it tells of a native boy who learns that he can have a big impact on the world, perhaps as big as Martin Luther King had on his. It shows the importance of having a mentor or someone who takes the time to make you feel important, like Kirby Russell does for Kashtin. I like the way the writer then takes this newfound confidence to help his own community, by designing an anti-drug campaign. The style of the essay is effective because the author includes strong dialogue and description to tell his story. The story unfolds well, moving from experience to experience in a way that pulls the reader in. The essay fits the theme perfectly.

Jordan Walsh

This poem is a very moving depiction of soldiers in the midst of combat in world war one. The author uses vivid images to depict the horror that young men, probably not much older than the author himself, had to endure. All five senses are used to describe the situation and render the horror. The poem gives the message that war should never be glorified. Poems like this can indeed change the world because they contain a strong message of peace.