### WRITERS’ CONFERENCE WINNERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5TH GRADE WINNERS</th>
<th>6TH GRADE WINNERS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Olivia Roussel</td>
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<td>Ethan Teel</td>
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<td>Isabella Von Seggern</td>
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<td>Devon Lewis</td>
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<td>Caleb Walda</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Chloe Park</td>
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<td>Lucy Gray</td>
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<td>Joseph Hughes</td>
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<td>Ode to a Poem</td>
<td>Naomi Gephart</td>
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<tr>
<td>Together</td>
<td>Adel Quta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spooky Shadows</td>
<td>Tommy Tsai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letting Go</td>
<td>Olivia Scavo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Empty Promise</td>
<td>Madeline Phuong</td>
</tr>
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<td>My Dog</td>
<td>Ana Bierbaum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendship</td>
<td>Amia Carter</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Little Things in France</td>
<td>Julia Beatty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War</td>
<td>Kayden Ptak</td>
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<td>Maria Krotov</td>
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<td>Camille Coker</td>
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<td>Performer</td>
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<td>Swisher</td>
<td>Amber Choi, Grade 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stars</td>
<td>Daniel Coker, Grade 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lion</td>
<td>Harley Babbitt, Grade 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life</td>
<td>Eric Wever, Grade 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broken</td>
<td>Avery Biggs, Grade 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ballerina</td>
<td>Maile Smits, Grade 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emblem</td>
<td>Marissa Toole, Grade 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ode to Middle School</td>
<td>Georgia Gray, Grade 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rain</td>
<td>Mahri Romano, Grade 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mirror Effect</td>
<td>Alexandro Robles, Grade 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country's Sonnet Song</td>
<td>Isabella Von Seggern, Grade 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless yet Happy</td>
<td>Micah Holder, Grade 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>America</td>
<td>Zachary Tempel, Grade 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinnacle of No Emotion</td>
<td>Vincent Rorick, Grade 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Night Sun</td>
<td>Vonnia Anwar, Grade 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This Girl Is Going to be Queen</td>
<td>Sophie Terrell, Grade 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Test</td>
<td>Ethan Teel, Grade 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Love Affair with Food</td>
<td>Emma Najdeski, Grade 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Quinn Saleik, Grade 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Unexpected Ending</td>
<td>Olivia Roussel, Grade 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Featured Art</td>
<td>Page</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joy Chen, Grade 8</td>
<td>Cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ysabella Liu, Grade 6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samantha Ko, Grade 8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eli Pasalich, Grade 7</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chloe Park, Grade 5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabella Von Seggern, Grade 8</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayden Ptak, Grade 6</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex Elko, Grade 7</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabrielle Spier, Grade 8</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke McClure, Grade 8</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amber Choi, Grade 6</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WINTER LYRIC
Devon Lewis, Grade 5

Trees freezing
Temperatures below zero
Squirrels are sleeping in their cozy tree
Bears are hibernating with bellies full
No more sounds of
Chirping birds
The water
Frozen solid
A snowman
Brighter than paper

BEAUTY UNNOTICED
Caleb Walda, Grade 5

The shabby stuffed animal sits near the bed
Its fur once soft
Now rough and scruffy
A missing eye and gray scratched nose
Its body in a mangled pose
The scarf it once wore
Now a tangle of strings
Its black marble eye has seen many things
It once had ears that are now worn away
Has this old bear been abandoned?
Not yet
However shabby, still in use
And even in all its long nights of use
This bear is still loved dearly
Seen by its loving owner
As if it were still, and always
Brand new
LOST
Chloe Park, Grade 5

Twigs snapping below bare feet
Wind blowing through my hair
As if it doesn't care
Whether people are lost

It just wants to get to a meeting
Wherever winds meet

Owls hoot tensely
Listening for crackling footsteps of prey
Every moment or so
I whip my head around
As if a monster lurks behind
But no one is there

I have never been this alone
Ever before

ASHEVILLE
Lucy Gray, Grade 5

I love Asheville
The mountains are my second home
The time I spent there
I loved
It was almost always warm
Playing outside was so much fun
It would be so nice to see my big family
Every day, like a vacation
Now we just visit
And I’m grateful I can
UNTITLED
Dillon Wardlow, Grade 5

The forgotten cemeteries are gone
There is no other place to find them
My great grandfather was buried somewhere
I am the one to find him
I will find them all
I want to see those lost gravestones
They are hidden somewhere
My parents tell me stories
Those stories are adventurous
They encourage me
Someday I will find them
In my dreams

SCHOOL
Joseph Hughes, Grade 5

If only I could take a big pink eraser
To all the mistakes I’ve ever made
I would be excited, joyful to have
No errors
Misplaced letters
Unintended marks on the edges of my page
My mind would be clear of all
Things gone bad
My days would be fresh
A new start
A world full of peace
And a blank white page
A glass cup
Traveling from the dishwasher
To its home
Hands grabbing dishes
One after another
Until all of a sudden
The hand picks up a lonely glass
And then, “Plop!”
It slips out of the hand
And shatters on the floor
Beautiful crystals
Scattered all over the marble tiles

You are a puzzle, confusing and intriguing me
Like a cage of birds, your grammatical structures fly around my head
The author, who spent 5 hours pondering a single sentence
As he searched his mind for another hidden meaning
Inventing the newest form of torture
The poet, a genius of sorts,
An evil plan beginning to take form like the poem he wrote yesterday
A cloud of confusion covering the page like the ink he spilt when he was frustrated
He allows the words to do his evil bidding
He keeps them in the thesaurus by his bed
They are a lifejacket, keeping his poem alive
Though there’s only one thing you need in a poem
Confusion
TOGETHER

Adel Quta, Grade 6

Wondering where the noise came from, we were in our house
When we looked inside the air conditioner, the things inside that were barely alive
Had been there for weeks and had been discovered over the hole with the mouse
The bird, a soft, delicate bird, shaking because his mother had forgotten him
Came with us on a short, but important drive
His sibling that experienced the same thing is being taken care of
We tried to help them as much as we could
Which is evidence that we started to love
Them and protect them under the hood
Unfortunately, it was too late
They all had gone in less than a day
They had all experienced the exact same fate
And this sadly, was the only way
We buried them outside
And this was when our thoughts for them were most deep
So we buried them together, side to side
They will always be in an eternal sleep

SPOOKY SHADOWS

Tommy Tsai, Grade 6

Waltzing on the streets
The shadows twisted about
Their dark hands fiddling
After they waltzed, the shadows
Sneaked away with their guitars
LETTING GO
*Olivia Scavo, Grade 5*

You hold on to someone deeply
But they let go
Breaking your heart
But you can’t let it show
You hold all the feelings
Sitting on a bench, letting the wind blow
Until you have to feel
All the darkness
Yet still letting the light glow
You accept the heartbreak
And grow
AN EMPTY PROMISE
Madeline Phuong, Grade 6

Amidst all the chaos,
The woman, a weary mother,
Watches and waits,
Although so much had happened
Since the horrible news
That had been delivered to her doorstep.

Two children, the sweet angels of her life,
Quietly comfort her,
Tears streaking down from her tired eyes.
Mommy, they whisper to her, unknowingly.
Why do you cry?

After days of waiting,
A flicker of hope kindles in her eyes,
The small chance of escape from
The death and destruction approaching.

A heaviness settled its way
Over the woman’s heart,
The unavoidable path solidifying the future.
She had desperately prayed it wouldn’t come to this,
The look on her face becoming more defeated
With each heavy step.

She approaches the ticket booth,
The woman slowly slipped off her wedding ring,
The last memory of her beloved,
A brave soldier who had fought in the never-ending war.

As she hopes it would be enough,
She dropped the ring
Into the attendant’s hand
In return for two tickets.
The woman pleadingly looked at the
Attendant, waiting for a third,
She glances at her two innocent children,
But was met with the attendant’s steely gaze.

The mother tucks the tickets into
The pockets of her children’s coats,
And ushers them onto the boat.
She promises to come for them soon,
Knowing deep inside that it was a promise
She would not be able to keep.

MY DOG
Ana Bierbaum, Grade 5

A scary place
The dog shelter is
Dogs barking everywhere
Howling, growling
But there
In the back
Is a small timid puppy
With silky black fur
And a white stripe running down her nose
Her feet are speckled with white dots
Like snowflakes on the pavement
She is the perfect one
She is the one we will bring home
And she will forever be a part of my family
FRIENDSHIP
Amia Carter, Grade 5

I share with you
Not just the most awesome selfies
But also some of my life’s
Most precious memories
Our friendship runs deep
Right through my heart and soul
You have no idea how important
In my life, is your role
I don’t care about anything else
Other than having you around
Because only your smiles have
The power to wipe away my frown...
But that’s what friends are for

THE LITTLE THINGS IN FRANCE
Julia Beatty, Grade 7

I ride my little yellow bicycle at noon in the spring
It has a little basket in the front that carries bright red tulips, and little white daisies
I wear black leggings and a little black beret
But my most favorite piece of clothing of all is the little black and white striped shirt that I usually wear in the fall
I have a little brown satchel that I carry on my back that carries two large pieces of baguette
As my little bike wheels turn on the smooth stone road I get very close to the same old destination
I soon come to a stop and take off the little camera I carry on my neck
And then take little pictures of the Eiffel Tower as I munch on little pieces of French bread
WAR
Kayden Ptak, Grade 6

The sun shall set, as the birds fly
Dusk fills the night sky
Swimming through their thoughts
You can hear the sounds of gunshots.
War has begun
We sit, watching the cannons blow
Fear, the feeling of disbelief
Running through our body
Screams fill the air
War has begun
Stealing through the night’s uncertainties
We cry as the sound of death fills the air
The stench of blood runs through our veins
Mixing the dusk and stars together
War has begun
We feel the crippling bodies watching over us
Looking for delight, we sit worrying about our future
Wondering how we will live after war
The final screams are let out
War has begun

FLICKERING LIGHTS
Maria Krotov, Grade 6

Deafening screams echo across the empty shed
Tools banging loudly into the wooden walls
Lights flicker mysteriously overhead
Deafening screams echo across the empty shed
As the wind blows violently, children toss and turn in bed
The thunder booms as the lightening calls
Deafening screams echo across the empty shed
Tools banging loudly into the wooden walls
**ASUS**
*Kyra Tonsil, Grade 7*

You don’t run on a normal basis  
You never have a clue  
About what you have to do  
At least next year  
You won’t even be here

---

**TO A HALT**  
*Andrew Habig, Grade 6*

Slowed further into a fixed state, I find myself in a standstill of functionality  
It is that there is a bump in the road, or more of a critical matter, a dead end

Misconceived, mistaken, perhaps that I am the wrong person, oh the brutality  
Seeking a way out, feeling like a lab rat in a maze, I find yet another, dead end

In the past I’ve been told to not look behind, so I look straight of my reality  
Walking on this road, walls closing in, on my side is an even more dead end

In the dark that I linger, I see the light, hope for my questionable personality  
Out of a curved tunnel, I take my drooped head and look up, but sadly, a dead end

At last I look above me, looking towards the gods, nothing, what abnormality  
Depressed and shocked, I crumple to the ground giving up on progressing - a dead end
Chloe Park, Grade 5
PARADISE
Camille Coker, Grade 6

Waves slowly lapping at the shore
A whole world goes unnoticed
In a single one, a tiny formation of water
Streaming together
Colors blend into one
As the setting sun reaches out
One last time
To this miracle of nature
Bubbling up from underneath a
Jet-black, cruel beginning
The amber fades to a grass-green
Before bursting above sea-level
To explode in a shimmer of magic
That is never seen
Silhouettes dancing in the wind
Palm trees stand proud as they wait
The first drops starting to spray down
The clear yet colorful ceiling
Glimmers mischievously
A ray, a stream of light breaks through
The tough barrier
Disappearing, this phenomenon
That was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity
To see, is gone forever
My dearest one,
Do you not remember?
Do you not recall?

Can you bring back
The memories,
The sweet things
That he’s done?

When the days slipped by
As the sun shone gold
And the one that you and I
loved
Grew tired, weak, and old?

As the day with scarlet rays
Shining through the window
Revealed the tears falling
down one’s face
With growing sorrow

Do you recall
Watching his life
Slip into the ranks of stars?
His soul
Escape
Into their waiting arms?

His body lying
As if in rest

How could that have been
His dying breath?

Eyes unseeing
Heart unmoving
Lungs not breathing

And he still left an imprint
On this very family
One that no other bird
Could give us so willingly

SWISHER
Amber Choi, Grade 6
Aurora Borealis
    Floats in the black sky,
    Illuminating the dead land,
    Rippling and waving.

Like
    A mystic veil,
    An ethereal wisp,
    An open portal to another world.

Disappearing
    In the morning.
Isabella Von Seggern, Grade 8
**LION**  
*Harley Babbitt, Grade 7*

Cameras flash before me  
I growl at the crowd  
I want to run away  
The man with the whip prevents me  
He makes me do tricks  
The crowd cheers and claps  
I want to hunt in Africa  
But I am tortured here

**LIFE**  
*Eric Wever, Grade 7*

As living here on earth has shown  
There is much that is not known  
But we still know of war and hate  
As our tempers continue to fluctuate  
There are still good things out here  
But the bad things simply won’t disappear  
Nature is such a pretty thing  
With birds who like to sing  
But we are ruining their home  
As we cut the trees, they must roam  
Out to where we have protected  
Or they could be dissected  
But we can still change some things  
Then maybe everyone can feel like kings
BROKEN
Avery Biggs, Grade 7

The weight of the world
Is heavy indeed
On my shoulders
It lies
All day and all night
I walk with sadness
I talk with a mumbles
Into a million pieces
But one day a girl
With a twinkle in her eye
Picked up those pieces
And used the glue
From her heart
To fix my soul
She lifted the Earth
And moved the sun
To make me feel happy
Once again
But then she left me
As soon as her job was done
And I was sad
For she saved me
From a lifetime of misery
That day I discovered
That the only thing
Worse than
The weight of the world
Is loneliness
THE BALLERINA
Maile Smits, Grade 7

Leaping through the air
Delicate, yet with flair
She grasps the dust, reaching
Leaping through the air
Her strength shone through her glare
Brave now, she once was shy
Leaping through the air
Confident, she can fly

EMBLEM
Marissa Toole, Grade 6

In science class
Doing my usual daydreaming
Overheard my teacher saying, talking loud and clear, that
Flags on the moon have turned white
From the sun’s radiation
Like it was easy to go out and challenge
Every muscle in your body
Like it was easy to know, as you strained to explore, that if a thing
went wrong
There would be a chance of death
Those people who journeyed out risked everything
Most important symbol that proved they did it
Has faded away
Something sank inside of me
Don’t know why everything has to come and go
I asked my mother, with curiosity, what she thought later that day
She said it makes you think about what is most important
My thoughts have settled
ODE TO MIDDLE SCHOOL
Georgia Gray, Grade 7

I am going to be blunt, I hate you.
You cause me stress and pain.
You are a liar! A phony! A fake!
Your movies make you seem great.

But you are not you,
Shove us in groups and slap labels on us you don’t even give us a chance to prove our worth!
You are a place where being a dumb girl is applauded and having a brain is looked down upon.
Yes, you praise good grades but the kids don’t.

You are full of stupid words
Savage, dab.
What are these stupid sounds people use when they clown around?
Oh, middle school how I hate you.

RAIN
Mahri Romano, Grade 8

Sprinkles on my face
Pours onto the concrete
Washes away the earth
   A powerful being
   A demure natural phenomenon
   A chance at new growth
      Cleansing the earth’s palate
      Dripping down a water pipe
Flowing into any space
MIRROR EFFECT
Alexandro Robles, Grade 7

The peaceful waters
A parallel dimension
Undisturbed beauty

Kayden Ptak, Grade 6
COUNTRY’S SONNET SONG
Isabella Von Seggern, Grade 8

I’m a girl in an inner-city school
Every day I sit and await the bell
So I can dance in the spring air, so cool
I love the sky, the colors all pastel

I’m much happier in jeans and a tee
Than a dress and a face full of make-up
With messy hair and bright eyes, I run free
Mud and sweat on my face, try to catch up

I need the country like grass needs the sun
I thrive on memories of mud battles
I miss my dog-like calf; he was so fun
Don’t forget the smell of saddles

I may sit in the city all day long
But it’s impossible to forget that song

HOMELESS YET HAPPY
Micah Holder, Grade 7

People have called me a stranger
I walk down the busy street with noise and bustle
I run in fear when parents come after me in rage
Little do they know the joy that has been spread
I see a small boy crying next to a broken toy
I kneel down to touch his broken slumped shoulders
And I pick up the broken toy and carefully place it together
I give it back to the curious child
I turn around cherishing the huge delighted smile
And I walk once more down the crowded streets
Alex Elko, Grade 7
America

Simply best
World’s greatest, the U.S.A.
Advances technology and science
Many are geniuses
Aiding people’s needs
Had bad times
But overcame
Diversity is key
Everyone’s equal
~~~

Equal, everyone’s
Key is diversity
Overcame, but
Times of bad
Had needing people’s aid
Geniuses are many
Science and technology advances
U.S.A the greatest, world’s
Best, simply
America
I openly try to hide all emotion
Like almost every other male in the world
Absolutely dead in all my motions
A male is thought to see emotion and hurl

It’s insane, males are to set to a standard
Of absolutely no love, life, or reason
If they don’t follow this rule, they’re slandered
To a male, emotion is severe treason

For some reason, we males have been labeled
To be this statue without any feeling
And with emotion, be fully disabled
But, the stereotype is healing

However, it’s still yet to pass the brink
Soon, man will be allowed to feel and think
THE NIGHT SUN
Vonnia Anwar, Grade 7

Say goodbye to the sun shining bright
As dusk takes over, the sky of gray
The moon appears at the start of night

As far as can be seen the trail of light
The children now are on their way
Say goodbye to the sun shining bright

There go the birds, all in flight
When the breeze lets the leaves shiver and sway
The moon appears at the start of night

The sea is calm, covered in twilight
Mist letting off a small spray
Say goodbye to the sun shining bright

The wolf’s howl is louder tonight
Making the young go astray
The moon appears at the start of night

The tension in the air is tight
As the people who look at the village say
Say goodbye to the sun shining bright
The moon appears at the start of night
THIS GIRL IS GOING TO BE QUEEN
Sophie Terrell, Grade 8

One day I will be queen
It’s in my very own blood and genes
My castle will be a live machine
And oh, it will be so clean
It’s always been my dream, ever since pre-teen
I never wanted to be prom queen or in a magazine
I just want to sit in my very own limousine
Eating gourmet sardines and fresh green beans
I will be all over your movie screen
Or maybe standing in a submarine
Playing the tambourine
I will be very keen
And I most certainly won’t be mean
I will remind people of a jumping bean
You will believe that I am better than St. Augustine
And yes, every week we will celebrate Halloween
My arms will be full of Marines
Now that I have told you of my daily routines
Let’s just keep it between you and me
But someday I WILL be queen
But right now, I am just a teen!
THE TEST
Ethan Teel, Grade 8

Another day at school
Not entirely cool
But a normal day
Almost ended in my dismay

The announcement of a test
Would not deter me from my quest
To complete my education
I could not communicate how exactly it went South with any articulation

I had studied hard
I had used my notecard
But it could not prepare me
For the onslaught of questions that stretched as far as the eye could see

I had accepted my fate
The outcome which I would hate
Resulting in a poor score
I loathed nothing more

As my confidence wavered
I had found my savior
The answers that I sought
Were recovered in my thoughts

I happened to recall
My grade would not take a fall
My doubts were crushed like a pest
Because I knew I could pass the test
A LOVE AFFAIR WITH FOOD
Emma Najdeski, Grade 8

Oh, how I love glorious scrumptious food!
What can I say? Food is my fierce passion.
Food, you always put me in a fine mood.
Delicious food is always in fashion.
Macaroni and cheese, meatballs too.
Lobster, shrimp and scallops are mighty fine.
Tacos and nachos, don’t forget to chew!
Oh food, will you be my sweet valentine?
Chocolate, cookies, and ice cream galore,
Snicker’s, Reese’s, Kit Kats, and Milkyway,
And now I want the ultimate S’more.
I also cherish the chewy Payday.
Food, I love you to the cheese moon and back!
Yes, I’ll take that risk of a heart attack.

Luke McClure, Grade 8
Music: the songs, rhythms, and the beats
And much more—music is a way of life
Music is creative, never concrete
Lyrics sometimes calm, sometimes cut like a knife

Music can be anything someone wants
A slow melody, or a lively jig
Music can set moods, mad, or nonchalant
Music can be concerts and even gigs

It sets different tones, sad and even mad
But it can make people feel excited
Music is an incredible thing, not bad
And it changes to make some delighted

Now, music is a wondrous thing it seems
And Music is woven through time like seams
THE UNEXPECTED ENDING
Olivia Roussel, Grade 8

Once I thought I could be free
That I could fly away so I wouldn’t see
The things that tried to control my mind
I thought I could leave them behind

I was wrong and they follow me still
I’ve never been able to reach that hill
That hill which will grant me freedom
I long to reach that kingdom

But today I’m going to try something new
I’ve chosen someone to help. And guess what? It’s you.
I needed someone to talk to and you’ve been there
I mean you’ve been listening ‘til now and it shows you care

I just needed to talk to someone who wouldn’t ask a single question
Someone who would still stay by my side even if I made the suggestion
Of them risking their lives to protect me
And you’ve risked yours since you’ve continued to read

I don’t know how we got to this ending
Since the beginning, the quality has been descending
But you’ve read until here and you’ve somehow gotten through
I love that you felt that you had nothing better to do