

# **Youth Entries**

Connie Shang

Victoria Smyrniotu

## CEASEFIRE

by Connie Shang

Matches, sagebrush – *oops*.  
A boy leaps, scrambling away  
To escape the devouring fire.

Flames scarf down buildings,  
Lick at a swallow in the sky,  
Belch out spires of smoke.

At last, a part in the clouds  
Emerges. Refugees return  
To turned fields and homes

Like Hollywood stars, they fume,  
Arms akimbo, over *whodunit?*  
As firemen furrow their brows.

Soon, red hot poker of guilt  
Prod the boy with stained fingers;  
He inches forth and confesses.

*Lock him up for life!* They cry.  
Fury takes the homeless crowd  
And they storm after the culprit,

But stop when the sky rumbles.  
Gentle droplets cool red rage  
While the heavens rain — *mercy*.

## **Fool's Gold**

by Victoria Smyrniotis

He asked for pardon,  
Kneeled before me  
With his eyes cast down in shame.  
He asked for reason;  
Unaware was he  
Of why he was to blame.  
But his sincerity I questioned  
Long before his words slew out.  
And my attentive nature dwindled,  
Just as he acknowledged doubt.  
His words, though wanted, I rejected  
As their falsities were told;  
They deceived  
Much like the wanton gleam  
Of rock mistook for gold.  
And I cannot accept his offer  
Lavish as it may be formed.  
In truth, he felt no qualms nor sorrow  
For the deeds that he performed.  
And if he were to vouch repentance  
If he sung of his remorse,  
Then I would be obliged forgiveness.  
Now, though, I can wait no more.