

EsSense

About the call for writing

The VSA arts Call for Writing invites students, ages 11–18 years, to interpret their world through the use of creative writing in the form of short works of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. Writers may use their own experience for inspiration or base their writings on fictional events. Students submitting writing must have a disability or a connection to people with disabilities.

The selected pieces will become part of the VSA arts online writing journal, *Infinite Difference*. All submissions must be submitted by **Friday, November 20, 2009**.

The Theme – EsSense

What is the essence of an object or experience? What attributes and qualities are the most significant when you think about a person or thing? The 2010 VSA arts Call for Writing invites you to create a short work of fiction, nonfiction, or poetry that describes the essence of a moment, event, person, or object by concentrating on only one of its attributes. In order to help your reader understand the essence of what you are describing, you will mainly use characteristics centered around one of the 5 senses (hearing, smell, sight, taste, or touch). The five senses are the means through which information is received. By primarily using only one of your senses to create a piece of writing, you will challenge your interpretations of the world.

Choose one of the following ways to approach the theme.

1. Think about an ordinary situation and transform it into something extraordinary by describing it through a sense that a person may not initially realize surrounds them. For example, you may choose to depict a landscape by describing the sounds you hear, rather than just what you see on the horizon. Push your mind to think outside of conventional perceptions in order to portray feelings and emotions through often forgotten about qualities.
2. You may want to consider a moment evoked through one of your senses. Does the sight of a color make you think about what is in your future? Does touching a certain fabric bring you back to a special time in your life? Is there a sound that reminds you of a particular person? Consider how a taste might cause you to reminisce about the special occasion you last celebrated.

You can use your own experience or rely on your creativity to describe what feelings and emotions are triggered when you see, touch, hear, smell, or taste something. Be creative—think about the moment, event, person, or thing in a different way than you may be accustomed. Bring to the forefront of your writing the sense that the piece is

centered. However, you do not need to solely rely on this one sense. Feel free to include other senses that will allow your reader to better relate to the story or poem.

Submissions will be judged on creativity, technical proficiency, adherence to the theme, and presence of personal style and vision. Short fiction, nonfiction, and all poetic forms are welcome.

My Ocean's Sweet Song

By Bryan Arnold

Age 17

Anchorage, Alaska, United States

I woke up feeling like I had something stuck in my throat, before I realized it was from the hole in my throat from the tracheotomy they had done. In the background I heard a sound that reminded me of the ocean. It was a whoosh, whoosh sound, constant and rhythmic and ever so sweet sounding. And then I pinpointed the sound. It was the sound of my new ventilator I would never again be without.

It's been a long, heart-wrenching year, but I made it through. The ventilator is making me feel better than I have in a long time. I think the finest words I ever heard came from my doctor as I was leaving the hospital. "You have just extended your life by ten years." Those nine words will ring in my ears for a long time to come. Those words and the lifesaving melody of my ocean's sweet song.

(Excerpt from *My Ocean's Sweet Song*, selected from the 2009 VSA arts call for writing)

Entry guidelines

1. The call is open to **students with disabilities and students who have connections to people with disabilities**. Students must be between the **ages of 11 and 18 years**. Submissions must relate to the theme "EsSense."
2. Entries must reach *VSA arts* on or before **Friday, November 20, 2009**.
3. Writing may be submitted in any language.
4. Writing must be original and created by the student submitting the entry. A total of two entries per student are allowed: one fiction or nonfiction piece and one poem. **Guidelines for each genre of work are:**
 - **Fiction and nonfiction must not exceed 500 words**. Works exceeding this length will not be accepted.

- **Poems must not exceed 100 lines.** Poems exceeding this length will not be accepted. Poems intended for song lyrics are acceptable.
5. Alternate formats for texts, such as audio recordings or Braille, are welcome.
 6. If the author is under 18 years of age, a parent or guardian must grant *VSA arts* the right to use writing submissions for public relations purposes, including, but not limited to, the *VSA arts* Web site, newsletter, related media, collection books, and exhibitions.
 7. Writing, video, and audio tape submissions become the property of *VSA arts* and will not be returned. **It is suggested that students make copies of their submissions before sending them to *VSA arts*.**
 8. Each submission must be accompanied by a separate entry form. Entries can be submitted electronically or by mail. You may also download an entry form below. **Entry forms must be signed by the author and parent/guardian for students under 18 years of age.** The author's name and title of work must be on all pieces included in the submission. Please note that if you are under 18 years of age and submit an entry form online your parent/guardian is required to verify their approval. Please plan on submitting your entry when your parent/guardian is available. If you change computers you will not be able to access the information previously submitted, and will need to retype the information again.

Submitting Applications

Submit your entry:

[By Clicking Here](#)

or

Send your entry to:

VSA arts—Call for Writing
818 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Suite 600
Washington, DC 20006 USA

Entries must be received by Friday, November 20, 2009.