

**Middle School Poetry, Second Place**

*Small Enough to Hold*

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Survivor: Joseph Alexander

Hope did not come  
With speeches or rumors of salvation.  
It fit within the palm of a hand,  
And it smelled like bread.

It came without a name,  
Without a promise,  
But with the frail hope to see tomorrow's breaking dawn  
If today was fed.

He cared not  
For the soiled hand that nourished him,  
Nor the German accent he detested  
But for the improbable soul  
That unfailingly returned.

The craftsman did not look away like the others.  
He knew instead that one fragile life  
Was worth the immense risk  
Of a small deed.

Hope is a match struck in the wind  
Its trembling flame refusing to be extinguished.  
Finding strength in the very force meant to erase it,  
Burning quietly but alive with a fiery energy.

So, when fear begs me to stay silent  
I will remember  
How hope was a shared sandwich.  
I will remember  
How hope was passed from hand to hand.

If hope was fed there,  
I will not let it starve here.