

Third Prize – Grades 9 & 10 Jenkins Prize

**xviii.**

The river banks have doused themselves  
in the blood of their tied feet.  
The soil, ensanguined, swims in such satiety  
and does not wince when two more bare feet  
sink into it. She looks without meaning to  
and it is her daughter  
who walks on toes across this bloodbath. On  
her head are braided arteries that look  
so beautiful against her  
crown of coal,  
and around the thick of her arms  
hang gasps of those who were supposed to  
have drowned. If this is not a  
portrait then it is a dance, and  
if it is neither than it is not her daughter  
who poses inside of this gaping wound.

**by Emma, Ithaca, NY**