

# The Pencil Sharpener

by Ajay Shroff

Inspired by "The Toaster" by William Jay Smith \*

A brown-furred grizzly bear with teeth tinted gray  
Rests on my desk and sharpens its prey.  
While I feed him dull pencils, he screams with delight,  
Eating his dinner with all of his might.

# Swimming

by Alexa Fairbairn

The swimmer,  
Sliding through the water  
Speeding to catch the others,  
Its colors contrast with the water

It sees the top,  
It thrusts upward  
Its eyes set on the others  
Its gills glide through the water  
Swimming fast

# The Last Cookie

by Lainie Hyman

Inspired by "This Is Just to Say"  
by William Carlos Williams \*

I ate  
The last cookie  
In the jar  
On the shelf

The one  
You were  
Saving for when  
You got home

I am sorry  
But it tasted so good  
So moist  
And chocolaty

# The Last Out

by Tyler Gay

Inspired by "The Base Stealer" by Robert Francis \*

Wondering if I should charge or play the hop,  
The ball is on me like a sudden rain shower.  
It hits the lip where the dirt and grass meet,  
Suddenly dying like a memory of a dream—  
Or a golfer's hopes seeing seventeen at Sawgrass.  
I anticipate fielding it;  
I see the ball into my glove and look up—  
The batter is running as slowly as a turtle.  
I feel the seams as the ball leaves my hand,  
And the batter is running, running, running, out!