

2009 - 2010  
CBC Writing Competition  
Junior Entry  
Category: Poetry  
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*The Drive to Succeed*

My life hangs in the balance  
between ink and adoration  
epigrams can't help me now  
in suspended animation.

Words a black and belching storm  
my mind's a barren plain  
Success is my *noblesse oblige* —  
and life's enduring bane.

Perfection at the minimum  
is rare, like hot-house flowers  
yet white bread's molding,  
so silver spoons against  
my dirty grades are clacking.

I've stared into the Gorgon's mouth  
on the cliffs of Win and Null  
and seen in vast and joyless depths  
my future – inane and cold.

White picket fence,  
housewife, trailer park,  
inexorable monotony –  
all await me in the Gorgon's throat,  
the bowels of mediocrity.

I've come so close to tumbling down  
her rabbit hole of teeth.  
Yet always I run scrambling, scuttling back,  
an amaranthine leech.

Somehow I always lag behind  
in this labyrinth of letters  
A, B, A, B, A, B, STOP! –  
an F, obese,  
forever.

Just one tiny, transient glimpse  
of failure's monstrous years  
has shown she doesn't steal my sight,  
but rather dries my tears.

A lack of strength,  
not Lilliputian sense  
is what holds me here confined.  
Oh how oh how oh how can I  
procure an iron mind?

A lazy, lagging, cancerous will  
is like my ball and chain.  
Failure whispers "cut it out!  
Or don't wake up again."

High atop a mountain's peak  
or in an ivied glen  
Greatness waves a glimmering hand  
"Just catch me if you can!"

Letters blaring "ok-go!"  
she holds within my grasp –  
but the ground is quaking!  
Fingers – why do you forsake me  
and let time breach the hour-glass?

When I am stuck, how can I compete  
with legacies, smarts, and skin?  
Pressing on the jugular  
my future's moldering in.

So tell me something I don't know  
as my childhood's set to sever.  
I must, I must, I must succeed!  
Or be  
irrelevant  
forever.