

Level III Third Place Winner Katie Burlovich's letter to Robert Frost

Dear Robert Frost:

Your poem "Nothing Gold Can Stay" has helped me realize that nothing has the ability to stay perfect forever. This poem has definitely made me accept and better understand many challenges I have gone through as a seventeen-year-old girl.

The first time I read "Nothing Gold Can Stay" was when I was in the Sixth grade, reading *The Outsiders*. At the time, I did not appreciate what you were saying: I just liked how it went well with the book. Now as a teenager who has had more involvement with literature and with real-world events, I can say that I honestly understand what your poem was teaching the world. Or, at least, what it has taught me.

Everything new is gold-or perfect. Like an infant, a relationship, or a school year even. Time goes by and things change or become corrupt. The infant gets older, sins and is no longer perfect. The relationship gets bumpy. The school year goes on and grades aren't good anymore. Moving on further, the baby grows into a teenager, is exposed to things like drugs, alcohol and sex in high school. The relationship is not good and neither partner wants to make it work. The school year is completely turned upside down. No, nothing is the same as what it was. Nothing is perfect. Nothing is gold.

As a little girl, I was expected to be perfect. I had great grades; great friends and I actually even had an amazing family. Then once I got into middle school, I had friends who started making bad decisions. My best friend at the time was going through a rough time during her parents' divorce because she had convinced herself that it was her fault. My friend started skipping school to hang out with kids much older than us at the time. At only thirteen years old, she started drinking alcohol. In Eighth grade, she was smoking cigarettes. When I got into High school, I watched my older brother (the straight-A student, perfect attendance holder, a great kid and my role model) put into the backseat of a police car for breaking and entering. And from that day on he wasn't perfect to me; he had flaws. He was not gold. Last year, as a sophomore, my amazing family fell apart. Mommy and daddy didn't love each other anymore. My mother and I ended up moving in with my grandparents. As a junior, my grades are bad and my attendance is nowhere near perfect. In middle school, I got awards for "Most improved in Language Arts" and "Student of the Month" in mathematics. Now, those are my worst subjects. I hang out with the wrong people and make bad choices.

The friend I mentioned earlier has been in-and-out of jail or D. H. five times as an eighteen-year-old. She has turned to alcohol for her problems ever since she was thirteen. My older brother was charged with two felonies, apologies, took a mediation class and did what he has to do, to make everything better. His record was expunged when he turned eighteen. He is in college and back to his straight-A's.

Through my perspective on your poem, things become corrupt at the end of the day. When a new day comes, there is a chance to be better. But it is up to you to take that chance to bring you back to a new and perfect day. It is your choice to make your day gold again.

Sincerely,

Katie Burlovich