



“Take a Bow” by Natalie Reyes  
3<sup>rd</sup> Place, Poetry 16-18

## Take a Bow

Heading into orchestra,  
I practiced hard all week,  
I unpack my bow and cello,  
Feeling at my peak.

I'm excited for new music,  
As I sit down and prepare,  
I wouldn't mind Rachmaninoff,  
Tchaikovsky, or Glière.

Instead, I find Sibelius,

*Finale No. 2,*

Every page is daunting,  
I just hope I'll play in tune.

My fingers can't move fast enough,

I suddenly feel weak,

The conductor's looking angry,

And rehearsal's looking bleak.

The cellists won't stop playing,

And I missed a note or two,

The conductor looked right at me,

And it made me miss a cue.

The sections are all looking glum,

Percussion, strings, and brass,

We've played this part at least ten times,

I'm not up to the task.

Practice after practice,

I try my very best,

Most parts are working out quite well,

But some are still a mess.

Performance night has come at last,

And, standing on the stage,

My confidence just melts away,

My panic is a cage.

My heart is beating frantically,

I'm not sure I can make it,

You're always told to smile,

But I don't think I can fake it.

Suddenly I see a face,  
Unveiled within the gloom,  
It draws my whole attention,  
And dominates the room.

This person I have known for years,  
But somehow, this is new,  
Seeing them, I feel all right,  
I even smile, too.

I pull myself together,  
And play with all my might,  
Our concert ended up so well,  
I could have played all night!

The audience stands up to cheer,

    Their faces smiling now,

As if to say “You’ve done it!

    Go on and take a bow!”