

“The Ballad of a Grown-Up Empress”
Alice Keating (NBHS Junior)

There once was a small child
Aged no more than four
And she was an empress
And she would wage war
On all of the dragons and ogres and ghouls
That terrorized her people
And ruined her schools
And houses and castles and towns

Then one day this empress
So old had she grown
She was forced to move out
And live on her own
She forgot all her people and castles and towns
And all of the dragons
That had burned them down
For all of the time she had known them

The beasts overran
And her people all cried
But she could not return
For all that she tried
To that blissful and simplistic state
Of her long-ago mind
Most devoid of true hate
And the kingdom she loved was no more