

**Writing: 5-8<sup>th</sup> Grade. Honorable Mention.**

**Julie Jirik, Grade 8. West Junior High School, Boise, ID. Teacher: Yvonne Georgeson.**

"We Were There"

We were there  
Step by step  
Bare feet on the dry ground  
241 miles  
Across vast western India  
We do this for our people  
Even with the sweat  
Dripping down our faces  
We are not silent  
We are not violent  
They will not control  
Us  
Our Country  
Our Salt

We were there  
When a six-pointed star  
Meant death  
Young children silenced  
From the formula  
That made their DNA  
Starving, crying, horrified, dying  
Was our future  
When we were inferior  
They took our things  
Even shaved our hair  
And eliminated our bodies by millions  
We had lives  
A bright future ahead  
But our souls remain  
Forever in memories  
Never to forget

We were there  
Standing for equality  
We are all human  
Colored or not  
We sat at the back of the bus

Labeled by our appearance  
But we would not settle  
To be treated like inferiors  
We are Americans  
He said "I have a dream"  
So we found hope  
He said "I believe"  
So we did too

Throughout the trials of humanity  
We were there  
In 1930  
For the salt march in India  
We were there  
In 1933  
For the Holocaust in Germany  
We were there  
In 1963  
For African American inequality

We were there  
And are here today  
So remember

We might have been weak  
But we used our voices  
Where a single word  
Carried power

Words are formidable  
To the oppressor  
So we must not  
Be named as bystanders  
Fade into the background  
Letting others suffer  
For if the brave people of history  
Kept quiet  
Failed to rise up  
Hope would die  
Justice would be killed  
And

The evil would win  
We carry the ability of change  
But  
The world will not change  
Because we want it to  
We have to act  
We were there  
Where are you?