

Name of artist: Spencer Watson
Name of piece: photograph, denny's, sept 19 2019
Grade of artist: 12th
Hometown of artist: Anderson, SC
Award won: National Gold (Scholastics Art and Writing Awards), Regional Gold Key
(Scholastics Art and Writing Awards)

photograph, denny's, sept 19 2019

the edges of our
limbs blur because
you could never
keep still and i
didn't want to lean
against the blushing
bowl-of-grits skin
of your neck for longer
than i had to, and it was

after church, and we
were later than everyone
else because you chatted
with the preacher on
your way out,
posed to look like we
were like the other
fathers and daughters
who went out every
sunday, but really we
only came out because
you sang like you did
every month, and mom
thought it was somehow
worthy of celebration
and the

air was sweet and
the tabletop sticky from
spilled syrup but mom
had me put my arm in it
so the picture would look
nice and you

turned your head
and that one mole
right below your
cheekbone to the camera,
looking away from me
like my eyes scalded
you and you'd always
known that but never
admitted it and i

gave you my best
choir girl smile i'd learned
because you made me
stick to church choir
knowing how i hated it,
ignoring how
i begged to stay home
and do something quiet
and lonely, and
i never made the friends
you promised,
even when i tried to
imitate your church boy
charm, and you

sipped your
coffee, satisfied with my
performance, and mom

put her phone
away and you took
your sweaty hand from
my shoulder and wiped
it on your khakis, and i

cleaned the syrup
from my arm and
the waitress

brought our
pancakes.