



Cover Art: Spiraling out of Control, by Isabella Ronchetti

Summer17:12Poems

Poetry

happy to be here By Alixa Brobbey

in the almost broken black car

we are turning from Zaire street

onto Lilongwe avenue.

dad complains about the car

and the weather, and the doctors,

i am too excited to say anything

inside my soul is singing, for no reason,

except i am happy to be here

yes, i see that paint is peeling

off of buildings we pass like

teardrops slowly falling from the sky

but next to this slow death,

there are pink flowers peeking

out from the cracks in the walls

and because of that small beauty

i am happy to be here

and yes, sometimes the sun

scorches my skin so i look more

burned marshmallow than delicious

chocolate, but here the boys don't

see me as beautiful like an exotic

flower, but beautiful like their own

resilient mothers, and that comparison

makes me happy to be here

and yes, i don't like how some want

to see me but not hear me throw

my voice over the rooftops, and yes

i don't like potholes and *dumsor* because

it's scary getting lost in dark holes, and

yes i don't like the fact that when adults

greet us we reply like a scripted Greek

chorus i am fine

i want to say that i am eons away from fine
because i am so happy to be here
and it may sound cliché or like forced poetry
but when i think of my mother's ancestors
hauled across the dark blue sea, i think
that a few hours of silence just to pacify
the spirits of the elders are worth a life
out of chains, where i can walk where i please
history makes me happy just to be

Alix Brobbey is a young writer living in Accra, Ghana. She grew up in the Netherlands and often uses the experience of calling two different continents home as an inspiration for her work, which has been published in Canvas, The Battering Ram, and others. Aside from reading and writing, her hobbies include running, acting, trying to retain her fluency in Dutch, listening to Shawn Mendes' albums on repeat, and fangirling over Harry Potter. You can read more of her work here: <http://lilaccheetah.wixsite.com/alixawrites>

Langston Hughes By Marisa Moran

How do you get your words

To sing jazz

And taste like chocolate?

How do you get them

To breathe fire like a dragon

And yet fill the room

With a honey-scented voice

That paints ripples of light and dark

Across the walls?

How is it

That you can coax them

To fall in love

And persuade them

To dance together

Across the page

Eternally?

Marisa Moran is a junior in high school. In her free time she enjoys reading, writing, and participating in her high school's theatre department.

Broken By Denise Rogozin

Put some lipstick on.
Get some blush, you've lost color in your face.
Oh my, is that a mustache?
Laser it away.
God forbid your legs are prickly.
You could fill a C
Just add toilet paper
I'll show you.

. How many times have you gone to the gym this
. week?
. Eat more, you'll bulk up faster.
. Hey baby, wanna come home with me tonight?
. She's probably just on her period,
. That's why she ain't feelin' me.
. Come on, you're late for practice.

Are you done?

Can I come in?

Oh heavens.

What is that?

.

.

.

.

Open up

Son, I've started the car.

Oh my god

What are you wearing?

What is around your chest?

Put down the scissors.

Put them down.

I swear to God, not one more snip.

.

.

.

.

.

Whose bra is that?

I'm calling your mother.

And the silk robe too,

And the lipstick

What did I do to deserve this?

Your curls

Your beautiful long curls

I'm booking a hair appointment,
We can fix this.

.
.
.

Alright, give everything to me
It's fine, no one has to know
We can fix this.

Denise Rogozin is seventeen years old. She has always loved writing, whether it was her unintentional re-creations of the Harry Potter series in middle school, or spoken word poetry about gang violence during her sophomore year of high school. She loves being able to share her thoughts in a different kind of way with poetry, and hopes to share some now through one of her favorites.

The Art of the Black Woman By Kalijah Rahming

being a black child living in America is an extremely difficult task

we are forced to deal with all the standards and stereotypes

that have been placed upon us for generations

we are the children who must bear the burden of our ancestors

we are also victims of racism, discrimination, and oppression

black women, specifically, have been lied to for generations

ever since we were children,

we were fed our daily meal of lies by a society that does not care for us

we are told that our skin is too dark, that we are too curvy,

that our bodies do not match the molds created by European standards

people tell us that we are “pretty for a black girl” or “pretty for a dark skinned girl”

although these may seem as though they are compliments,

the underlying truth is that they are saying that people of African descent are not beautiful

OR if we are beautiful, it is only when we are light skinned

why is white the only standard of beauty out there?

there are many variations of black people and black beauty out there in the world

it makes no sense that the only ones who are respected by society

are those who are lighter and have features like those of Europeans

what makes black not beautiful?

to me, black women, like my mother, exhibit strength and confidence

and do not let any obstacle get in their way.

i wish to be like them

they are my true inspirations

to me, black is not the color of darkness and hatred

but instead the color of

beauty, hope, and freedom

Kalijah is a tenth grader from California who identifies as a self-proclaimed chai tea enthusiast. It does not seem possible to her that people are able to get through a week without at least three cups of the stuff. She is a vivacious reader and does not think herself safe and content unless she is in the middle of at least fifteen books at the same time. In addition to this, she is also a feminist and a supporter of the Black Lives Matter movement.

African Plain By Cindy Song

I do not love you—your ringing laugh

or your big hair which holds a thousand
surprises. I do not miss those times—those
stupid wonderful times when we talked
about swollen knees and shot birds in the
back of my dusty little garage shop. How
could I have known that my little garage
still had room for you, whom I do not love
of course.

I wish the gears of my feelings worked simple
like the ones in cars.

I am a mechanic not a poet.

I do not love
not loving you, not having the words to say
what my lips bleed to say. Fear my heart
will be hammered open—shattered—

like the cases you so cleverly solve,

like the ghosts of a slashed mattress.

How I long to sing the bitter notes of your

past into a sweeter melody

but people can't be fixed as easily as cars.

My love for you is a mystery only for you to solve.

It's not like your other mysteries. It's plain like the

tall African grass that smells like bush tea and

whispers hints so loud. No longer will I be

caged in denial like a lion roaming the

plaster white walls of his

stubborn pride:

I do love you—

even more than the infinite expanse of the

Kalahari, the swaying olive trees of my beloved homeland.

Cindy Song is sixteen years old and a junior at Richard Montgomery High School in Rockville, Maryland. Besides writing poetry and prose, she also enjoys playing tennis, drawing, and taking long walks in nature.

Like Planting By Lucas Grasha

A writer writes
to rip a hole in a floor.
To find a bloom in a blight.

Because a poem startles the night
to puncture safety and its borders. It pours
into your dormant, furrowed brain to rewrite

patterns walked into the ground. Might—
vacant crucible —is like every board
rebuffing new blooms (the freight

of everything) and is exhumed. The tight
floor is safe and dying. Hoarded
seeds in the mind's cabinet ripen

like sediment. The writer rights
pestilent fallowness. Then: words
that abuse vacant troughs with light

and uprooting hands which fight
with manic pain to erase borders
from the mind's geography. At night,
the poem startles with fruitful blight.

Lucas Grasha currently studies poetry and German at the University of Pittsburgh. In his spare time, he reads books from his eclectic library with his wife. He proudly calls Pittsburgh his home.

gutter song By Rebecca Flieder

mad adam east of eden
makes up his own rules
to a game he does not play.
he will make her the burnished
sandalwood
tree of life and
she will take the apple
she will take the fruit
the snake decides
swallow the body the blood
of the *etz chayim* the
mates for life

back alley blackwater lilith.
a hot black tar
tangerine jumpsuit and

smiles—no
grins—no
sneers at
the pavement melting between her teeth.
the concrete forest
the polluted cosmopolitan politico
cold, calculated,
chaotic greens and greys
reflected in her eight-ball eyes.

her mother was a forest fire:
ardent, searing.
her father a gutter song
of half-spent cigarettes and
sweltering workday's grime
waiting to be burned

lilith:
cuts her teeth on a road just laid down
hot black tar between molars
grinding his pavement punches down through the
atmospheric smog splinter infested sidewalk rollerblading from
his lips sits a cigarette rolled from the very jet black she walks on

and she: like her mother
will not submit.

mad adam makes up his own rules
to a game he does not play.

in kind:

she will tear herself out of him
stop the traffic in his heartbeat
cause a collision
and slip away

lilith will play his game
play him like the devil's fiddle
twirl him around her little finger
like a snake around an apple tree
lilith: coffee-candied lips and a
sweet as saffron smile
she will not play she will win
bring eden to its winter
she will not merely survive his game
lilith: the screech-owl
the night-hag
the monster
the black tarred and feathered abomination
she will not merely survive his game
she will tear it to pieces and kill it with her beak
she is everything he cannot be and more
she: like he mother
will not submit.

she will burn every inch of eden until he knows
until they know
she will not be a pawn to push towards a sea of grey

she will leave the apple trees to rot
and burn the bridges she comes to
whatever she may be:

night hag,
night monster,
night witch

will be better than a slave.

Rebecca Flieder is a Creative Writing major from New Hampshire whose works often focus on love and nature as they relate to the modern world. When not writing, she loves to wander the woods behind her home and pretend she's not the one that ate all the chocolate chip cookies.

Morning Hymn By Allison Gish

Stowie holds her grandfather's tobacco pipe.

She blows silvery wispy clouds into the sky

And makes plans to find Alaska,

wanting the gentle love of cubs and bears.

I turn to the armoire and reach for my shawl,

pulling the loose strings of fading lavender.

In the kitchen hangs the drying lavender

Which she sometimes lights in her pipe.

We sit by the open door and I pull my shawl

Closer around my shoulders. She looks at the sky,

And she says that the clouds look like bears

And that today feels like Alaska.

I ask her if she knows that in Alaska

The sky is always a color like lavender,

is always crying, for the weight is too much to bear.

She looks down and rolls the smooth old pipe

Between her fingers, and says that the sky

In Alaska is fine with its cloudy shawl.

I trace the cracks in the veneer with my shawl

Covering the tip of my finger like Alaska

Covers Stowie's thoughts. She says that the sky

Here is too big for her and a piece of lavender

Falls from its clothespin. She puts down the pipe

And she says she wishes she were a bear.

Her father walks into the kitchen, bearing

A basket. Re-hanging the lavender, my shawl

Falls and her father mumbles about a broken pipe.

He tells her not to go to Alaska

And in his basket lies something lavender

That he made small for her— it is the sky.

The armoire now holds the tiny sky.

Its finely cracking veneer bears

the weight. I'm going to paint it lavender

I think, the same as the color of my shawl.

Stowie asks if I've ever been to Alaska

And then says something about pipe

Dreams. We watch the sky put on its starry shawl

As celestial bears dance somewhere above Alaska,

And with lavender paint we patch the broken pipe.

Allison Gish is a lover of all things natural hailing from the Rocky Mountains of Colorado. Her poetry and prose have appeared in Young Ravens Literary Review and Foxcroft Chimera Literature and Arts Magazine.

To: Yellow Fever By Jasmine Cui

I know I am alive and convenient.

A piece of the whole. A body

in an ocean of bodies.

A quart of seawater can still be the sea.

I am just a smaller vessel. I know,

you do not understand the language

of my grief. Mistake its sound

for sloshing, my silence for willingness

always grasping at surfaces, the circumference

of a wrist – trying to comprehend

a smaller infinity.

Jasmine Cui is eighteen years old and is majoring in Political Science, Economics, and Chemistry at SUNY Geneseo. She aspires to be like her parents who are first-generation

Americans that fought an extraordinary battle for their place in this country. She is the founder and co-Editor in Chief of *The Ellis Review*.

Unmaking By Annabel Chosy

The day you are taken out,

I am left at home to take a bath.

I turn the faucet and let the silver

rush my palm, the nanny watching

as the bathtub swells, and deepens.

I do not know of you yet, resting

in the bloom of my mother,

the waves spreading all around you:

so small.

I do not know of Dr. Kilburg,

do not know of her sad mouth saying

No more heartbeat, no more, no more.

The water of the bathtub cups me

like my mother cups herself when

she comes home. She tries to smile

at the pink child in the water,

but the ache will remind her of

will remind her.

Annabel Chosy is a high school student from Minneapolis, Minnesota. Her work has been published in The Blueshift Journal, Words Dance Publishing, Crashtest, and Stone Soup. She has also received recognition from the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards.

OCD and Heartbreaks By Linzy Rosen

Pills line my dresser

Like tallies in a prison cell

Plastered on the walls

Counting down the days until liberation.

I organize my pills into neat rows and columns

Just another one of my OCD perks

Except the only one that is cute is my cleanliness

You said

Apparently my disorder can be picked apart by Notes and Retweets-

You clicked the share button.

I shake up each bottle

A melancholy melody to accompany my broken-record thoughts

I wash my hands over and over in the fiery breath of scorching water at the thought of you

As red skin peels off

Like my clothes did that time in your bed

I guess I was too much to handle for more than one night.

My favorite pill is the one that looks like an atomic bomb

But whose name still sounds less foreign than yours when it rolls off my tongue.

My raw hands glide across the wondrous curves of the child lock cap I twist

Would you appreciate my body as much as this?

My hand fits better with the pill bottle than it did with yours.

Saliva embraces the pill as I gently slide it in the back of my throat

A euphoric reunion

How nice it is to be this close to something that will not push me away

That will not slam doors in my face or treat me like an experiment.

My fingers gingerly caress each tiny body

As I dump the remaining pills in my hand

They dance across the crosshatches of my palms and scars on my wrists

Softer than any kiss I've ever received.

A smile warped with incredible pain and a feeling I cannot yet detect

Crawls across my face

When I realize that

This is the most intimate experience

I've ever had.

Linzy is a junior at Westfield High School in New Jersey. When she isn't reading or writing, she enjoys embracing her inner nerd by reciting over a hundred digits of pi to anyone willing (and even unwilling) to listen. She is an active member of her school's all female FIRST robotics team and a fierce environmental advocate. Armed with an ardent pen and the power of caffeine, she knows she can take on the world.

Dream Land By Hanna Iruka Hall

The sky is the color of a rusty

crayon, the house a black box

with a triangle on top. In the attic,

a boy sleeps on a bed of broken

sheets, a bar of light across his body.

The dark in his room is friendly

as erasers. Grinning pencils

are leaning in the closet,

the shadow of a stuffed monkey

claps his hands. The laundry basket

rolls around laughing. And the room

simplifies. A wall becomes a line,

a chair a friendship. A belt buckle
disappears. Above him is a shadow
of a giant pair of hands, tousling
his feather hair, and the boy's stick arms
are crooked, elbows bent, as if he is cradling
a bird.

Hanna Iruka Hall is eighteen years old and loves to read and write. Her work is forthcoming in Eunoia Review and has been recognized by Scholastic Art and Writing Awards. She is fascinated by Medusa from Greek mythology, and would like to conduct a slime-mold experiment in her free time.
