



February 2018 Eleven Poems

How We Talk About Juliet By Amanda Lee

i.

Botanically: as the blushing rose named

for her, vivisected into light-shy

petals. On the flower

-laced continuum of taxonomy

we scatter her somewhere between

inanimate object and heroine.

ii.

Linguistically: we assign her the word

“devoted” and move on to Romeo.

But shouldn't we stop and debate if she, too,

can be strong? Debate if women can be

workers

breadwinners?

Only 2 women debate in parliament.

iii.

Mathematically: equate her relationships. Love

is the product of physical beauty. Is this

why my friends starve themselves?

Strawberry juice

is the colour of botched

skin after plastic surgery, blood

seeping through Botoxed smiles.

iv.

Artistically: paint her pale skinned, baby-

curled, trailing damask. We hand her

a button

for modesty. Then criticize her

for her short skirts, hot pink

binders and crop tops.

v.

Astronomically: hold our hands against the same

constellations Juliet

looked up to when Romeo left her lost

and alone. We watch the moon wax and

wane, looking for a line of best fit

through this

star-crossed path.

Amanda Lee Siu Ching is from Singapore. Amanda is a student at Raffles Girls' School (Secondary) and a Creative Arts Programme mentee. Her work has been recognised by the Torrance Legacy Creative Writing Awards and appeared in TeenInk.

Father By Stephen Duncanson

May I move your shovel from beside the door? Back when I was little, the street you'd clear stamping, damp layers shed, boots upon the floor; you haven't touched it once this year.

Scrape scrape, oh how quickly you would move. My brothers too would press our noses against window glass to see what you've cut through the snow, red hat and standing tall.

And now your hair gets more and more like snow; it's melting off with every coming spring.

And grey, asphalt pebbles, where once was glow —do I need worry? Have you lost something?

Father, I moved your shovel from beside the door, now I brave the storm outside
and I need you, all the more.

Stephen Duncanson is a freshman at Southern Connecticut State University. He has
been published once before in the Blue Marble Review as well as in Polyphony HS. In his
free time he enjoys reading and weightlifting.

Solipsist By Dana Dykiel

Small towns grow big stories

in the cracks between the sidewalk, in the silence

between words, the ones we fill

with what we do not know.

We have heard sirens call

from static, read novels

from paragraphs, built lives

out of fantasies.

We have bloomed too bold

for tepid sunlight and gentle

breaths of earth-

We are prodigies of steel
and sugar, the ghosts
of cities not yet seen and of
devotions not yet lived. Now,
We find no stories left untold
and lie on our backs, sinking
into the ceiling, hoping to transform
through our own alchemy.
An army of children, straining to grow up,
waiting for the world to move.

Dana is a high school senior who lives in Massachusetts. As a lover of language, she works as a staff member on Polyphony HS and Window Seat. Her writing has been recognized by the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards, as well as published on Kingdoms in the Wild.

Planet Blue By Vivian Tsai

beneath the clear sky we are wide-eyed

and wee,

all dancing-and-dizzy

wherever we roam;

how lovely to spin

ourselves topsy-and-tizzy

on the brink of this marble

we like to call

home.

Vivian Tsai currently studies computer science and applied math at Johns Hopkins University. She spends her free time doodling, writing letters, and playing tennis with friends.

The Silver Screen's Lion By Emily Dorffer

The king of Hollywood— the main event, the star—

Demands the roaring crowd's attention. Royal pain

Awaits the swooning girls who beg to stroke his mane.

He bares his teeth, a predatory smile, and paws

His prey behind the scenes. He feasts on wild applause

And box office revenues, claims the lion's share

Of praise, and blames his bombs on brands his costars wear.

He reigns a concrete kingdom, prowling past the mates

He ruled by stalking, spiking drinks, and skipping dates.

The paparazzi poach a picture, hunting news

To mount on magazines and garner website views.

He snarls and roars at newsroom queens, his pride destroyed,

As channels pounce on stories. Fade to black. A void

Consumes his fans and fame. The scavenger remains

Encaged. He dreams of breeding, meat, and private planes.

The girls remember beastly nights, each one a scar.

Emily Dorffer is a current undergraduate at Johns Hopkins University. When she isn't busy reading or writing, she loves spoiling her cat and baking with her mom. Her works have previously appeared in Cicada, Breath & Shadow, and The Lyric.

2nd Period Maths By J.L. von Ende

I don't consider myself a poet

I like to think I'm a mathematician;

There's something burning inside her

That I can't quite calculate.

Each time she speaks

I listen closely for hidden x's and y's

Maybe a z or two

But my mind is distracted by the movement of her lips

A cosine curve in dark red.

She ties her hair up into deep chestnut twists

My abstract geometry professor wasn't lying

Fibonacci spirals do exist everywhere.

I love mathematics

Puzzles, missing pieces, transformations through numeral planes

God, this is the most challenging puzzle of them all

I scribble out equations over and over

And smear graphite on my fingertips

But my final conclusion is always the same:

I love this girl more than I ever could the numbers.

J.L. Von Ende is eighteen-year-old writer from Washington, D.C. His hobbies include: feeding pigeons, studying mathematics, writing, and riding the subway for fun.

Flush By Rachana Hegde

I think of freedom as an empty vessel

singing about god's mercy and how she

thrashed the skies, how the rivers flocked

to her bedside as god sang the mountains

into existence. I think of death blistering along

the underside of our arms or of stabbing

fresh meat until it ripens. I dream of the

release when milk spills from our mouths,

baby teeth gleaming on the rooftop.

I dream of an origami moth's tongue

folding and bursting into flames.

I think of gulping the smoke billowing

from our cars and wonder how fish

can plunge down the toilet but wash up

on shore, glowing clean, dripping wet

onto the sand. You see, I want to learn

how to flush my sins like purging the

aftertaste from wine. Prayers slip down

the steps of a temple and I ask god how to

wring the sadness from my body. I dream

of scraping the salt from my silhouette.

Rachana Hegde is an eighteen- year-old Indian writer from Hong Kong. Her poetry has appeared in DIALOGIST, Diode Poetry Journal, and The Blueshift Journal. Her work has

been recognized by the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards and nominated for Best of the Net. Find her at www.rachanahegde.weebly.com.

The Pond By Rachana Hegde

I fell into the pond,

body pearled and flickering.

A painless death would be a

miracle, something to bear.

The night pretended vulnerability

and even this was too much.

I collected my glossy truths;

I pretended this would not last.

I was still learning to live but then,

this happened and I want to know why.

My tongue lay trapped, lazy like a

frog boiling in its sweat.

I hungered for melted chocolate

as my fear stained the water.

The upturned faces of our mothers

shone in the light. It was hard to

apologize for this intentional mistake.

I had to tear apart the truth, maybe

dress it up like a ghost story.

I buttered my lips so it would slide

out easily. Late that night, I walked

back into the pond. Leaves swirled

around my ankles as I floated,

dress dragging me down.

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Confessions By Vivian Parkin DeRosa

To be vulnerable is to block the breathing tube of regret

with a wad of sticky tack and tell the truth.

Tell your mother you're lonely.

Tell the neighbor you're worried that everyone's going to die.

Tell your best friend that you're afraid that everyone's going to die lonely.

truth has always been inside of you, and so has vulnerability,
sitting with their knees pulled up to their chest in the corner
of your heart, waiting to hitchhike through your mouth
so they won't weigh down your chest anymore.

To be vulnerable is to stop using 2nd person,
because it distances the reader from the writer.

So I'll tell my mother I'm lonely,
and I'll tell my neighbor that everyone's going to die,
and I'll tell you that I'm worried we'll die lonely.

but I know that you hear me, and that is the opposite
of lonely.

brush off the winter from your shoulders so you won't
be so cold and rip off your skin to show everyone
your bleeding heart. the Spring spilled blood brings

is so warm and wet and intimate.

Vivian Parkin DeRosa is an editor, writer, blogger, and intern at Project Write Now. Her work has appeared on the HuffPost and in several small literary magazines. She's currently working on a novel.

Art Theft By Adam Zhou

I like to paint / over a painting / just to see / if the story it tells / the one with the purple sky / and below it / a pair of silhouettes / changes into one / where I'm actually in. / It's fine if I'm stood / behind the trunks of the autumn trees / or in the form of a lone sparrow / or even hidden in the crevices of the minds of two children. There's a bottle of tears / under my bed / and as I let the substance spill / onto my fingers / and slither / into the nooks of the frame / I watch a blue-gray sea / of scattered memories / ripple against its own waves. / The landscape / now is darkness. / Perhaps there was nothing / to begin with / and so I'll start / my own journey. / The brushes / on blank canvas / pave a never ending / road.

Adam Zhou has been recognized by the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards at the National Level and his work has appeared or is forthcoming in The Rising Phoenix Review, What Rough Beast, The Kill List Chronicles, Eunoia Review, Glass: A Journal of

Poetry, among others. As a high school sophomore at the International School Manila, he has been subject to the wide array of exhibitions cultural perspectives have to offer and aims to share these through writing.

Death the Chef By Emily Dorffer

Preparing blackened boy, I heat a house

with matches struck by boredom. Hungry flames

escape and gnaw the door. The boy can't douse

the fire that licks the walls and ends his games.

I marinate a girl in salty brine.

As coral traps her foot, some kelp and weeds

entangle legs. A shark's sharp teeth confine

her thrashing limbs. She trails from jaws and bleeds.

Methinks it's best to serve outdoorsmen chilled.

As snowflakes season skin, the hiker slips.

The crack of bone on stone announces spilled

ingredients, and frostbite tints his lips.

One day, dear reader, you shall make a fine,

delicious dish, and I alone shall dine.

Emily Dorffer is a current undergraduate at Johns Hopkins University. When she isn't busy reading or writing, she loves spoiling her cat and baking with her mom. Her works have previously appeared in *Cicada*, *Breath & Shadow*, and *The Lyric*.
