



Barn Outside the Community Garden

# Blue Marble Review Summer Poems 2022

**Editor Note** By Molly Hill

*Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it.*  
Ferris Bueller

Editor's Note

Summer Poems 2022

Dear Readers and Writers:

Summer is fleeting, — which is why we've called upon the tried and true wisdom of Ferris Bueller, to introduce our Summer Poems 2022 online issue. As life speeds along, we read hundreds of poems for every issue, and the ones we select for publication are those that make us pause, because they show us life presented in a fresh and original way.

For example, we receive many poems about beloved pets, but a *Ghazal\* of Jealousy* about an English Bulldog? Haven't seen that before (well done Tyler Sookralli). And while we weren't specifically looking for poetry about *The Life Cycle of an African Bush Elephant*, Lucy Somers showed us why this was exactly the poem we needed, and that it wasn't really completely about elephants,— was it?

Sometimes when we turn down writing, students email and ask *what did I do wrong?* Instead of our responding: *write more like this*, we can only send encouragement to write more like your own self. Because ultimately, we are asking for what happens when you stop and look around once in a while. What do you see, from your corner of the world? Write, and send it to us so we don't miss it. The idea being that each Blue Marble Review issue then becomes a collection of all of these disparate points of view.

Summer is flying, and there's something out there you shouldn't be missing. Make sure you get it down on paper.

Molly Hill

Editor

\* (Pronunciation: “guzzle”) Originally an Arabic verse form dealing with loss and romantic love, medieval Persian poets embraced the ghazal, eventually making it their own. Consisting of syntactically and grammatically complete couplets, the form also has an intricate rhyme scheme. Each couplet ends on the same word or phrase (the *radif*), and is preceded by the couplet’s rhyming word. ([www.poetryfoundation.org](http://www.poetryfoundation.org))

**Reach Out** By Kendall Cooper

*in support of Ukraine*

*i.*

reach bone, reach drooling eyes  
reach the sternums of streets that fail  
to crack. reach life that caresses  
the mourners, reach guns that fire  
diagonal to the dead. reach missing and  
missing and found, reach under  
the black mattress of a miracle. reach  
the wilting body. reach tattered wrists

*ii.*

reach shameless, reach vulnerable  
and nude. reach bare arms

that cannot bear love. reach into  
humanity without

looking and finding  
the missing pieces. reach away,

then reach back. reach anyone  
on the train of a breath

any delicate stare, any hurt  
construction of a child.

*iii.*

reach *send*  
reach those who fly  
reach those who lift gravity  
    and souls to pass the time  
reach brow  
reach wrinkle and terrified hips  
    that shackle a body  
reach blood that runs gray  
reach mouth that runs straight  
reach angel  
reach divine  
    and dangerous mercy  
reach bless  
reach severely gentle!

reach on to those tender people  
    on the other side waiting  
    to never be called  
reach them

*iv.*

with their hands  
only full of open and empty. reach  
out  
to your children. reach out, just  
enough  
to hold them in your arms

Kendall Cooper is a rising high school senior based in Houston, Texas. She is an alumna of the Kenyon Young Writers Workshop and is a 2022 Adroit Journal Mentee. Kendall has won numerous Scholastic Awards for her poetry and was a semi-finalist for Houston Youth Poet Laureate. Currently, she works as a literary apprentice for *Breakbread Magazine*.

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### **Small Town Survival** By Jaxon Farmer

Imagine being born into a world that bites back  
Thrown here with no stepping stones  
The clatter of flag poles; the chatter of fallen leaves  
—this is home and hell.

Cold carcasses carried in the arms of Small Town,  
Puppeteering inert skin with heartstrings,  
Collecting taxes or cemetery-addressed love letters or me.  
Muffled chirps and benches left barren  
Hooked on minority famine.

But these eulogies are not compulsory  
Because sometimes escape is recovery  
So as new-home warmth overwhelms  
And the fiery frigidity subsides  
We are finally granted a goodbye

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## **Citrus** By Gianna Longo

The bowl was left empty  
though I knew you wanted something  
that would tease your tongue the  
Way you would tease me  
when you wanted to see me smile through  
a scowl. I could only find limes  
So we sucked on them after  
licking salt off one another's  
Hands, priming our tongues for  
shots of tequila we poured  
down our throats in the sweet  
Burn of agave and mistreatment.  
I wanted so badly to cry  
but when I saw your face  
Nose crunched, lips tight, eyes  
Watering, I forgot why.

Giana is a writer of creative nonfiction, poetry, and short stories in Philadelphia. She is currently working towards a masters at Saint Joseph's University. Her work has been published in Philadelphia Magazine.

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## **Step One** By Jocelyn Olum

Someday  
I am going to be a *kick-ass* grandmother.

Just wait. I'll have grown-up mojo over 9000  
I'll say whatever the hell I want to

Because someday

There won't be anyone older to complain.

Someday I will tell all those awful stories about "flip phones"

and "BuzzFeed"

and "bluetooth"

and when I run out of memories about snail mail and VHS tapes and walking uphill to school

both ways

barefoot

in the snow

Because in the end I think there are some things that never change.

Someday I am going to be a middle-aged woman.

Wean teeny children into teenagers on the teddy bears of the future—

Someday I will be a new mother.

Meet my partner's eyes over a knee-high ball of perfect and fall exhausted into an unmade bed

Place my hands over a rounded stomach and feel new life pulse inside of me

And get up to go to the bathroom one more time

but

Before that (*I promise*) I will be a college student

Throw off the mantle of my loving/hated parents and then reach backwards to lift it ill-fittingly

on

Squish the memories down when I pack my bags so they fit inside a standard carry-on

And find them flattened smooth like pressed flowers when the contents may have

shifted during  
flight

Well.

It's early, still.

Mom always did say I jump into things;

I suppose that's more than enough dreaming before dinner.

Jocelyn Olum is a writer, a student, and a circus performer. She grew up in Boston, Massachusetts, where she was awarded both Gold and Silver Keys from the Regional Scholastic Writing Awards for Poetry. Her work has been featured in Red Eft Review and is forthcoming in Eunoia Review.

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**Crumpling** By Livia von Gossler

Do you think we will grow old  
In a way that doesn't hurt  
I feel I hold a hundred years  
And am not an infant yet  
My skin is stretched and then it folds  
What are the church bells ringing for?  
Will my eyes close and then go blind  
Before I get used to the light?

Livia von Gossler is a seventeen-year-old high school student. She is currently living in British Columbia, Canada. A goal of hers is to study English at university. Always

interested in literature, she's been writing poetry for years and participated in multiple poetry events. She loves poetry and how it can turn complex emotions into art. In writing she found way to cope and express her own sentiments.

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### **Life Raft** By Conan Tan

Thirty years on & still summer nights settle into  
shared breaths. The moonlight dancing on your lips,

each syllable of air pregnant with want. Within these  
naked walls, we are holy & that means selfish

& that means I confess I like my body more  
when you're inside it. This moving metronome rhythm.

These shipwrecked hands that found a home  
holding yours. God, how we have whittled our lives

down to this: newspaper coffee. Feet massages  
on the living room couch. Your pillowed touch

braiding me to sleep. There are nights too endless  
with weary & you would harness me back to shore,

the flesh of your name percolating the tongue  
like we are everywhere & tomorrow all at once.

Conan Tan (he/they) currently lives in Singapore and loves writing poems on grief, love, heartbreak and trauma. When he's not writing, he's probably curating Spotify playlists or

rewatching *The Good Place*. Their poems have been published in, or are forthcoming at, *SingPoWriMo* and *Eunoia Review*.

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**Ghazal of Jealousy** By Tyler Sookralli

Oh dearest one, envy changes my smile to scowl, love.

Your beauty is exotic, present in your rolls and jowl, love.

Do you know the pain I feel as I watch others caress you?

As they run their hands through your hair, I stifle a howl, love.

As I see you, I remember the blissful and happy times:

You, running into my arms naked, free of even a towel, love.

You follow them with ease, lured by simple promises.

Stay with me, beloved, for they lust for mice like an owl, love.

Our evening walks are tranquil, sans the ones who pass us by.

You rush to any jogger or monk, licking every shoe or cowl, love.

Let us etch our name into a bench, Tyler written on the right.

Then mark the left with your tiny paw, find a squirrel, and growl, love.

*(Written with the intent of employing traditional ghazal structure, and in tribute to my English Bulldog.)*

Tyler Sookralli is a high school junior who spends his free time immersed in the engulfing world of literature and the arts. The two primary guiding forces in his life are storytelling

and music (which often find themselves intertwined). As a writer, he has no greater goal than to learn from others and become the best storyteller he has the potential to be.

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**( ) Empty Parenthesis** By Chinedu Gospel

Let's bible our mouths into shape.

Damn the demons beneath the

bridge of our minds. Scalpel our throats

& whiten the silent birds therein with

psalms. Let's prose the story of the boy  
who died in the bed of the ocean. Sound—

stretch his ribs into the strings of a harp.

Sing— patch the bullet holes on his chest

with grief so tangible, so sticky, the flood  
of our eyes cannot erase it. Let's canoe

to the shoreline of the ocean. Cast mourning  
into the water in search of fish. But this

ocean knows more grief than we do.

Where I'm from, every boy is a bold font

at the beginning of a story, a strikethrough  
in the middle & an empty parenthesis

at the end. My fada taught me to count  
my days. & count my blessings. & count

my sons. & the stars above the sky. But,  
before I learned numbers, I learned the genesis

of grief. I learned that a boy should be more  
bullet than bone. Only then, would the war

boomerang into glory. Look —I don't mean  
to be talkative. Because, if this poem, was the

story of me, it would still end as an  
empty parenthesis —( ).

Chinedu Gospel is an emerging poet. His works have appeared or are forthcoming in Nantygreens, Praxis magazine, The Rising Phoenix Review and elsewhere. He plays chess and listens to inspirational songs.

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### **Life Cycle of the African Bush Elephant** By Lucy Somers

Helping my grandma take down Christmas decorations,  
I help her sit and grab water as she places a soft hand  
Over her heart. On the drive down, we are reminded  
How we need to keep her in good spirits,  
How we need her alive. When we arrive, I hug  
Her extra long. I let go- I can tell she's in pain.  
I try to be good.

I try and sometimes I'm enough, usually adequate.  
Someone is almost always better. So- I love my grandma

The most and hold her the longest and let her teach  
me to play cards while everyone is sleeping.

She tells me how she was a hand model  
and Miss Air Force Runner-up. How my mom  
was trouble from the time she was born.

She tells me my soul felt familiar the minute  
we met. She'd rock me all night,  
but I'd stay awake, exploring and watching.  
Now I am tired.

She can't walk upstairs to her bed anymore.  
She didn't tell me this, but I can see.

The couch she sleeps on has a texture-smooth  
and slightly tacky from her hairspray. I hate animal  
Documentaries but she doesn't know this. We watch  
Them together most nights. My head is getting too heavy

For her lap. She doesn't tell me this, but I can tell  
By the way she inhales sharply when I'm drifting off  
To sleep. So, with our mostly quiet bodies we watch-

The sunset over the Sahara and penguins shuffling  
In their circles. She cries when elephants are born.  
The African Bush elephant carries the calf for two  
Years, and when it's time for things to be undone,  
They fall apart. And we weep.

Lucy Somers is a Midwestern poet who is deeply inspired by her natural surroundings and familial

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**Lost in L.A.** By Kyra Horton

clouded

how do i find a mind scattered in pieces around a city?

been losing my head since the day i got here.

lost

but as close to heaven that i've been a while

how do i fix a life that feels so perfect?

mend a heart that isn't broken, but isn't beating anymore

the line between euphoria and self-destruction is too thin for me

i cross it often

i can't think straight most days

my thoughts take over every waking moment until i exist in reality only in waves

not sure what reality is most days

most days i dance until my feet blister

other days i cry until there are no tears left

maybe the never-ending sun beaming has something to do with my emotions existing

only in extremes

clouded

the city where there's so much magic you forget to breathe

so much beauty you forget not to stare in the sun

so much opportunity you forget who you are

there are no homes here

just rooms filled with aspiration

corners plagued by desperation

studios filled with hope

hearts filled with longing

i don't belong here  
my heart can't survive here  
i want to go home  
not sure home exists anymore  
i gave it all up for la  
for a shot at my dreams like the millions of others feigns itching to make it out  
lost  
the city where inspiration fills your lungs with every breath  
the city where i found myself yet still feel  
lost

Kyra Horton is a twenty-year old creator. Whether expressing herself through writing, performing, or painting, she strives to turn pain into beauty. Her identity as a young Black woman from Chicago shapes her work. She grew up being inspired by activism and solidarity in her community and the arts. Kyra is fearless in the avenues she seeks in order to create the emotions painted in her heart. The world is Kyra's canvas, as well as her muse. Her primary medium of creativity is spoken word poetry. Kyra has performed at over 50 different events since beginning her poetry career 5 years ago. Kyra published her first poetry book called *Cries of a Butterfly*, wrote and produced her album of poetry called *The Silencer*, released an EP of poetry called *Tears Of Gold*, and published poetry for the Gate Newspaper and the nonprofit organization Sixty Inches From Center. She has led writing workshops as well as participated in journalism cohorts to cultivate her skills.

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**Laylatul Qadr** By Rimel Kamran

*Laylatul Qadr* whispers in the *masjid*

Like the soft ripple of breath and vowel.

A language, my quivering fingers weave  
Between the quilted cotton of my *hijab*.

A mellifluous *dua*, I etch in the blood  
Of my veins like a carved promise.

A covenant, I sow in my heart's flesh  
Which blossoms between the fractures of angst.

Two words, I embrace like home  
Between swollen lips and teeth.

*Sabr. Patience. Hifazat. Protection.*  
*Sabr. Patience. Hifazat. Protection.*

Two words, my henna-stained fingers  
Trace on the saffron-hued carpet

Yet suddenly amongst these dulcet syllables  
I hear the bitter beads of rainfall cascade

Seeking to drench this gift of hope  
A relentless reminder of humanity's ignorance  
How the indifferent drown the voice of justice  
With the bitter call of malice

And plant the ubiquitous germ of indifference  
Corrupting the fertile lands of democracy

As the white man's fist stifles my voice

With apathy in the name of justice

And exudes the sour odor of his privilege

Spilling his venom as if this heart can't feel pain

Muffling my voice with his sallow knuckles

Because he fears my right to speech

But shall I remain silent?

But shall I remain compliant?

When my faith is stitched on my chest

As an emblem of my dignity

Or when a prayer of hope blossoms from my palms

Like a rose both battered and beautiful

And when *sabr* and *hifazat* roll across my molars

Like an anthem of justice awaiting to be sung

When *Laylatul Qadr* whispers in my ear

A message of hope, a message of power.

### Defined Terms

1. Laylatul Qadr- One of the holiest nights in the Islamic calendar on which Angel Jibril revealed the Quran to Prophet Muhammad. The night is observed by Muslims

through prayer, repentance, and reading the Quran.

2. Masjid- place of worship for Muslims
3. Hijab- religious head covering
4. Dua- Arabic word meaning “prayer” or “act of supplication”
5. Sabr- Arabic word meaning “patience”
6. Hifazat- Urdu word meaning “protection”

Rimel Kamran is a current junior and the Cincinnati Youth Poet Laureate. Her poetry aims to build community, celebrate diversity, and share her Pakistani-American identity. She hopes to share her love for poetry, especially with youth, and encourage them to seek the unheard poem within them. When she's not writing she enjoys pursuing her interests in science and medicine.

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## **Wonder** By Lilianna Colon

I wonder  
If there is a place  
Where all our  
lost  
memories escape to.  
A secret sanctuary we can never find.  
I wonder  
If the memories creep from our minds  
In the middle of the night,  
So silent that we do not  
Even remember they were ever  
Ours.  
I wonder if they float through the bright blue sky  
and whisper to us from up above,

Hoping we will notice them,  
Hoping we will claim them  
Before they  
Vanish  
to their  
Secret sanctuary.

Liliana Colon is a twenty-year-old mentee in the Writing Works Program through Girls Write Now. She is from New York City and is currently taking a gap year from college to better explore her passions. She entered and was one of the winners of the My Simple Realization writing contest for her personal essay entitled “Sheltered.” Her poem “Soil” will be included in the sixth annual online spring issue of Girls Right the World. Liliana is looking forward to new opportunities for growing and cultivating her love of writing.

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**Barn Outside the Community Garden** By Brian Schatteman



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