



Ballooning by Hallie Dong

Blue Marble Review

November Poems 2022

Editor Note By Molly Hill

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Editor's Note:

Dear Readers and Writers:

Because our submission numbers are so much larger than the amount of writing we are able to publish, we've added a November Poetry issue this year to showcase more good work from our student writers. We still end up turning down more work than we accept and students often email to ask us what type of writing we're looking for. The best answer is to read the type of work we've already published.

Regarding poetry, certainly we're open to a variety of forms, and publish haiku, odes, elegies, ghazals, sonnets, prose poems etc. But we also welcome hybrid and unconventional forms as well. In our FALL submissions queue this year, there was a LOT to like. And while it feels like the writing gets stronger, the longer we publish, this is just a small sample —a bit of the 'best of' our FALL reading.

In this issue—

Cameroonian writer Hyla Etame writes about longing in *Love Letter to My Fatherland*. And in *Beautiful Marigold*, high school student Mustafa Dost shows how an unconventional style can really work— this is not a typical 'flower poem.'

Kevin Song successfully builds beautiful lines into strong stanzas in *Triggers and Disappointment*, while Quinn Murphy confides a very relatable worry in *A Seething Fear*.

In *Wheel of Fortune (X)*, Filipino poet Rigel Portales manages to combine in a short poem —cobras, dice, Twilight, and heart surgery— with excellent results.

Isabel Isaac creates a beautiful, intimate scene in *kitchen light*, and Haze Fry explores the state of the world in her poem *Sixteen*.

Sandra Lin covers culture clash in *ESTRANGED* and wow, — Arim Lee shows off some skill weaving memory and image in *k-summer*.

Amelia Glass' reflective voice begins with one bed:empty, in her poem *thinking on the meaning of the word 'gone.'*

Something for everyone here. Please send more.

Molly Hill

Editor

Love Letter to My Fatherland By Hyla Etame

I long to walk on the shores
of your beaches,
touch the cool Atlantic—
A horizon of nothing.

I want to taste your beer,
smoke cigarettes with the middle-aged men
in the open-air bars that are in-service
from late afternoon to the early hours of the morning.

To step into the terra-cotta clay mud
of your dirt roads in the countryside
and glide on the smooth pavement of Yaoundé.

To be stared at as I shop in the markets,
be called “foreigner”, “stranger”, “American”
in the native tongues.

To speak broken French with my Francophone family,
nearly perfected English with my Anglophone side,
and eavesdrop on the surrounding conversations
spoken in Pidgin.

I know more than they think, ha-ha.

To savor your smoked barracuda,

long for it to be in every dish...

To glare at the statues commemorating imperialists...

To devour the fried plantains cooked as a midday snack.

To be stung by your mosquitoes

as I hike in your national parks.

To be embraced by my fellow countrymen and women

as if I had been born and bred there.

Hyla Etame (she/her) is a writer from Southern California of Cameroonian heritage.

Hyla is a first-year student at the University of Kent in Canterbury, England, studying

English Literature and Creative Writing. Her writing often meditates on nature,

everyday experiences, and her identity. During her high school career, she was a

member of WriteGirl and her poem “The Nonexistent Divide Between Land and Air”

was published in their 2019 anthology. Her poem “Heaven on Earth,” which she

describes as “a love letter to the desert,” was published in the Inlandia Institute’s Spring

2021 Volume XII Teen Issue. Currently, she’s writing the second draft of her novel about

a teenager living in an egalitarian pure communist society and hopes to publish it as soon

as it’s complete.

Beloved Marigold By Mustafa Dost

Aug 24

Oh lovely death! How dark, you make the night grow!

No longer do the hands punish. No longer do the eyes sneer.

Oh lovely death! How benevolent you are!

The most equal occurrence, the most known experience, the most revered event!

Wisping away the lives of those who were wronged, to a new life.

And carrying the poor souls of those who wronged, to a new chance at life!

Aug 27

Oh lovly death! How misteriyous you are!

How butiful your face must be to even transfiqs the eyes of the suffering to your demenor!

How gentle you must be, to pour out the breth, forever sinking your frends chest!

Huw fast you take away the pain of marters!

Oh lovely death, do unto me as you have done for genaretions!

Oh binivoltent death, cary to the land you are so fond of!

O mysterious death, transfiqx my eyes unto your face and release me the pain from this world!

Sep 3

Hav I not suffered enuf?

m I not to the degri of those who died and met ur pleasince?

Y du yu onli come to thos who dislike you, why must yo keeep me withut yu?!

Oh cowy death, show urslf!

An ugli expreshun, of only urs culd capture the atttenttshun of yur “friends”!

How dgustig ou mst be!

No wonder you don’t resid in the hevans! Not evan th demans of hell had dasired yur residunce!

Ha! How sud must it be to be to be rjected bi the devil himself!

Oct 31

Oh gurdy death, youn’t must have pruuf!

I visit graves manyy multiplicashun a day.

I only eat the meat, meat, meat from the cows.

Nd the gerlic from the wo men.

oH diSgrumblEd deth, y Du you forsik me soo??

My TEARS havE terned into YoU, mY Hert is only for u. My supherIng is onli for YOU!!!

ARnt MI WITS NIT ENUF? IS MI SUL NOT ENUF? PLES ANSWER!!!!

Stoopid doctor an his stopid wrtititings

Oh Deph, jus clam mi sul lik mi bveld magorlds.

Nu lengr wil I dezev u, I prumiz.

Hav mercy o wretched Deth!

reLLve r wrtchd mecy dath du unto me.

Oh Deth!

Mustafa Dost is a fifteen-year-old developing writer from SoCal, whose biggest fear is fully finishing any writing idea. He likes gardening, collecting classic books, and pretending to have a ton of work to do. The main goal in any of his writing is to evoke a powerful emotion, and to this day he works toward that goal.

Triggers and Disappointments By Kevin Song

i swim through the dark, alone.

the street lamps blossom to sip the
cool, blue glow. memories forget they
are memories because the stars
blink just like they did that evening in april.

the moon dangles its cold lure. lips crash
into lips. hands fold into hands.

once the sun cracks through this ink-black
shell, then i'll know. however, until
the dusk dies, i don't have to. until the
~~birds~~ wake, i don't need to. if this terrible

night continues to haunt me, the whispers
of you and i can still turn my head.

tonight, there are constellations left
unnamed, so it doesn't need to be real.
i'm not asking you to love me; i'm begging
you to make a fool of me. take my body
and crush it with yours. what are fingers
for, if not necks and triggers? you
already told me that this will shatter
everything, so now all that's left is for
you to show me. come, let's collide. we
can be shooting stars—dying and beautiful.
there will be no one to witness us, no
wishes to grant. what are nights for,
if not desire and disappointment?

Kevin Song is a freshman at the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities. He only recently started writing poetry and it has become a powerful outlet. In his free time, he enjoys spending time outdoors, eating Asian food, and reading manga.

A Seething Fear By Quinn Murphy

On my darkest inner nights,
I soothe a seething fear.
One that whispers of my life,
And the many failures near.

It tells me of potential,
Resting unfulfilled.
It warns of idle moments,
For which I'll later pay the bill.

It tells me I'm a nothing,
Erased before I'm gone.
It speaks of opportunities,
Fading with a yawn.

It knows of all my secret dreams,
Ones tucked inside my heart.
It tells me they will wilt away,
Lest my apathy departs.

It makes me think of giving up,
Tests the mettle of my want.
Conjures visions of success,
To be shattered as a taunt.

It creates a constant ticking,
For the moments as they fly.
I can't forget the speed at which
My life is rushing by.

It asks me what's the point,
When it's likely that I'll lose?
It scoffs that working everyday,
Is a silly thing to choose.

And of course I'm frightened,
That stride on as I may,
I might remain forever,
One more lost in the fray.

But either I can use this fear,
Or will it end up using me.
Will I become paralyzed,
And bound up in ennui?

Or will fear strike a fire,
Burning somewhere in my soul,
To push me ever onwards,
And to hold me to my goals?

It can keep my vision clear,
Cleaning clutter from my mind.
And aid me in my daily search,
For the focus I must find.

The fear, at times, can feel,
Like a weight upon my back.
But in truth, it is a compass,
That is holding me on track.

Quinn Murphy is an eighteen-year-old writer based in British Columbia, Canada. She's been practicing creative writing since she was twelve, but she's been telling stories for much, much longer. When she was fourteen, she started working as a contributor for

CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Company) Kids News, creating news articles for kids across Canada. Her poem The Writer, and her short story, The Little Thief, were recently published in the Spiritus Mundi Review. She has a passion for creative writing, particularly short stories and poetry, and she is working on her debut novel, which she hopes will touch readers of all ages.

Kitchen Light By Isabel Isaac

on fridays you come home with the evening paper,
shaking sunset and dry leaves off your boots at the back door,
greeting me with a bag of murukku and a kiss to the cheek.
the kitchen's glow is quiet and yellow, silhouetted
by shadows of a sloppy slow dance,
an orange tabby cat asleep on the sill,
an old dogwood on the other side of the glass.
i catch the chai pot before it boils over.
you pour us a cup each—
extra sugar for me, just a pinch for you—
while i tune the panasonic to our station of choice.
we join a gingery dusk at the table by the window,
spilling the day's stories onto warm chestnut
and the night's secrets into
warmer hands.

Isabel Isaac is a senior studying at Palm Beach Atlantic University, where she majors in Popular Music and minors in Creative Writing. She is originally from Northeast Philadelphia and has been living in West Palm Beach since 2015. Several of her works have been published in Living Waters Review. Most of her writing centers around her

Indian-American heritage. Outside of music and writing, her interests lie in photography/cinematography, fashion, and cats

Sixteen By Haze Fry

So does this year turn me sepia?

Wrinkled by the amount of times I've screamed,
cheeks grayish from saltwater drizzle.

Now they say my hands are wise enough to be trusted
on a steering wheel,
grown enough to fit a rifle between my fingers
and cuddle it at night like a teddy bear.

I'm asked to sign ballots
with yawning words that make me feel
like I'm back in the uterus.

A brainless cereal of cells
with more rights than their mother.

So I'm forced to hold life in my body
against my will, not allowed
to free myself from pain –
yet I am allowed to take a life, or many
with the rapid turn of my elbow in a car
or the press of my finger on a trigger.

Tell me why we are celebrating.

Tell me why there are candles
staining my pupils when I close my eyes,
and sweetness dissolving on my tongue.

The old lady in the restaurant
calls me a darling young girl,
~~yet the drunk man on the sidewalk offers me beer.~~

I can taste it all on my palms.

The softness of my baby hands clutching things
in my peripheral view,
constant newness freckling my plump cheeks.
And I taste the feeling of a red plastic cup,
sticky and crinkling in my hand
as I stumble through a world of vomited traffic lights.

I've never prayed for anything.

I've only whispered to the sky that cloaks me in childhood
and hoped that life would turn out okay.

But laws are passed and overturned
and each wicked grin in congress rips the fabric of my cloak
off my body.

Does this year mean I must confront it all?

Must add my tears to the puddle of my generation
and join them in changing things,
use my tender, fragile mind to fight the people who think me less valuable
than a fetus.

If I walk with my lover,

I must shade our hands under our shadows.

I must only kiss her in the dark,

or never kiss her at all.

Supposedly I was born to love this world,
to thrive under the solar system
and the way it ignores me.

As I age my value lessens,
yet I must value everything I touch,
~~every~~ sense I've been blessed with, and every wink

a man throws me from his truck window.
But if I wink at a woman whom I love
I could be thrown behind rusted gray bars.
Is this adulthood?

I will not let the way my body has crystalized
or the way I bleed on the crescent moon
dictate how I must treat and be treated
by the world.
and give them the sound of my scream.
How I stretch my neck into the fog
and spit out a raging thunderstorm
until they finally hear me.

Haze is a junior in creative writing at Ruth Asawa School of the Arts in San Francisco. They have work published in several literary publications, including Synchronized Chaos, The Weight Journal, and Parallax Journal, and have performed their poetry at the Youth Art Summit in San Francisco and 826 Valencia. When Haze is not writing, they can be spotted cuddling their three cats, holding their python, feeding their tarantula, or rescuing insects from being squashed.

k-summer By Arim Lee

If I close my eyes hard enough they hurt, I can pretend all I know is that vitreous summer. No grass, no sand and shells, only the soreness from staring down at choices

for too long. On those yellow-lined roads, we walked, prayers drying on our tongues, our shorts papery, palms sticking to each other. Big words, bubble-blown at the moon.

School kissed our foreheads. The trees wouldn't shake, but they'd smile with the wind. If only
my parents knew that laughing felt like the right way of being ripped apart. Maybe then,
there

wouldn't have been so much swallowing. The air was streaked with our sweat—proof
that we were real besides the rusted taxis slowing down for our hands. Here are

testaments to how summer spat us up naked: telling the part-time lady we were
eighteen or older
and howling. Fishing for silences to fill the cavity of two digits. Flapping our arms to fly
home.

After that, the bugs began. They didn't buzz or trill—they cried. Especially the cicadas,
God,
could they cry. Voices awkward and hoarse like they had a better sound lodged in their
throat.

It's half past yesterday and my room is the hill a star chose to die on, lit frantically from
the inside
out. The TV is an assortment of hair colors & they move so fast. I can see the protesting
outline of

our breaths against the breeze. I'm leaving soon, for good, and when I'm not here
anymore—I can't be
begging summer to open back up. It'd be a special shame, being welcomed into my own
home. So I lift

my head and try to stomach the busy air. I pluck the traffic cones from the incessant
construction

sites and wear them like ornaments on my shirts. I lunge and yank the stars down, replace them

with satellites. I'm too scared to exhale any color but gray. And in all the useless gaps in my body, I bear
the pale lie that we were bobbing for breath together, the intersections of our time a rakish grin of hope.

Arim Lee is a high school student based in Andover and Seoul. Her work has been recognized by the Alliance for Young Writers, The Harvard Crimson, The Fitzgerald Museum, Smith College, and more. She founded and reads for CHINCHILLA LIT, as well as The Courant, The Hanok Review, and Polyphony Lit. In her free time, she enjoys listening to the same song over and over again (right now it's Mido and Falasol's "Superstar").

ESTRANGED By Sandra Lin

I tell the boy I like my AP Chinese score
and he's saying it's good enough. Neither of us
heeds the elephant. I say I was raised by dragons
and he flounders, too stiff-jointed to word his
doubts. Beyond every unlikely conversation is the
elementary school we forsook in Brooklyn, which
is to say that I'm a reminiscencer. Cultural cringe is
why I go back to the same people, why I walk
backwards on the double helix to pick up all the
mirrored strands of nucleotides, why I must prove
my loyalty to generations of long-gone forebears
~~and the land they left behind. In the distance,~~

Lianjiang's tea mountains and the waterfalls of Minhou.
The ground I first learned to walk on now lost. In
sleepless city, I rename my hometown and forget the
blood I once begged for after a plane ride. It's border
selectivity that divides: the eagle on the cover of my
passport, the unforgiving tongue of the green card
that says I will never be yours. For once, I want to be
licit, a crossbreed written under a genus, a known
existence. Let me burn agarwood for those who came
before. Even this incense can be known as eaglewood.

Sandra Lin (林诺晨) is a Chinese American from New York who currently attends Bell High School in Florida. She has been recognized by the Alliance for Art and Writing, Rider University, and Hollins University, among others. Sandra is working on a platform that aims to empower marginalized voices in literature. She may be contacted on Instagram @sandranuochen

thinking on the meaning of the word 'gone' By Amelia Glass

one bed: empty
sheets folded over the mass of pillows, still.
one bedroom
with too many remnants.
one house, one person — one hollow silence.

[
my little sister sings along to songs
in our deserted kitchen.
~~what's the word for missing something~~

before it's gone?

beads of rain batter themselves

against the window glass.

in tiny reflections of silver globes,

i see an infinity of worlds.

drops inside my pupils inside a drop

of rain. they are as black as a funeral trenchcoat.

]

grief does not feel like sadness.

instead, a black hole swallows

and collapses everything

into the grave

of a star.

it is everything and nothing

existing in the same impossible core,

stinging like a stone, and bitter. velvet

and oil pool down the walls

of your throat.

grief is the absolute presence of nothing

in a space

where something

should be.

Amelia Glass is seventeen years old and wishes she wasn't. She loves plants, her two sisters, and the cool mist after it rains. She is currently a junior at Lone Peak High

School. thinking on the meaning of the word ‘gone’ is her first published piece.

Wheel of Fortune (X) By Rigel Portales

In another life, I would wear helmets every day. My mother watches Twilight so she can fall asleep. When my sister dreams of vegetables, they are already diced. My father watches cobra hunters on TV when he can't fall asleep. They pull up floorboards. They kick empty tires. Tomorrow, my father will have open heart surgery. Tonight, I hear my neighbors that I have never seen. They could be playing snakes and ladders. They could be surgeons or dice makers. Have you ever lived inside of a die? The dice maker who was once a jeweler asks the mirror. The jeweler who was once a dice maker says yes.

Rigel Portales is a twenty-year-old Filipino poet afraid of disappearing. Fortunately, his works have appeared/are soon to appear on Palette Poetry, Frontier Poetry, and Cha with a poetry chapbook, DEAD BOYS MAKE THE BEST MEN, forthcoming from FlowerSong Press in the US. He's currently poetry editor at the Malate Literary Folio. You can find him on his Twitter account @rijwrites where he writes to preserve and preserves to write.

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