



by Ina Yoonseo Lee

Blue Marble Review Winter Poems 2023

Editor Note By Molly Hill

Winter Poems

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Dear Readers and Writers,

An Editor's Note is kind of like the warm up band at a concert. You may be willing to see it through, but you *really* came for the main event. And here it is:

This issue is smart phone and laptop ready and just about poetry only, with the exception of two incredible art selections from Ina Yoonseo Lee, and Grace Zhang. There are poems here about dreams, anxiety, leaving, birds, fire, foliage, and even a special homage to 'thick-skulled annoyances.' In other words, something for everyone. Read on and thanks for starting another year with us.

Molly Hill

Editor

A Different Future By Hannah Kirkendoll

Everyone thinks my hopes for my future are weird,

But it is normal and average that I fear.

Growing up and living exactly like everyone else is not my desire,

There is a different type of life that I acquire.

I don't mind working a nine to five,

I just need to have other activities that help me feel alive.

While my neighbors are driving their kids to summer school,

I want to be across the country lounging in a rooftop pool.

When my sister asks me to watch her kids so she can have one night to relax,

I want to be on a first class flight to Paris eating airplane snacks.

I believe there is a lifestyle for everyone and I'm not judging I swear,

I just would rather live differently, freely, with a little less care

Hannah Kirkendoll is a senior at Timberland High School who loves writing in her free time and hopes to pursue a career in nuclear medicine.

a walk through poison & thistle By Clover O'Mordha

my marrow is now toxic with clove & nag champa

I'm convinced the ground is not, in fact, lava

but wisps of candle smoke spilling from the trees

the air here is rich with damp bark, drenched earth, amanita

I lie at the base of the fox hearth, all cozied up & guessing

pebbles & branches marking my soft back

I exhale all the built-up chimney soot, cedarwood, mold spore

take in the warm vapour pouring in from the sun rays

close your eyes, dear—the wind is ripe &

nipping

Clover O'Mordha (they/them) is an emerging poet currently studying at The University of Akron. They are pursuing an MFA in poetry and enjoy cays, books, thrifting, & tofu pudding.

dear university By Maya Walker

my name is maya walker & i am a prospective student
at your institution. i am interested in english literature.
spanish language. classics. studying abroad. i am interested

in a small school in a big city; a big school in a small
city; a campus within a city, like nyu but not nyu. nothing rural,
nothing suburban. i can't stand suburbia: house after

house after house in a row. one of them is my house, my
childhood house now. the house i'm moving out
of to come to your institution. no, university, not institution.

institution sounds like an asylum & i've had enough
of those. what's that? no, i'm not insane. just deranged enough
to apply to your school out of all the schools, your school

with little mental health resources & no family to help me through
my panic attacks. oh, i'm sorry. not panic attacks. let's call
them anxiety episodes, nervous fits, the jitters. anything to make

them sound less scary. anything to make me not a hazard to
your university. i promise i'm a good student. i promise i'll try to be
a better student. i promise i'll try to be a better student than

the ones who've dropped out after their first semesters, the ones
who realized they weren't fit for life away from home. i promise
i'm fit for life away from home. why else would i be applying here?

it's so far. it's so close. it's so urban; i can get lost in the
buildings & people & say *at least i'm not alone* when i'm tired of not
being heard, of being not good enough for you. dear university,

i promise i'm good enough for you. i promise i won't give up on you like
i gave up on high school sophomore year. that was a fluke. i'll never
give up on anything again. dear university, i'm applying because you're

my safety school. because you're my reach school. because i have
no other choice. i'm applying because i'm tired of my home. i'm applying
because nothing on campus reminds me of home, & i like it that

way. i'm applying because what choice do i have, because i have to go
somewhere. i'm applying because i need a fresh start, because
i always have one on your campus. thank you for your consideration.

Maya Walker is an avid reader, tea drinker, and lover of words. She is the founder and editor in chief of Fulminare Review as well as an executive editor at Spiritus Mundi Review and a staff writer for Immortal Journal. You can read her work at The Augment Review, Ice Lolly Review, Fifth Wheel Press, and others, or find her at the abyss of ink known colloquially as the Instagram page @maya_whispers_words.

leaving By Elena Ferrari

room like the inside of a lightbulb gone
dark. a daughter

already not a daughter
places her hand on a chest
forever burning, quickly now.
those curtains taming light. bed beneath
a quilt beneath
a father, draped in navy wool.
summer so hot it cracked in your mouth.

room in strict geometry:
heaving with every breath, easy patterns
slipping to ribbed floorboard–
hall constricting like
a throat. she lowers herself to a goodbye
below breath. i begin forgetting
even as light leaves those corners.

later, he wakes again and again
calling out to blurred edges, asking
if we have left, if he is staying

Elena Ferrari is a junior at Milton Academy and lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Her poetry has been recognized regionally and nationally by the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards and is published or forthcoming in Cathartic Youth Literary Magazine, Magus Mabus, and The WEIGHT Journal. When not reading or writing copious amounts of poetry, she can be found annoying her cat and drawing force diagrams.

Seventeen By Katelyn Caulder

Seventeen is like this:

i am sarcastic and stubborn

Sweet and sensitive

I feel helpless and also full of hope

I've never been braver, but only because I've never been more scared

Seventeen is like this:

I am eager for the future to arrive, and yet I wish it would slow in its approach

My hometown is a prison

And my hometown is who I am

Part of me will always be here, and part of here will always be in me

Seventeen is like this:

A middle finger is a salute

Fast food is its own love language

We are wild and stupid and brilliant

There's a dialect you speak at seventeen that you will never be fluent in again

Seventeen is like this:

I scream into the void at the top of my lungs

I haven't found my voice yet

I am nearly an adult and I'm still a little kid

I am a mess of contradictions and I am a blank canvas

Seventeen is like this:

It's beautiful in spite of and because it's ugly

Seventeen is freedom

Seventeen is purgatory

Seventeen is the cusp of something great

Seventeen is the most important year of my life, at least until I get to the next one

Katelyn Caulder, 17, is a queer poet from Lakeville, MN who enjoys YA novels, iced coffee, and dogs. In her free time, Kate competes on her school's speech team, teaches karate, and plays guitar.

when people ask me to explain anxiety By Nabiha Ali

i don't tell them / of the sawdust mouth / the sandpaper / curled like a / prawn or the
clogged-up
/ throat / the gravel-flooded eyes / or how the / blue blood / rushes to my head / twitches
and /
rolls / down my wrists / like violet tears / like / desert-dust / in / stead i / tell / them / of
being /
dragged / nine feet under / water breath / less kicking and / screaming / with no room / to
rise up
/ for air / i tell them / of the black seaweed that / catches / round the curve / of my throat /
pulverises my wind / pipe into snapped-out hearts / i tell them of the cockles / and oysters
that /
catch on / to my finger /

tips; hooks tethering / me / to the ground / the tinfoil half-moons / i spill / from the cusp of /
my lip
the / oily silver bubbles that / foam around / me like / pearls smooth / and round / the stars
/ that
shiver / over the face / of the water / clear and blue / and still and / silent / as death / i tell
them /
to imagine a / windowless / room / and the / walls / closing / in on / you / like / fangs / i tell
them /
it's your soul / erupting / like a lotus / imploding / over the face / of water / before
scattering / like
an ash / or / any / dead thing /

and / i tell them / it's / not / poetry / but it / could be /

it could be

Nabiha Ali is sixteen years old, and lives in Lancashire. When she's not writing poetry, she enjoys playing with her pet budgies and writing stories she knows she'll never finish. This year, she has been shortlisted for the national BBC Young Writers Award with Cambridge University. She is also a recent winner in the 15-17 years of age category for the Solstice Prize for Young Writers.

northern cardinal By mikey harper

when my father was younger, he

aimed his frustration at birds.

when a farm throws itself out wide,

the second between shot and thud

eats itself alive and is lost in the flush of cedar.

when my father was younger, he

had a grandmother whose rules bled right into him.

don't walk on the grass if it isn't yours, don't let a woman walk nearest the street, don't

shoot the northern cardinal.

my mother still thinks you became one

that when the last threads of your scent escaped out the window

they tied back together and flew

over a farm, untouchable.

your love remained a quiet, breathing creature

one that twists and dances and

lives

even as your absence serves proof of a voyage completed.

mikey harper is a seventeen-year-old transgender artist and aspiring journalist from houston, texas. he is a creative writing student with a focus in poetry and creative non-fiction, and is the founder/managing editor of BLUNT FORCE JOURNAL. he has been previously published in the augment review, paper crane journal, and twice through cathartic lit. when he isn't reading or going to concerts, he's learning a new song on bass or adding more CDs to his collection.

Fire Man By Josie Bednar

The fire burns beside me. We chat
And speak of anything but rain.

He gets the place ready to ignite.
We make the bed and dust the picture frames
Sweep but do not mop. I take out the trash.
He tells me it's the easiest job he's seen in years.

He tells me it's already flammable. He tells me
I'm already on fire, that I saw tears and knew to burn.
He praises me for being ready to blaze.

When we're done, I pack up. It's cleaner that way, he says,
Better you know what you are saving before it is burning.
We exit, hand in hand, and I ignore the feeling—
His fingers scorch, palms enkindle,
But I squeeze harder.

With one breath the house is gone.

Ash rests on the tip of my nose.

He nudges me.

It's better off this way.

And we go ahead and climb the stairs,

Suitcase wheels clacking beneath us.

When he releases my hand,

I feel the warmth still.

Across my palm, four seared marks.

I look away and clench it into a fist.

Even now he has not let me go.

Josie Bednar is a writer and athlete based in Texas. When not writing, she can be found organizing her personal library or on the basketball court.

Standing Still By Brian Lee

there, tucked away beneath

the eaves of the porch:

my grandmother. loud

splatters of rain on zinc

plates, my thick black

hair falling to earth beside

pebbles and puddles. she

was still, so still while i

wincing my ear away
in fear of the blade's
incisiveness. i saw her
in the mirror; her hands

on my shoulder. still.
some years later, long
past trimmed fringes
and slanted sideburns,

my mother and i talk
about her after her passing.
we are still, still. how
the cracks in the ground

hold not my hair, nor hers
but indelible markers
of unfaltering steps, with
half-torn shoes and

ribbed garments; she
is there, has always been,
snipping away stray strands,
feeding with these still hands.

remembering that, i say,
see how you will not
hear me bemoan storms,
gnash my teeth in rain,
trace the steps of years lost:

i like her am standing, still.

Brian Lee is an aspiring writer and poet from Singapore, whose works are published or forthcoming in Cathartic Youth Literary Magazine and Corvus Review. Having grown up in three different countries, he writes in an attempt to recreate and remember.

Poem for Thick-Skulled Annoyances By Lavanya Mani

I do not wish to speak with you
of matters great or small.
I take no joy in seeing you
when I walk down the hall.
I see the knives stuck in friends' backs
when eyes light on your face—
I will not be the fool to stand
beside you in their place.
My intuition's rarely wrong
and you set it abuzz;
I've learned by now that crazy is
as someone like you does.
I do not wish to speak to you'
with any grace or class,
I wish you'd stop trying to talk
and just let me walk past.

Lavanya Mani is a sophomore at Clayton High School, and has written poetry throughout her life. She recently attended the Young Women's Leadership Institute at Barnard College, where she took a class on spoken word poetry. She hopes to pursue higher

education in writing and English, and to keep using the art of writing throughout her life as a way of expressing herself and connecting with the world around her. Outside of writing, she has a passion for musical theater, violin, and her speech and debate team.

Jasmine Dreams By Morgan Santaguida

When you were eight, you didn't know
now you don't let yourself
remember.

Napalm raining on bamboo roofs,
death knocking at rice doors,
or bright orange teardrops
making their love to the jungle.

An American soldier, heading home,
abandons your sister
and her unborn child,
your mother heals your father,
his brain beaten, broken by war.

While you slept in a dinghy
fighting against the Pacific,
battling your own red tides.

Years passed, you reached Jersey's shores,
littered with kool-aid and condoms,
Your hands bled in warehouse night shifts
and your all-American tongue,
silenced stories of a family left in Saigon.

Then you had me,
the bombs and death stayed overseas,

When the nurses wrapped me in pink
and adorned daisied socks to my feet,

did you once again see
Jasmine blooming along the nighttime
shore, your mom's delicate hands
placing petals behind your ear,
and the pollen tickling your tired eyes.

Morgan Santaguida grew up in a small Pennsylvania town. She has previously been published in Stylus, Whimsical Poetry, and Cathartic Literary Magazine. She is now living in Massachusetts as a young writer, studying at Boston College.

Winter Tiles By George Sun

It was yesterday
when I saw a woman swallowed
by Winter. Her splintered back
like an archway and her face
so chipped you could see bleeding
memories seeping from her skin—lines etched
from the corner of her eyes like
tear tracks.

She passes
our car, pushing her trolley right
as Winter sprouts. A blanket
of whiteness engulfs the empty
crosswalk. And her. At the green light,
Mother reminds me

to look forward. As we flee
I only see her fractured body
crumpling like paper.

Winter reminds me of
watching the hue
on Mother's sunflowers turn
golden, then shrivel in December—
draped by sorrow. Their silhouettes
wrinkled in invisible residue.

Outside the window I search
a blank canvas for
the woman's heart.
Until the ground and the horizon meet,
I am drowned in

hope.

George Sun is a sixteen-year old Chinese-Canadian poet from Canada. His work appears in *The Source*, *Polar Expressions*, and *Poetry in Voice*, among others. Apart from writing, you can find him assembling jigsaw puzzles or playing basketball.

Tritina for a Sparrow and a Bumblee By Bryce Baron-Sips

A sparrow, catching a bee in its beak,
Splits its little body down the middle
Via the geometry of concrete.

This memory comes back like hot concrete
Every summer: Bird can't fit Bee in Beak,
The angular crush along its middle.

Between necessity and cruelty, middle
-point proofs have been proven, yet the concrete
Angular force of agony, a beak...

A beak is a middleman for the force of concrete.

Bryce Baron-Sips is an American writer living in Sweden. His work is published or forthcoming in Revolute, VIBE, beestung, Strange Horizons, and elsewhere. He can (while it lasts) be found on Twitter @bric_a_bryce.

Winged Victory By Grace Zhou



Winged Victory of Samothrace, a masterpiece from the Hellenistic period, symbolizes the Greek goddess Nike. She was said to bring good luck in all aspects of life, whether it be in athletic competitions, war, or even the artistic fields. The statue remains on display in the Louvre, where visitors from all over, including myself, flock to this remarkable piece.

Grace Zhou is a sophomore in high school, attending the Brearley School in New York City. She recently moved from Ohio, where she grew up. There, Grace developed a passion for music, writing, and art. Since starting flute at age ten, she has become a two-time COFA finalist and has also attended Interlochen Arts Camp for three years.

Old Memories By Ina Yoonseo Leo



Ina Yoonseo Lee was born in 2006 and is now a high school student in Seoul, Korea. She is an emerging artist interested in expressing emotions through drawings and paintings. She always tries to capture the memorable moments of her daily life.