





**RIP CURRENTS**  
Break the Grip of the Sea



**IF YOU GET IN A RIP CURRENT:**

- 1. Don't Panic
- 2. Relax and float on your back
- 3. If you can't escape, tread water
- 4. If you're exhausted, conserve energy

**IF YOU GET STUCK:**

- 1. Don't Panic
- 2. Relax and float on your back
- 3. If you can't escape, tread water
- 4. If you're exhausted, conserve energy

**IF YOU GET TRAPPED:**

- 1. Don't Panic
- 2. Relax and float on your back
- 3. If you can't escape, tread water
- 4. If you're exhausted, conserve energy

**BEACH WARNING FLAGS**

-  **Water Closed to Public**  
High Surf with Strong Rip Currents  
Hazardous to Swimmers and Surfers
-  **High Hazard**  
High Surf with Strong Rip Currents  
Hazardous to Swimmers and Surfers
-  **Medium Hazard**  
Moderate Surf and/or Undertow  
Hazardous to Swimmers and Surfers
-  **Low Hazard**  
Calm Conditions, Excellent Conditions  
Hazardous to Swimmers and Surfers
-  **Dangerous Marine Life**  
Hazardous to Swimmers and Surfers

100



## Blue Marble Review Summer Poems 2023

**#1 Ay Mujer- Oh Woman-** By Cora Welker

**#1 Ay Mujer-**

Mujer Joven,  
Con una belleza como ninguna otra.  
Cuando lo viste por primera vez.  
Sabías que lo amabas.  
Y el dijo que también te amaba.  
Tu amor ardió como un fuego apasionado  
Mujer enamorada, dejas que tu consuma.

**Oh Woman-**

Young Woman,  
With Beauty like no other.  
When you first saw him.  
You knew that you loved him.  
And he said he loved you too  
Your love, it burned like a passionate fire.  
Woman in love, you let it consume you.

Nueva Madre,  
Con tus hijos en tus brazos.  
Tu amante a tu lado.  
No hay anillo pero no te importa.  
Porque crees que tu amor te une.  
Pero eres ciega, madre amorosa.

Pobre mujer,  
Te deja una mañana  
Él nunca mira hacia atrás.  
Encontró una nueva mujer-  
Amar para siempre.  
Él le da un anillo de diamantes y oro.  
Que brillan como las lágrimas en tus ojos.  
Ay de mujer desolada,  
sin nadie a su lado.

Oh mujer amarga,  
Tus emociones te consumen como un fuego.  
Y ni siquiera tus hijos están a salvo.  
En tu locura y dolor-  
has destruido todo.

*New Mother,  
With your children in your arms.  
Your lover by your side.  
There's no ring but you don't care.  
Because you believe your love unites you.  
But you are blind, loving mother.*

*Poor Woman,  
He leaves you one morning.  
He never looks back.  
He found a new woman-  
To love forever.  
He gives her a ring of diamonds and gold.  
That glitter like the tears in your eyes.  
Woe to a desolate woman,  
with no one by her side.*

*Oh bitter woman,  
your emotions consume you like a fire.  
And not even your children are safe.  
In your madness and grief-  
you have destroyed everything.*

Vuelves a tus sentidos.  
Pero es muy tarde.  
Tu eliges unirte a ellos el río.  
Mujer afligida. ¿Qué has hecho?

Y ahora La Llorona,  
Cada noches lloras.  
Desde las orillas del río acechas.  
Llamando a tus hijas.  
Nunca seguir adelante.  
Y nunca encontraré paz.

## **#2- Dolio?**

¿Duele? Mujer Ahogada?  
¿Cuándo tu cabeza se hunde bajo el agua?  
Cuando tus pulmones se llenan con el río?  
Mientras te hundes-  
¿Duele?

¿Dolio? Mujer Ahogada?  
Cuando la muerte te detuvo.  
Estabas asustada en absoluto?  
¿De las aguas turbias?

*You come back to you senses  
But it's too late.  
You choose to join them in the river.  
Grieving woman. What have you done?*

*And now La Llorona,  
every night you weep.  
From the riverbanks you lurk.  
Calling for your children.  
Never moving on.  
And never finding peace.*

## **Did It Hurt?**

*Does it hurt, drowned woman?  
When your head goes under the water?  
When your lungs fill with the river?  
While you sink-  
Does it hurt?*

*Did it hurt? Drowned woman?  
When death held you down.  
Were you scared at all?  
Of the murky water*

De tu destino?  
De cada paso que diste?  
Tu vestido, una vez de blanco  
Como la flor de guayaba  
Se vuelve marrón con el agua del río.  
Mientras gritas “¡Ay mi hijos!”  
Dolió?

### **#3 Lágrimas De La Sal.**

Tus lagrimas llenan el río.  
Como el viento susurra tus pecados.  
Oh querida, ¿dónde están tus hijos?  
¿A dónde han ido ellos?

Tus lágrimas saladas riegan la tierra.  
Y tu pena se aferra a las rocas.  
Tus hijos se han ido.  
Así que pones tu cabeza debajo.  
Y deja que el río llene tus pulmones.

Cora Welker is a freshmen at Lafayette Highschool and is extremely dedicated in the arts. She has been in the SCAPA program since 4th grade and is excited to continue her education at a new school.

---

*Of your destiny?  
Of every step you took?  
Your dress, once as white  
as the guava flower.  
Turns brown with river water.  
As you scream “Oh my Children!”  
Did it hurt?*

### ***Tears of Salt.***

*Your tears fill the river.  
As the wind whispers your sins.  
Oh my dear, where are your children?  
Where have they gone?  
Your salty tears water the earth  
And your grief clings to the rocks.  
Your children are gone.  
So you put your head under.  
And let the river fill your lungs.*

**Still Life** By Mackenzie Duan

At dusk, I listen        to the clock of my mother's  
knife on the cutting board.

How it strikes  
like an evening        bell, remote yet tender,  
the scene casted        in chiaroscuro:  
my mother's dark, sloping        arms against  
the chalky walls. I study        this while pretending  
to read a novel where a woman        never knows her son  
chose a new name. How I think        of love: in name only.

What I think of bliss:        scallions bobbing like hollow beads,  
my mother splaying        the roots with metal, the present tense.

Soft breathing beyond        the window's torso.  
How our kitchen        cramps with light.

Mackenzie Duan is a high schooler from the Bay Area. Their work has been recognized by YoungArts, Princeton University, and The Poetry Society.

---

**The Gravestone** By Linh Duong

A crow  
caws. Its cry has  
signaled a new  
night. In this  
inky blackness,  
a faceless grave  
sits alone in the center  
of a vast, abandoned field.  
In the deafening silence, fireflies  
float about in the emptiness as mice  
navigate their way through the dense,  
overgrown grass. The critters  
lived within the trees and beneath  
the dirt.

// //

// //

=====

They shied away from moonlight.  
Yet, this night was a moonless one and these  
shy creatures felt brave. Inch by inch, one by one, they  
made their way to the gravestone. This once represented a



person. This person was someone who had lived, who had forged relationships, and who was now dead. When it was first erected, people visited and their tears watered the grass that surrounded it. But now, no one ever visited. The wind and rain had worn it out, stripping the grave of its name, making it faceless. Now, no one was left in the world to remember the skeleton that lay beneath. But if its person was forgotten, then what purpose did the grave serve? The gravestone contemplated, having no answer. Its skeleton hadn't died alone, so why was it about to? A lonesome existence. Reality had settled in for the gravestone. The gravestone had been abandoned. And now, no one would weep for it, clean it, or keep it company. Time took its toll. All living things eventually died. This same fate would befall the gravestone. After being neglected for so long, cracks had formed. It was alone. Its name was gone. Its purpose had faded. The tombstone was overrun with moss. The moss thrived in the cracks, anchoring itself to them. It grew so much that the tombstone's surface could barely be seen now. The gravestone knew that it had little time. Once the moss took over, it'd be the end. The crow cawed one final time. It mourned the death of the gravestone.

Linh Duong is a graduating high school senior, —she is excited about her future and traveling the world, especially in Spain and Vietnam. In her free time, she loves to binge-read Chinese novels and eat triple fudge ice cream. Her

hobbies include drawing (dragons) and learning new languages. Linh is adventurous, outgoing, and a hard worker, enjoying quiet time by listening to music or practicing Chinese.

---

**12 hours before...** By Weyinmi Barrow

One scalding hot shower,

Two boiled eggs with instant noodles,

Three more boxes to stuff with our memories,

Grandma is coming over by four.

Aunty is five months pregnant,

Six cousins teary eyed, begging me not to leave,

Our priest comes over by seven,

We say our final goodbyes by eight.

Nine people sleeping in this house tonight,

Ten boxes lined up in a row,

By eleven, i'm still fast asleep in my anxiety,

It's twelve,

And i'm awake,

Alone,

And never been more afraid to go.

Weyinmi Barrow is an aspiring novelist and poet. Born and raised in Abuja, Nigeria, and consequently moving to Trinidad and Tobago, she channels the feeling of everyday and extraordinary experiences into her writing. She is sixteen years old and loves reading in her spare time.

---

### Thoughts on the Water By Annie Walsh

a line

brushes up

against my glove, abrading

the calyces through

the thin fabric. three clicks until the sail catches

the wind just right. my boot grazes the strap

as I slowly lean back and allow my face to feel the cool ocean spray after

every

wave.

Sometimes I wish I could be her; not just in control of steering her.

Sometimes I wish I could be her; able to get up so easily. Head

strong through and against those tough waters.

Or even on the easy days. Take time to slow.

I aspire to be her. On any course.

Annie is a high school senior from New Jersey who is a varsity sailor on her high school team. With passionate creativity and an observant eye, Annie reflects on her own characteristics with her time spent on the water sailing as well as other aspects of her life. When off the water and out of the classroom, Annie enjoys sewing garments and accessories for herself and friends, as well as taking on hiking trips outdoors.

---

I can pull the sun from my pocket

You don't believe me?

*Watch*

I can shine it on the end of my sleeve

We can crowd around it like children

We are children

I can open the sun from enfolded skin

Scrape it, expose its yellow core;

Yellow and *red* and sweet, you can smell it

There is orange peel under my fingernails

And citrus in our noses

We can pull apart segments

And listen to its heartbeat

We can eat the orange triangle

By shared thoughts

And taste something together

We are eating a kiss.

We are eating a hug

There is hand-holding in our stomachs

Miriam Thorp is a high school student who grew up in love with the postmodern surrealism of Norton Juster and down to earth, anecdotal humanity of Harper Lee. Alongside a love for debate, skateboarding and fashion, she listens for the sound of the words everywhere. Miriam loves writing and hopes she never runs out of stories.

---

### **Psalmic Ode for August** By Chinedu Gospel

& I remember August like  
I remember the death of my  
grandmother —humid & icy  
& colourless like water. Or  
isn't that how a wilted leaf  
turns back green? I love to  
imagine my tongue a taproot  
cast deep into the soil of  
songs. I love to imagine that  
it grows into a tree. I love to  
imagine that its sweetest  
fruit is a dirge with a grape's  
geometry. & carotene. I love

to imagine that my lover  
eats the seed & begets grief.  
The pastor on television  
speaks a word of prayer. But,  
I do not voice my amen like  
there's a fire in its etymology.  
Because, I am tired of burning.  
I am as silent as when ashes hit  
the ground. Believe me, I still  
sing love songs. & holy psalms.  
Though, the aubades remind  
me of my dead. The hymns,  
my unholiness. There's a dark  
ness at the tip of my tongue.  
There's always a voice —vast  
like the sea —that swallows me.  
& it's not of my making. In this  
poem, I prepare a room for joy  
in the presence of my sorrow.  
I anoint my tongue with oil.  
& my songs overflow.

Chinedu Gospel (Frontier IV) is an emerging poet & undergraduate from Anambra, Nigeria. He plays chess & tweets @gonspoetry. He is a Best of the Net nominee. He is the winner of the StarLit Award, AsterLit 2021 winter Issue. He won an honorable mention in the 2021 Kreative Diadem annual contest (poetry category) & Dan Veach Prize for younger poets, 2022. He was longlisted for the 2022 Unserious collective Fellowship. His works of poetry have appeared or are forthcoming in Bath Magg, Trampset, The Drift mag, Gutter Magazine, Fiyah Magazine, Sonder Magazine, Roughcut Press, Consequence Forum, Agbowo Magazine, The Deadlands, Blue Marble Review among many others.

---

### **Corrosion** By Gaia Rajan

When the artist grew up, she promised herself she'd finally change her name. If she was sad she would be sad in a way that was useful for her art. She would keep her money in a small purse, a notebook in her right pocket.

She would become a regular at aquariums.

The artist went to college to learn about machines.

She spent days writing equations in small side stapled books she bought for a dollar apiece. She built models of ships from scrap wood and left them on her beloveds' stoops.

That summer, the artist told her mother she was in love with a woman, and then the woman left her



for a residency in Paris where she'd study the mating rituals  
of Atlantic eels and how they relate to love, and death,  
and the body, and then her mother turned into a terrible silence.  
The artist couldn't remember why she wanted  
to grow up. She was writing a book of confessions,  
inspired by photographs of herself as a child. She was writing  
a set of poems that she wanted to give to her mother  
once they forgave each other. She was trying  
to take buses to every single place where she was born:  
her mother's hospital, her elementary school,  
the spot of asphalt where she skinned her knee  
for the first time. She was trying to remember.  
She was trying to find a good reason to last.

---

Gaia Rajan is the author of the chapbooks *Moth Funerals* (Glass Poetry Press 2020) and *Killing It* (Black Lawrence Press 2022). Her work is published or forthcoming in *Best New Poets 2022*, the 2022 *Best of the Net* anthology, *The Kenyon Review*, *THRUSH*, *Split Lip Magazine*, *diode*, *Palette Poetry*, and elsewhere. Gaia is an undergraduate

at Carnegie Mellon University, studying computer science and creative writing. She lives in Pittsburgh. You can find her at @gaiarajan on Twitter or Instagram.

---

**blah,blah,blah** By Gill Noffert

blah blah blah transition.

the second shifters are coming home.

it is midnight and i am in a restaurant without patrons.

i'll join the traffic outside soon enough.

maybe i'll tell you about liminality again:

that dharma is only unity

where space and time are concerned.

blah blah blah samsara.

i'm cleaning a table and realize i

have to do this again in thirty minutes.

i dread it.

maybe i'll tell you about cycles again:

that Ouroboros and titanium combine to create

eternal self-fulfilling prophecy.

blah blah blah antitheses.  
there is a bug on the booth.  
i kill it with my broom and sweep it away.  
maybe i'll tell you about harmony again:  
that life requires death  
not only for the sake of comfort.

blah blah blah  
the stars seem to rotate in the sky  
and the moon pulls the tides  
i'll go outside and track the constellations and wade in the ocean.  
maybe i'll feel connected again.

Gill Noffert is a sixteen-year-old poet from Wichita, Kansas who is driven by dichotomy. She creates homes for herself between spaces of pride and despair, fear and exhilaration, and abstract and concrete. Poetry is her space to question, build, and unify her thoughts.

---

**kaleidoscope** By Caroline Chou

life lately:

fridays narrowing in my vision,  
then falling out of sight; midnight  
snaking in and out between todays  
and tomorrows; moments  
becoming currency—*do you have  
a minute? spare me just a  
second?*—to be counted, folded  
into pockets without another  
glance; steadying breaths,  
collecting shadows, staring at the  
ceiling; *I have nothing left to give*;  
pencil lines that cannot be erased;  
moons turning too soon; forgetting,  
forgetting, forgetting; existence but  
not experience; present mistakes  
for latent futures; questions best  
left unanswered;  
a sickening haze, a blur:  
never ending.

Caroline Chou (she/her) is a writer from Maryland with a love for leitmotifs and magical realism. Her work has been recognized by the Scholastic Awards and published in The Aurora Journal and Aster Lit, among others. When she's not writing, you can find her reading fantasy, playing golf, or doodling everywhere she shouldn't.

---

### **Tennessee Gas Station** By Lucy Somers

For the first time in a while  
the air is nice. The midnight  
gas station atmosphere—  
I bask in the bulk of headlight.  
Photosynthesizing in the LED luminescence.  
Wind touching the worst parts of me—  
letting it all be exactly what it is.

Exactly a week later I am quartering  
tomatoes and there is already a light line  
of guidance, the reddish ghost of a cross  
my knife shovels into. Sometimes  
I make things out to be more complicated  
than they are.

Sometimes all I have  
is in my hands.  
And every part of me  
is necessary.

Lucy Somers is a Midwestern poet who is deeply inspired by her natural surroundings and familial bonds. Common themes in her work are: grief, connection, and coming of age.

---

### **A Bedtime Prayer** By Rachel Johnson

On my knees beside the bed  
we often share, I read a collection

of poetry and blast Spotify radio through  
pain-inducing earbuds – KALEO sings

“Oh darling, save yourself.” I crave  
words tumbling over words so I let

them spill from me too, cut myself open  
with pen and paper for more words, words,

words – a different kind of wound, easier  
to hide if I give it a name: poetry.

Rachel is a recent graduate of the University of Central Arkansas with a BA in English and Creative Writing, and a Spanish minor. She is from Bentonville, Arkansas and currently lives in Conway, Arkansas where she went to college. She is an aspiring writer and avid reader. She has an Instagram page where she posts about the books she reads (@racheljohnsonreads).

Her first creative publication is in the Vortex, UCA's literary magazine, Spring 2022 print issue in which three of her poems and two pieces of creative nonfiction appear. Her book review "Learning to Love Matt Mitchell" was published by the Southern Indiana Review in May 2023.



**RIP CURRENTS**  
Beware the Grip of the Rip



**AT CURRENTS ARE NOT CURRENTS**  
A narrow channel of water flows out from the beach through a narrow channel and then flows back in on either side.

**IF YOU GET TRAPPED IN A RIP CURRENT:**  
Don't panic. Don't fight the current. Relax and float. Don't swim directly across the current. Swim parallel to the shore until you are out of the current. Then swim back to shore.

**BEACH WARNING FLAGS**

- Water Closed to Public**  
Red flag
- High Hazard**  
Red and white flag
- Medium Hazard**  
Yellow flag
- Low Hazard**  
Green flag
- Dangerous Marine Life**  
Purple flag

100



