



Chroma

Blue Marble Review Winter Poems January 2024

Dog Years By Austin Anthony

all of my friends are dying
before they can become people
all of my dogs are dying
before they can become teenagers

& god it's just so scary to exist this young: (to be)
the first breath and the last step—
fighting so hard to exist
while tripping over the exit,
to be so close either way.
& isn't it just the same direction
when you're too small to know the difference—
to even know
what you're running towards?
& there are barks from heaven
in the sounds of my past
& when I sprint in the dark
I don't even know which light
I am running to / from
& I promise that I still love you
even though I'm still living (sorry)
like a human would
& if it makes you feel better,
most nights I wish for the future
to morph into dog years
& for you to take my place,
running wild in the backyard—
a kid with a chance & a dog sitting in his lap—
& to have 7 years to spare
 & to have 7 years to
 & to have 7 years
 & to have
 & to
 &

Austin Anthony is a seventeen-year -old writer from Texas—his poems have appeared in or are forthcoming within the Eunoia Review, Juste Milieu Zine, and the Diamond Gazette.

Blessé By Lauren Ah-Hot

Il m'a blessé.

He ~~hurt~~ me.

Il ne m'a même pas demandé rien

He didn't even ~~ask~~ anything

Mais je lui ai donné tout ce que j'avais

But I gave him all I had

Il m'a dit que j'étais sensible

He told me I was ~~sensitive~~

Nous nous sommes éloignés

We grew ~~apart~~

J'ai resté coincé

I stayed ~~stuck~~

J'ai resté pour longtemps avec lui

I stayed for a long time with him

Peut-être c'était trop long

Maybe it was too long

Il m'a blessé.

He hurt me.

Moi.

Me.

Lauren is a high school senior in Singapore. In her free time, she loves playing tennis, reading, and running her online bath bomb business. She aspires to major in engineering in university.

aubade for lahaina By Ela Kini

between our gnashed teeth,
smoke curdles.

we draw lifetimes across our tongues,
mouths pressed to hot pavement.

summer softens into stiff ash,
smoldering marlboro nubs.

every man prints a smile
over his lips, tastes hollowing.

to an empty night, he begs for ocean to swallow the land.
to bristle his unmoving wife.

sand trickles into flame
& children still molding island

into home burn with the remnants of the shoreline.
concrete blemishes into dust.

when night parts,
there will only be wire

spilling into veins. plastic flickering.
each body ends in standstill:

crumbled sandstone, rotted palm, dead boys' cotton shirts.
a man lurches towards death,

lands softly. a man is called home.
the neck of the moon cranes

to catch our corpses.
morning is homeless.

is a daughter begging
to an oxidized locket of lost brothers
swallowed in rust.

is a hotel worker offering juice
to soften hearts' muscle, strip it of striations.

is a closed resort stripped into a hospice scouring
through her own ashes for open beds.
dusk ends in a call for prayer.
few split open their mouths, swelled with ash.
god, save our knotted bodies,
swallow these hundred fallen stones before we suffocate.
we inhale the perfume of a land burning,
nestle the incense between our hands.
soft, burnt sage chronicles the clock
pressing herself into another dawn.

Ela Kini is a student attending Hunter College High School. She has been previously recognized by the National YoungArts Foundation and the Alliance for Young Artists and Writers. Her work appears or is forthcoming in the Rising Phoenix Review, the Eunoia Review, and elsewhere. She likes to write while wandering sidewalks.

Is There Sound in Heaven? By Maria Polizzi

It's funny the days my brain chooses to miss you.
Some of them I expected,
Christmas, Easter, Fathers Day,
However, I didn't expect to be ready to cry before my cousin's wedding
Today he is reading his vows, but eight years ago he was reading your obituary.
I didn't expect to miss you at my eighth grade graduation, thanking my family in my speech.
I knew they could hear me in the crowd, but I hope heaven is close enough that you could too.
Sometimes I am jealous of my younger self, a little girl who was oblivious to the life cycle.
Immune to grief.

The only death she has experienced is her dog's,

But that girl grew up.

Now she knows death, has become familiar with it even, but it never gets easier.

That little girl sits up at night now hoping there is sound in heaven,

Hoping Papa can still hear her.

Maria Polizzi is a sophomore in high school and though she hasn't submitted her writing in a while, she's never stopped writing poetry. She writes poems to articulate what she is feeling in the moment, and hopes to continue doing so. She also dances, and enjoys spending time with her family.

Minutiae By Rishi Janakiraman

Splayed fingertips cradle oil in their clasp, dripping
with remembrance—blotched, coconut. Amma ropes

my hair in bunches, sews each lock into place with
a touch of copra, tells me *kanna, I wish I had your*

curls—but I yearned for pin-straight, so thin it
could be folded into paper cranes. Swans drifting

in saccharine; my hair sunken as waves gush to the
scalp. A thousand follicles drowning until syllabic

remains break the surface and my body forgets to
breathe, curdles an accent in the larynx. She twists

ringlets into grapheme, says to me: *Ammamma had hair like you, gripping yet so fragile.* One droplet laces

my strands, mourns the skin, unspools away from its origin—a matrilineage in taproot. Notice how my

tangles are brittle like Amma's voice, chafed in English. How her hands combed down to split ends:

watch two become four, eight, sixteen, thirty-two, my receding femininity splintered—a diaspora

of my mothers before these bathroom tiles.

Little black circles fallen to the floor.

Rishi Janakiraman is an Indian-American high school student who writes from North Carolina. His work has been recognized by the Alliance for Young Artists and Writers, and he appears or is forthcoming in *YWP*, *Chrysalis*, and *Eunoia Review*, among others. A Top 15 Foyle Young Poet of the Year, he also reads for *Polyphony Lit* and enjoys listening to Fiona Apple.

Google says that a Labrador Retriever lasts forever By Mae Baltazar

if forever is twelve, on average. Not accounting for gender, lifestyle, illness, or god-forbid accidents.

The one I have, sun-sleeping, belly-up, is seven and a girl, She absorbs all light in photos and sleeps under my desk, which is more empty than it is used. I count her estimated years on one hand but I'm old enough to be aware of our place in this world, irrational and impermanent. There for the moment and someplace else for the next. My dog does not know any better than the life she has at home, quietly asking me why I have to leave and arrive back here tired. Asking, *why is it that I could see you sad but I can't do anything about it.* With pressed fingers against black fur, I'll find her roots grayed at the seams. A pea-sized tick clinging to dead skin. I gladly string it out and she brings her nose to the parasite. *Where did it come from if I've never met other dogs outside the house.* I can't answer the questions her nose asks. I wish I was someone who knew everything, for her sake and for my own. My dog's tongue is out because the summer is unbearable. So, I let the door open, and she stands between what's in there and what's left out for her. I'm old enough to be aware of our place in this world, irrational and impermanent. There for the moment and someplace else for the next. My dog does not know any better than to stand there and wait for me to say *hey, you can go.* *Dry your paws by the door. Sleep under my desk. Belly-up against the fan. I'll follow.* Google says the average lifespan of a labrador retriever is twelve years, time enough to be forever. She is seven. I let her in the house, which becomes more home than it is empty. *What will she be without me, I wonder, starfished under a sun spot, eye boogers nestled in her eyes.* I wipe them away with my thumb and she brings her paw to bat my hand away, *that'll be enough.*

Mae is currently in their senior year, writing an essay collection about video games for their thesis, which they hope will work out in the end. They have work previously published by HEIGHTS Ateneo and are working to find more places for pieces to be. They are also currently playing Breath of the Wild for the first time, seven years late but figured it was about time they finished a Zelda game, and have something extra to talk about in an essay or two.

Irrelevant By Josephine Belliveau

My hometown looks so much older now.

The sky is drooping down and sinking all these houses into the ground.

It's the first time I've slept in this room

And didn't fear the dark,

But I still feel shadows standing behind me

Leaning on the door frame with my height marks.

Someday when I'm taller

Someone will paint this room a different color.

And I'll hold a funeral for the oak tree,

The oldest thing that's ever known me.

I hope the roots hold my skeleton

A veil over my skull,

Decayed and elegant

I already feel irrelevant

A kid who still thinks medicine is poison.

Josephine is a high school student, bookworm, and an aspiring Jo March. She spends small town Florida days enraptured by books and poetry. Her writings are best read with a cup of tea and belief in magic.

the night before I turn eighteen By Olivia Burgess

We eat rotisserie chicken in a German car park
with Deutsch saver slogans posing in awkward angles
on the periphery, but it tastes just like it would inside our
four walls. House beats rain bullets on car windows
and slap the tarmac that men with beer bottles are
jostling their quivering feet on. In the supermarket
we reached for familiarity like pouring our hearts
onto a postcard bound for home: a pillowed
packet of fresh greens, a verdant pesto bottle,
debating over the white or wholemeal greek-style
wraps in their beaming cling film vest. Two tables,
in the process of subsiding to nature, four chairs pushed together,
huddled over our feast, almost children playing tea parties
in the declining half-light of day, tearing chicken into strips
with our international hands as steam elapses
like freshly dewed tears,
hot enough to finally melt the frost of my childhood,
to let that secret time evaporate like dew on a morning
windowsill. It will not be a religious prayer I say to myself
and the ever-lowering sun, but a peace offering. The years
will lay like knives in my bed tonight, prodding my back and

mind as they bestow the brunt of my belittled wisdoms,
an ever-constant reminder of the lamb-like sacrilege
of my youth, of fragile naivety. As a child I preferred the hugs
of willow trees, their green hushes, the obscurity of daylight
never ceasing to stop time, if just for a moment's breath,
an exhale of chlorophyll, two, three, four.

There are no watches here, no mechanical timepieces,
no alarms for the new dawn where I am supposedly baptised
a new girl. Just the taste of salt and oil, fat and gorgeous.
Chicken skin sprinkled around my lips.

Olivia Burgess is an eighteen-year-old word chef raised and residing near London, UK. Soon to embark on an English degree at King's College London, her poetry typically focuses on her raging internal conflicts, her muse, and the inextricable relationship between nature and humanity. She has been published in over twenty micro press avenues, and she hopes you take care of yourself today.

Faint Scent of Floating Plums By Aiden Zhou

Four plums sit
on the table beside you.
Plump and purple, a page printed
from our storybook of expired memories.

I nestled into your lap
as Fengbo tickled my feet
and ripped orchid blooms

away from their stems.

Wafting in the night sky,
they melted into a sea of stars.

I melted into your arms
as the stars shone above us,
arrow tips of metallic silver
wriggling into the corrugations of
your visage.

Your stern lines softened
by the west wind,
the faint scent of floating plums
delicate and sweet as spun sugar,
following behind like death.

Snow fell for the last time.

It is spring now, and it has been
five days. Blossoms of clotted blood
rain down around me as I reach
for the last fruit, craftily hidden
behind a still snow-laced bough.

I set it down next to you.
Five plums, five petals,
and five blessings within.

The last
a peaceful death
is what you wished for most of all.

I scatter your ashes into the spring breeze,
and watch you drift away
with a faint scent of floating plums.

Aiden Zhou is a seventeen-year-old poet from Vancouver, Canada. When not writing, he can be found playing chess or delving into a novel.

Abecedarian:Lila Opens Her Lunch Kit By Sofia Fontenot

and she has discovered the lost city of Atlantis, a treasure chest
babbling with jewels and dry grains of rice. She
coaxes open its teeth better than any
dentist could and her hand dives in,
each finger a careless wanderer,
flirting with every
glimpse of the journey but
having no destination nonetheless.
In reverie her wrist of rainbow hair ties
jumps in after those fingers, green
kiwi hunters and yellow yogurt slurpers,
lugging back out again a slippery
metal container. Like spooking pigeons, her
nails sneak up on the lid, slide under,
open wide a toothless mouth and
plume the scent of prancing meatless
quorn nuggets and candy apple colored ketchup,
ravioli pockets of ricotta
stitched to bursting, grapes green
tumbling after one another, catching

umbrella-like in the doorway of her mouth, their
veins severed of sugarcane syrup, and
when she is licking the last of the labneh from her spoon,
xanthan gum in happy marriage with
yesterday's bowl of muesli in her belly, she
zips her lunch kit closed again.

Sofia Fontenot is a senior at the High School for Performing and Visual Arts. She is a self-described observationalist, spending most of her time people-watching and eavesdropping on conversations. Her writing has been published in Cathartic and Agapanthus Collective literary magazines and in the YoungArts Finalist Anthology.

night in the daisy field By Kailie Foley

My face turns over in a bed of fire;
half-sculpted bronze thoughts.

Two swallowtail butterflies
try to fly together on a beach;
only one has a broken wing,
the pattern falls short.

The doctors know about this;
the pattern falling short.

My therapist puts her hands

on one side of the room and
moves them over to the other.
One side is night fire, the other:
pure daisy. She wants me away
from night fire.

Annette Giacometti
found fakes that mimicked
her husband's work,
a dead artist's dismay.

I feel to be a missing figure
who walked into a fire,
stood, and burned.

I made snow angels
over a daisy field for hours,
named each angel
after my grandmother;
this is where the line
of the room begins to blur.

My upturned angel earrings
never caught fire by morning.

I never do catch fire.

Neither do Giacometti's protected people;
though they may be burning inside,
naming this sensation light.

Chasing this burning in a circular motion.

I do not need to find this light as I am alive;
bargaining with higher powers
during hours when I could be sleeping.

The pattern still falls short.

I thought my mother

was saying a prayer
she was fixing her hair.
My identity slipped out of my mouth
due to a loose mentality, and
a four-year wait to speak mattered less;
my mother pulled over the car and
said she loved me. I was on fire inside,
but daisies flooded the car and never burned.
After death, the potential of new clay
for a man Giacometti destroyed and missed.

Kailie Foley is a nineteen-year-old poet from Illinois who loves to write about nature, mental health, and grief. Her prose poem Home for Sale, In the Summer, After the Funeral is in *Impostor: A Poetry Journal*. She hopes to convey her heart space through writing as it helps her heal.

barn swallow By Harmony Noelle

With a line from "I'm One" by May Swenson

There is a friend staying with me where I
am lodged. A blue-backed, white-bellied barn **Swallow**
that sings out in search of a mate. **The**
creature's wings flap as it soars close to the **Sun**.
But not too close. It is searching for a mate but **I'm**

the only other one here. Just me and **The**
swallow. I admire this friend. There is just the **One**,
yet it keeps its hopes up, desperate for a companion. **The**
swallow searches, and it will someday succeed. But there is **Only**
me, for myself. I have no birdsong. I am the **One**
person here. In this house, in these woods, **In**
this life. The swallow sings, and I watch **My**
friend soar high as I sit. Just me, in this quiet, solitary **Life**.

Harmony Noelle is a twenty-one year old studying English Literature and Writing.

Almost Winter Here (after Gabrielle Calvocoressi and Lev St. Valentine) By Julia Glazebnik

There are days where I remember
everything. Even your sheets. Miss you. So sick
of ghost stories. Fire every day. Angie
with the hot pink cardigan leans closer;
a full body mirror for my cold hands.
There's lots to say and never the time. Who am I
kidding. Ignore this. Miss you. Would like to see
the lights with you again. Green, pink.
So fluorescent. So homecoming. Miss you looking

across the dead field. The desk. Hands so
bargained for. The forest fire. Wish you
would come home for Christmas; call. It could
be so simple. Disregard this. Miss you
desperately. The way we laugh teeth. Miss you
upside down. Would like to stand in the water
with you. We wouldn't have to talk.

Julia (she/her) is a reader and poet from New York. Drawing inspiration from artists such as Ocean Vuong, Victoria Chang, Tim O'Brien, and many others, her work can be found in/upcoming in the Eunoia Review, the Persimmon Review, Scribere, and a few other corners of the internet. She has attended multiple young writers workshops, the most recent one being the Sewanee Young Writers Conference, and has also had her work recognized by the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards numerous times. When free, you can find her baking lemon scones, playing bass, spending time with her cat, or watching murder mysteries.

Chroma By Isabel Lee



Chroma

Isabel Lee is a sophomore high school student in the Bay Area who has been making art from a young age. She enjoys acrylic painting, watercolor, and colored pencil. In her free time, Isabel enjoys baking, being in nature, and listening to music.
