



A Collection by the Young Poets' Society

2019

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From Mrs. Pomerantz

A Blank White Page

—Francisco X. Alarcon

is a meadow
after a snowfall
that a poem
hopes to cross

I came across this poem recently and thought of our “faithful five,” the poetry group members who are dedicated to being poets, to being engaged citizens, and to being themselves. The clarion voices they bring to the page and to our meetings each week are in the poems that “cross” these pages...these “meadows.”

On meeting days, I often joke that I don’t have to meditate when I get home because I’ve been brought back to center by their words...and I don’t really have to eat dinner (theoretically, of course) because I’ve already been fed. We have been particularly thankful this year to work with the following five individuals whose dedication, spirit, and incredible talent have been a beacon:

Kaylee Braidwood, whose incisive wit and wisdom invite an examination of life’s layers of irony and paradox.

Bryce Dershem, whose gentle, rich sounds and images insist on gratitude for hope and happiness.

Caden Diaz, whose reticence belied the world of wonderful words that bubble up in him.

Grace McIntyre, whose frankness and simplicity elicit open smiles in response to the details of our lives and honest tears in response to the struggles.

Padmini Rao, whose passion and depth, whose wisdom beyond her years, requires our attention.

I thank each of them for a year for the ages and look forward to what next year will bring.

Fondly,
Mrs. Pomerantz

Under Pressure in the Recital Hall

Scenes from the Poetry Out Loud contest:

Paddy and Caden, whom I have known since they were freshmen. Self-possessed. Clear. Paddy kills it, Caden is there in spirit.

Kaylee chooses the poems I understand best, channels the beats and doesn't look back.

Bryce improves, even upon a perfect reading. The embodiment of the Romantic Poet.

Grace had rehearsed with index cards. I thought that made sense, as her poems were very challenging. At the last minute, we realize that no cards were allowed. This would have been my undoing. How can a high school student handle this?

Grace recites both poems from memory without hesitation or prompts. Flawless. I will never forget this moment. Amazing courage. Her teammates focus intently on her, providing telepathic support.

After the contest, I look away from the stage and see parents and teachers and more students. Mrs. Steller, Mrs. Pomerantz; the judges: Mr. Bowne, Mrs. Mancinelli, Mrs. O'Keefe, and Mrs. Brattstrom. More teachers and substitute teachers and academic support professionals and administrators are in the audience, all on their own time, to support the students. The students offer each other congratulations and advice.

Thank you to the parents and teachers. The students' success and confidence reflect both their innate talent and your belief in their ability to perform so well, under pressure.

Love, Ms. Walker

Poets' Dedications Page

Kaylee Braidwood dedicates this to: Dr. Leason, for fervently following her own dreams while helping her students achieve theirs.

Bryce Dershem dedicates this to: Mrs. Pomerantz, for inspiring those around her with her love for the written word.

Grace McIntyre dedicates this to: Mr. Kemery, for pushing his students to write masterpieces in the form of poetry.

Padmini Rao dedicates this to: Ms. Walker, for being so impeccably and unconditionally supportive of everything we do.

Kaylee Braidwood

inside of the calm

somehow i think the stubborn bone in my body
cracks into pieces when i step into the ocean
and somehow my hair has fallen in lust with the hot breeze
and somehow i can hear music in the sand
and somehow i can finally survive without effort

i'm not entirely sure that happiness is not a myth
but i also like to imagine that if movies were not invented
and coffee tasted like water without the essence of breath
i would still imagine everything was going just fine
as soon as i kicked off my flip flops.

so maybe the end of the day creeps up like a secret
and catches you when you most want to plummet.
maybe negativity has become more humane to you
than your own father.
maybe the tv screen has taken a toll on you.

i still believe, with my entire pessimistic being,
that melting into a world hidden under an umbrella
and sipping the air through a straw of salt
can lift your own heart off of your shoulders
and remind yourself that solace is alive where the earth is organically opulent.

i'm so sorry

secondhand smoke
exhales off the chapter where she falls into the pattern of numb
and swirls into my pottery brain
visions of last march flow a bit too close to the dying flame
awfully terrifying how words from decades past
can send you into a mental mosh pit without the beer and companionship
those same words will remind you
that the side you choose to sit on in the backseat of your mother's car
can be a life or death decision
especially if you are convinced that your father is out to get you

the people who wrote these words suffered such an unforgiving air
they laid themselves in open fields to describe the real feeling
instead of laying in their comfort zone and taking a wild guess
they had a desire for death dug so deep that
eradication was simply impossible and nothing more.

standing in the grocery store line
tears smudging against the bell jar
my excuses slipping under the claminess of my palms
as the heat rises, chokes.
i'm so sorry.

Bryce Dershem

The Sparrow Song

With warm words the sparrow sings,
thrice to another with eternity's wings

A pastoral tune of reflection
carried through the winds with his affection

Resounding off still pebbles
to the historian's ears that then may settle

And so does the sparrow bid adieu
to shadows by the sparrow song anew

Caden Diaz

in sight of ground

picking bulbs from out
of this pot's moss dim soil
so rich pulling from this pot
dirt drips off its roots

from, tulips blossom slowly
in my spring wind
still, crying is my song
whistling through high rocks

skulking from high rooftops
slinks down my moon
still crying is my song
whistling without growth

nor color
nor sound

“like me, I, myself, who is not here and never will be”

And so it sang once,
it sang twice,
three times hard.

The little fir tree,
its little pinecones,
bullets, waved
green in the wind.

Against my headboard
they came, those flowers
cloying and vacant,
sad, but yet not of it—
of me.

I think.
In this open space,
I think and I know,
in this open space
I hear the sounds of
what I knew.

Maybe so soft up to my ears
signing, signing!
to oh a god I do not know
that doesn't know us.
But still Cry's from up on high heaven
it remains.

Grace McIntyre



Element Poem

By: Grace McIntyre

Water

Peaceful, calm, soothing. Flowing beautifully down a path, joining a waterfall. Drifting away to the ocean, where all drops of water go. Relaxed and poised, ready for the embrace of the Earth.

Earth

Strong, sturdy, powerful. Solid stone and soil, creating precious life. Every single living thing, is created, being loved by Mother Nature. Unbreakable and unstoppable, only destroyed by Fire.

Fire

Bright, beautiful, dangerous. The sparkling flames, eat away at everything it touches. It's rage never lets up, it burns brighter than anything else. Unforgiving and cruel, the flames get stronger with Air.

Air

Pure, clear, clean. The wind blows gently, on bare skin. The breeze gives us kisses, with the cool air. Purified and amazing, the oxygen we breathe is a part of nature.



Athena

Zeus the God of Thunder, Métis a mortal woman. Athena Goddess of Wisdom, courage, inspiration, civilization, law and justice, strategic warfare, mathematics, strength, strategy, the arts, crafts, and skill. Clear gray eyes and brown hair, the owl is her sacred animal. Her weapon is her spear, and shield. Athena is a fierce warrior, lacking compassion and not being emotional. I love her because, she is amazing!



Padmini Rao

XXVI•IX

Lay bare your sins to me
Throttle me in your Sargasso Sea
Let me drink what you pour
Lend me your sorrows from before
Before you abandon your Sodom
Bless upon it the creation of Adam
Perhaps it'll keep your mind from straying awry
Until then, my sin, sew into mine to revive
Because every time we make love, an angel weeps
And every time you lay beside me, King David creeps
For you are my angel of light—
My immorality and essence, my libido's right.
It's a Freudian slip; you and I,
Not much truth to whisper, but plenty of lies.
We feel what we see yet can't see how we feel
But when I look into your dark brown eyes
And I taste your warm caramel skin
When I feel your plump lips on mine
The licentious ones down south,
I run my hands through your curly onyx locks
And I feel your warm hands on my golden skin
The smell of bewildering ecstasy clouds my senses
And I arrive at a consensus
Whence you prowl at me in the likes of a lion
It tends to align the belt of Orion
But I need your caged heart to be free and loyal
Like a guardian dog to the royals
Because, my love, our fire has burnt out
Leaving our lust in a drought
And so— In virtue of a living dog,
You're, to me, as lovely as a dead lion.

We Owe it to Ourselves, an Ode to Ourselves.

I believe we owe ourselves an ode of warmth and bright skies.

I've been besotted by the warm sunlight, and one too many times they've unveiled my lies;
I've felt them shine a shadow betwixt my thighs,
Persuading my eyes to pour a trail of tears which made the nightingale soar, in which I've
heard a cub's first roar.

Was I beseeched to such an extent that I'd been unable to hear this before?
Was "equestrian" the name I had to gain to lose this game of starry night skies and my brave
knight's lies?
Those lies of lilac that have halted my thick golden skin from breaking.
As my blood heats, yes, but my skin cools at your caramel touch, all of this— it is infinitely
too much.

This rush of lavender and the faint blush of pink stings my heart into a pool of thoughts, I'm
inundated, but I float all the way up to a new blue moon.

Blue is the color of my deepest lust and laid beside me is your ivory trust.

As, I might be a creature, I might be a changeling, but— I am the perfect cabinet of oddities.*
The only boy I've loved in my youth told me I was his definition of perfect, but somehow, I've
grown perfectly incapable of loving him as a man.
In manner of something as that— in lieu of loving at all— I'm only worthy enough for him to
trust me, roughly.
For he awakens my mind with the ways of a licentious electric ecstasy.

O how I've committed treason, due in this poisonous lust: pleasure is the only way to fumigate
that lack of trust.

So I looked into the deep dark eyes of the angel of light and I stared back at the omnipotent
parent of ours,
Declaring how "C'est la vie mais je ne sais pas où cela mène!"
I'd much rather spend my life drowning my sorrows in a conduit of men.
A new whim to sore and paint red the field of white orchids— (Oncidium Sharry
Baby) —

My bloody nose inspired from this bright pure shade, taunting my grave with a crescendo of mirth in the form of a new flower bed.

I live knowing of the stars glowing at night and day, but unbeknownst of how they pave through the hills of fog to wake dawn at my bay.

I've grown from becoming so numb from my blackish mane to my littlest toe— I grew from being enraptured in that strange woe.
Somehow I prevailed, rendering a sapling in a world full of ruin.

Green is my heart, as the loath'd fumes are poured from my lov'd parts into the looking glass.

For I am my angel of light— my immorality and essence, my libido's right— but you and I are just a Freudian slip.

For when my still heart whispered last— It sang mine own name and it sang an ode of love, and immortality and it sang an ode to myself.

*From the book *Villette* by Charlotte Brontë

Our Haiku

Fold, press, seal, bend, crane
Two ways for everything? Yes.
Bend, seal, press, fold, crane — Bryce Dershem

Cozy, wood home of
bookshelves and fireplaces
and our family — Bryce Dershem

a sweet serenade
strawberries and bananas
chilled, crisp, craved, clean, candy — kaylee braidwood

Fox Beauty

A fox has red fur
It's fur reflects a bright ruby
I wish I was one. — Grace McIntyre

Summer Break

Sunshine and fun times
A long break from school
Summer is me time. — Grace McIntyre

Bunny Love

Fluffy and furry
Cuddly and cute
Bunnies of spring — Grace McIntyre

Even the moon can't shine without the sun,
Dark nights eclipsed brighter with you as one. — Padmini Rao.

Every time you'd take me,
You'd awaken a strange envy — Padmini Rao.

Falling in love with a silver fox,
Is a saga of greenery and goldilocks. — Padmini Rao

Roses can't grow without thorns
Devils don't show without horns. — Padmini Rao

Our Limericks

My hair reminds my mother of a lion's mane,
It's how she has given me this name.
She says "you're crazy!"
She says "your future is hazy!"
O dearest mother, we are not the same.
—Padmini Rao

there was a flower without petal
next to the tea without kettle
inside of her mind
the world had gone dry
and this is the way she must settle
—kaylee braidwood

There once was a teddy bear
Who taught a little boy to care
And how to find joy in each day
With merry games and lively play
Because there is magic everywhere
—Bryce Dershem

There once was a fox who stole a pair of socks
And hid them well under a pile of rocks
A boy received his mother's glare
It was more than he could bear
So he had to wear his father's old smocks
—Grace McIntyre

Poems We Love

Kaylee Braidwood's Page

Joey

by Neil Hilborn

Joey always told me, laughing, as though it were actually a joke
That he wanted to kill himself but it was never the right time,
There were always groceries to be bought
And little brothers to be tucked in at night.
Don't worry, Joey isn't gonna kill himself 20 more seconds into this poem,
It's not that kind of story I'm telling here.
Joey got a promotion and now he can afford anti-depressants.
Joey is Joe now.
Joe is a cold engine in which none of the parts complain
Joe is a brick someone made out of fossils
If you removed money from the equation,
Joey would have been painting elk on cave walls
People would have fed him and kept him away from high places
Because goddamn look at those elk.
I think the genes for being an artist and mentally ill aren't just related,
They're the same gene
But try telling that to a bill-collector.

We were seventeen
And I drove us all to punk shows in a station wagon that was older than any of us,
We were seventeen
And I bought lunch for Joey more often than I didn't,
We were seventeen
And the one time Joey tried to talk to me about being depressed when someone else was around
I told him to shut the hell up and asked if he needed to change his tampon
You know that moment when the cartoon realizes he's taken three steps off the cliff
And he takes a long look at the audience
Like we're holding the last moving box in a half empty house?
Joey looked like that without the puff of smoke.
He just played video games for a half hour and then went home
I once caught Joey in my dad's office,
Staring at the safe where he knew we kept the guns
Once Joey molded his car into the shape of a tree trunk and refused to give a reason why
I once caught Joey in biology class
Staring at a scalpel like he wanted to be the frog
Splayed out, wide open

So honest
There is one difference between me and Joey:
When we got arrested, bail money was waiting for me at the station
When I was hungry, I ate
When I wanted to open myself up and see if there really were bees rattling around in there,
My parents got me a therapist.
I can pinpoint the session that brought me back to the world,
That session cost seventy-five dollars.
Seventy-five dollars is two weeks of groceries
It's a month of bus fare
It's not even a school-year's worth of new shoes,
It took weeks of seventy-five dollars to get to the one that saved my life.
We both had parents that believed us when we said that we weren't okay
But mine could afford to do something about it
I wonder how many kids like Joey wanted to die,
And were unlucky enough to actually pull it off,
How many kids had people who cared about them but also had to pay rent?
I'm so lucky that right now I'm not describing Joey's funeral
I'm so lucky we all lived through who we were
To become who we are
I'm so lucky-
I'm so
Lucky

Bryce Dershem's Page

I Give You the Morning
by Fred Åkerström

Ever again the morning creeps across your shoulder,
Through the frosted window pane the sun grows bolder.
Your hair flows down your pillow, you're still sleeping.
I think I'll wake you now and hold you,
Tell you again the things I told you;
Behold, I give you the morning,
I give you the day.

Through the waving curtain wall the sun is streaming.
Far behind your flickering eyelids you're still dreaming.
You're dreaming of the good times and you're smiling.
I think I'll wake you now and hold you,
Tell you again the things I told you;
Behold, I give you the morning,
I give you the day.

Close beneath our window sill the Earth is humming,
Like an eager Christmas child the day is coming,
Listen to the morning song it's singing.
I think I'll wake you now and hold you,
Tell you again the things I told you;
Behold, I give you the morning,
I give you the day.

Like an antique ballroom fan your eyelids flutter,
Sunlight streams across your eyes through open shutter.
Now I think you're ready for the journey.
I think I'll wake you now and hold you,
Tell you again the things I told you;
Behold, I give you the morning,
I give you the day.

Behold, I give you the morning,
I give you the day.

Grace McIntyre's Page

Alone

by Edgar Allan Poe

From childhood's hour I have not been
As others were — I have not seen
As others saw — I could not bring
My passions from a common spring —
From the same source I have not taken
My sorrow — I could not awaken
My heart to joy at the same tone —
And all I lov'd — I lov'd alone —
Then — in my childhood — in the dawn
Of a most stormy life — was drawn
From ev'ry depth of good and ill
The mystery which binds me still —
From the torrent, or the fountain —
From the red cliff of the mountain —
From the sun that 'round me roll'd
In its autumn tint of gold —
From the lightning in the sky
As it pass'd me flying by —
From the thunder, and the storm —
And the cloud that took the form
(When the rest of Heaven was blue)
Of a demon in my view —

Melting

by Kali Uchis

You are my church, you are my place of worship
I heard you're the plug, can I be the circuit?
When I got court, I hope that you're the verdict
When you're around, my insides turn inverted
My blood start to rush when I see you, darling
I know you're nearby and I know your purpose
Take one look at you, you're heavens incarnate
What is this spell baby, please show some mercy

[Chorus:]

Melting like an ice cream
When you smile
Melting, you're a daydream
Stay a while

I pray that I can learn to be funny
I am watching every stand-up comedy
Just hoping that it will rub off on me
So you will smile at everything I say
You got some soft lips and some pearly whites
I wanna touch them with the dead of night
Your smile ignites just like a candlelight
Then somehow I know everything's alright