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Movable Type

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Contents

Director's Note—*Sean Murphy* 1
Thoughts on the Three Prize Winners 2

PRIZE WINNERS

At a Wake, I Confront—*Yvanna Vien Tica* 3
Elegy for Our Pseudohistories—*Yejin Suh* 5
Letters from Pennsylvania to Washington: for Ellie Chu—*Stella Lei* 9

HONORABLE MENTIONS

Elegy with Lipstick Smear—*Sabrina Guo* 11
Fissureman—*Matt Hsu* 13
golden bowl hunger—*Chloe Lin* 15
Fuego—*Sophia Mateja* 17
It Takes a Village—*Emily Truman* 19
swallow-boned—*Amy Wang* 21
crabs caught in chain-link—*Richard Zhu* 22
Our Hands—*Carolyn Lau* 23
Elapse—*Yong-Yu Huang* 24
homage to home—*Alana Esposito* 25
Dear Mother Armenia—*Hagop Alajajian* 27
the salmon people—*Elizabeth Duke Moe* 29

ABOUT THE POETS

Poet Bios 31

CULTIVATING CREATIVITY & COMMUNITY

Call for Essays 34
1455 News 34

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Having completed another successful Teen Poetry contest as part of 1455's third annual Summer Fest, I can confirm two things: the contest gets bigger and better each cycle, and choosing a grand prize winner becomes more difficult. It's a labor of love, and I'm grateful to all the teen poets from America and beyond for sharing their writing. I'm also proud to note that we more than doubled last year's total of poems; over 130 submissions were received and, once again, narrowing that down to ten proved almost impossible.

As a reminder, the theme for this year's contest was Finding Community During Crisis, and the guidelines requested the poems to reflect on or react to the contemporary sociopolitical and cultural environment (including but not limited to #BLM, #MeToo, COVID, etc.); every poem that made the final cut successfully explored these parameters, but the diverse and provocative variations on these themes were extraordinary. Just like last year, some of the poems seemed pieced together by newspaper headlines; others invoked family histories (the kinds found in photo albums and especially the kinds kept secret or spoken about for the first time), and there were ingenious, if inevitable references to science, politics, ethnicity, anger, and shame. This being a heavy subject, the weight of these collective words was not inconsiderable, but like the best art, these poems encourage dialogue, they seek understanding, they inspire solidarity. In a time where we're seeing a general lack of courage and common sense (by our elected leaders, by our neighbors), these poems are at once an indictment and an aspiration to our better angels.

This past year has been a period of intense turmoil and disruption; it's also been a time of grace, generosity, beauty, and witness borne. As always, we hear our politicians and self-appointed spokespersons eager to opine (but seldom enlighten or console), and as ever, it's our poets, whom Percy Bysshe Shelley famously declared "unacknowledged legislators of the world," who best explain and interrogate our lives.

1455's mission is to celebrate creativity and build community. We do this by encouraging storytellers, and poets are anything but unacknowledged in our corner of the world. Indeed, all of our free programming is offered with the goal of connecting worthy writers and diverse audiences. If we're able to showcase under-represented artists, all the better. And being able to support young writers is a critical and inextricable part of this process. We are proud and honored to shine a light on voices we can learn from, and as is so often the case, we stand to learn more from our young minds than they do from us.



Be well and stay safe!

Sean Murphy
Executive Director, 1455

THOUGHTS ON THE THREE PRIZE WINNERS

At a Wake, I Confront

YVANNA VIEN TICA *Grand Prize Winner*

“At a Wake, I Confront” took me several reads to fully and properly absorb and, like any exceptional poem, the more I look at it, the more I see (about the world; about the world of poetry; about myself, etc.). While this poem will resonate in years to come, it will remain a definitive and devastating observation of our world, circa 2021. In succinct fashion, we see and hear about nightmares, scars, breathing, grief, politics—all words and ideas that assume an extra edge, a peculiar urgency, during a time when masks were obliged and intolerance, in some circles, encouraged. On a line-by-line—and word by word—basis, it’s exquisite yet tough, like, say, a diamond dipped in blood. Above all, it evinces the key ingredient suffusing the very best poems: empathy.

Elegy for Our Pseudohistories

YEJIN SUH *2nd Prize Winner*

“Elegy for Our Pseudohistories” manages to be exhaustive in scope, and emotionally exhausting in ways both right and perhaps required for a year that exacted such a toll; aside from an intolerable body count (abetted, in part, by willful ignorance and malevolence on the parts of both the powerful and the powerless), we’ve all been forced to endure more than a reasonable burden—of suffering, of sudden silence, of uncertainty. Yejin Suh is an old soul, and her poetic sensibility arrives fully-formed in this miniature epic. I’m not certain how such wisdom and talent is acquired at so young an age, but I’m grateful to have it in our world, and I look forward to much more in the future.

Letters from Pennsylvania to Washington: for Ellie Chu

STELLA LEI *3rd Prize Winner*

“Letters from Pennsylvania to Washington: for Ellie Chu” is another work that manages to address contemporary concerns while achieving a liminal space that is at once urgent and out of time. On a literal level, this is a poem about travel (and trains, gravity, acceleration, motion, and the implication of all of these energies being grounded or derailed—by both clear and less obvious forces). There is a resigned nod to inevitability and even reality which, sadly, in 2021 none of us can assume is reciprocated in good faith, but there’s also an unmistakable vibration of expectation. In the final lines we have something so many of us desperately need and have been in lamentably short supply of lately: hope.

At a Wake, I Confront

YVANNA VIEN TICA *Grand Prize Winner*

a boy who stares at me. The window parallels
our distance. Unthreatened, I ask him if he has trouble
sleeping and what pills he takes to bed. Whether

his dreams bleed
into night terrors.
I tell him about my nightmares

mimicking the shudder of an old man's
body after a beating. My K-complexes refuse to let me
believe this is all imaginary,

that a nation rejecting its blood is innocent
of its sickness. I almost tell him I've hunted
the mountains for respite. The roads etched

into their sides like scars.
Instead I tell the boy I avoid
going outside. I tell him

about an old Vietnamese-American man
whose store I'd pass on the way to school.
I haven't seen him, I say. All the blinds are drawn.

I tell him I fear breathing
without a mask. The stench of blood
overwhelms me. I tell him isn't it

interesting how faces are cartography
that can haunt mountains
like wandering men. I tell him I lied

about the old man. I did see him
by the side of his store lying
unconscious. His head looked like the tomatoes

my mother liked to buy
from his store to stew in her sour soups.
As if tomatoes could enact

violent stages of grief. I tell him that,
lying there, the old man
reminded me of my grandfather

taking a nap, his head bowed in a listing prayer.
I almost apologize for politicizing every story
to keep this nation awake. Instead

I tell him how the old man once said he missed wandering
the mountains with good knees. He knew flowers
like a language and once gave me a hand-picked chrysanthemum

for a long and beautiful life. He told me
he had a grandson my age and hoped
we'd be friends when he visited.

As our reflections touch in the window, I tell the boy
the old man missed his grandson
more than the mountains and good knees.

That he would have given him more
chrysanthemums than he could hold
in his hands, in his vases. ■

Elegy for Our Pseudohistories

YEJIN SUH *2nd Prize Winner*

*All political and social ideologies came alive, in the temporal
and spatial sense, in an area completely isolated from the
outside world...*

—Choi Jungwoon

*“The Gwangju Uprising: The Pivotal Democratic Movement That Changed the
History of Modern Korea”*

That snaggle-toothed boy kissing the rounded corner
of a truck—knees limp against silver hubcaps, a prayer

hooking him down the roads. Blooming in purpose
and fervor, I believe it. I didn't believe

the first nursery home fight, nor the second, the third,
but I believe my grandfather on the crimson dusting

his shoes, flowering on the ground, the snaggle-tooth boy
a question of a body. I saw a fake crime scene on TV once:

just four limbs and a head stretched over a
dinosaur fossil (extinct body). A human body inverted

is, after all, only bones reverted, and who's to say
what belongs on the outside and what doesn't belong

anywhere at all. How his feet must have pressed
into ground until it was no longer apart from the earth, the earth

merely allowing the soles to part at each step,
pounding home, backpack laced over his head. I know

he scrubbed & scrubbed the shoes long after
their demise—or revival—in sharp motions

like the soldiers dusting their hands. No entry to
Gwang-ju, schoolboys sprinting home the wrong

way, the feet of the students much like those of
the soldiers: bloody & patchworked with wary

intention. Marching perhaps knowing they too
may go extinct a mutilated body and nothing more,

hanging by one incisor.

/

after Franny Choi

Make me three kingdoms. Make me
a continent of sires so wide and endless
they ride like stars in expansion,
thunderously back in time. Hooves
clattering in tandem, metal animals,
great city beasts. What is a horse
if not a vehicle to test its rider, much like
the A-train bucking through Saturday mornings,
gears trembling into slot. Traversing the great
kingdom of transit lines and given enough
berth even Genghis would've thought you
fearsome. You say, They're afraid.
They tell me to go back
to my empire. He says, Defiance
is what propelled the horses.

/

"I was born a woman but never lived as a woman."

for Kim Hak-Sun, who died without an apology

All I think about is the clean separation of whole objects no blood. Cars and street poles and

Trauma shears can cut through almost anything. Leather and
denim to turn the victim face-up to the heavens,

as if to say Look what you've done or Look what you can save,
because made in His image means holding everything against hope,

as if it counts. Do not ask me about cutting. Once, the umbilical was
torn from a child because the child was borne from tearing too—

Skin sloughed from bone to settle in ox bone broth, hanbok in violent sep-
aration from a girl's milky skin. Lured by promise of work

and made to give up the flesh in cycles of centuries. How surgically
brutal the division of cloth and body, of girl and machine,

of woman and her entire life. Of comfort / and / woman, units of war supplies,
they were called. Made in His image is the arrogance to mold a woman

into what she is not, oil-slicked fingers trying to press metal. A war
never atoned. Do not ask me about cutting again, until each bullet

is returned in the shape of their names. ■

Letters from Pennsylvania to Washington: for Ellie Chu

STELLA LEI *3rd Prize Winner*

Gravity is matter's response to loneliness.

—Ellie Chu

The Half of It (2020)

Twice a day, you signal the trains because
you don't trust light to guide metal. Lift your arm

and the engine surges forth. Give crossing
bells to the girl you love and she says it's like being

a master of the universe—the way gravity holds
every atom in place. See, I'm not like you.

I can't hold acceleration in my fist, I choke
my brakes on every hill. But I live near a train

station because it promises movement, steel hurtling
across steel, an escape hatch that skins my knees

as I crawl out. After coming out, you stand
in a church and everyone gasps as I applaud.

After sunset, I kneel at the platform, kiss
my knees to the line, and baptize my hands on rust. God.

I curl my fingers and no particles align,
no girl sucks my name in her mouth, but I'm learning

Newton's laws—objects in motion stay in motion.
So when you take the overnight train to your future

city, let me run next to the tracks. Let me
chase your smoke as we rush, together, to our better lives.

Let's pray we never stop. ■

Elegy with Lipstick Smear

SABRINA GUO

for Delilah (2006 - 2018)

You can see her virginity seeping through,
the girls say near the lockers.

My throat, glassed. My voice, gunked.
Screaming at the girls: I'm not a prude!

Sweet naiveté, father whispers in my ear.
My throat, itching beach-flea bites.

My throat, yearning for sea salt to slough off
pumice against the heels of their feet.

Later that night, my head
cradled in mother's arms. I ask

Do you love me or father more?
She is silent. Hours pass, ataraxic, in sleep.

*

Father enters my bedroom, no knock. He tears
the blanket off my body, then pulls

my blinds open. I am used
to this. He hands me a prescription bottle. Two white

tablets under my tongue, no water. I chew
and chew, the bitter white hiding

behind my teeth, until they are thin

as trust. My head is lighter... it is
leaking water, no, my hand lifts,

as mother walks in
with a glass of water. I refuse.

*

Snip. I grip the scissors, cutting the outline
of mother's sun-smoked face. This collage

of my family won't make itself, so I press
against father's cheek on the tapestry

above my headboard. The corner of my lips
twitches. I resist turning

the scissors 180 degrees. I am careful
not to harm father. My nails scratch

mother's cut-out face, the deep red
lipstick smearing down her chin. ■

Fissureman

MATT HSU

(I)

Met you in the chapel where blind are buried. You wore
Ruby-ribbons, swiped a pomelo from my fingers and

Promised you would douse me in satsuma. I gave you
two— no, three caramel buttons, you said they tasted

Like requiem. If we were on an island, bitten by crabs
And jade sharks, you'd rescue me; squeeze lime into

My cocktails. Where are you now? Hawaii or France or
Purple-mountain? Taking photos of swordfish, finding

Penguin eggs beneath the rocks? Deaf, but hearing all,
For you can choose when to listen? Framing your face

In amber, partying with another pride, breathing God-
Forsaken hymns while I pine for a platter of fresh citrus?

(II)

Glasses and gooseberry hair and texting until
The app begged for mercy and Brooklyn-Nine-
Nine and quesadillas in the foyer and copper

chemistry catastrophes and MILFs and DILFs
And Thai iced tea every Friday and feminist
Shakespeare and Billie and The Beatles and
Sharing art too ethereal for the rest of them
To handle and coronavirus and endless April
And letting our snap-streak die (but that's okay
Because we were getting sick of that app) and
Forgotten birthdays (but that's okay because
There was no one to remind us) and school
And work and school and work and forgetting
What you looked like without a mask and
Gifting the raspberry candle you gave me
To my brother and reading alone and eating
Alone and leaving you in solitary Eden (but
That's okay because you're happy)

(III)

Hands buttered like black
Breakfast tea; You offered; I
Stabbed and watched you bleed.

Gambit, you lost, but
You didn't lose much. Just the
Pawn that I've become.

Soccer tees that smelled
Like crowfeed. EXPO markers.
Maybe something else.

Drunk at Delta.
Imagine if I was there—
Periwinkle bliss.

Alas, dreams are dreams,
I wish you well and mourn for
All I could have lost.

(IV)

Saw you last
Tuesday.

You cut your hair. It looks nice. Remember
When it scratched your shoulders?
Ha— good times, good times.
Good times.

I— You— No, I—

Let's get boba. 70% sweetness, right? No? Damn,
It's been too long, haha. I'll order a chocolate cupcake
And nibble around the
Surface so we don't have to stare over our straws.

What's new? Yep. Yep. Yep.
Oh, really? Damn. Yeah, I thought so.
Nice.

My schedule?
First period: whatever
Second period: whatever
Third period: whatever
Fourth period: whatever
Fifth period: whatever
Sixth period: whatever
Hahaha

Not much. Still have to start my Drivers Ed. Can you
Believe I'm 17 and still don't have my permit? When I
Can drive I'll
Take you out for pancakes, and we'll
Drown them in syrup. You'll
spill your drink onto my lap— oops! Clumsy,
Clumsy!

Yeah.

Crumbs on my lap.
Breadcrumbs.

She did? That's
Crazy! Hahahaha
Can't
Believe they're still going strong ■

golden bowl hunger

CHLOE LIN

in elementary school we sang
a song about a chinese
restaurant and a loaf of bread
bread bread the waiter asked
me what's my name and this
is what i said
said said i thought bread only required
the pulling of
dough not the outer
corners of our eyes

here bread is not served but stolen
dishes robbed of its authenticity they raise
their noses at our sauteed scallions ginger garlic
in sesame oil fragrant white rice shove
clumsy creation stripped of its flavor at
our doorsteps here you barge
through our doors a
battle cry

ching chong bing
bong is a colonist's slang inherited
by little east asian boys jovial whoop
then i realize that children are
capable of slicing

our tongues

we learn to dangle our brush tips just above
 rice paper silent confinement thin
 red boxes a hungry desire black
 ink characters glide
 across the page while walls follow

still we stand our paintbrushes
 dwindled to stubs colored wax fingers curled
 around the aging paper our futures
 held within a picture frame
 waiting—

waiting for the day history
 measures our
 worth steady lines the colors
 of our art not lost in
 yellow peril not existential
 danger black ink monsters dripping our
 murky yellow-ness—

for the day we stop choking
 on your dry chicken and slimy
 broccoli a colonizer's
 skimpy gift throat lodged to
 the brim with your bull
 shit—

but we raise our chili soup broth
 with green onion curled beef and grow
 back our
 fractured tongues—

hoping for the day when people of
 golden skin find themselves under fried
 rice sun our laughs lucid artwork
 painting the sky with shades of
 red we will sing from
 the bottom of our bellies and
 no longer
 be hungry ■

Fuego

SOPHIA MATEJA

Fuego

We measure time in an ever-growing stack of Net Yorkers
Counting the faded rings of charred trees
on a yellow hill, wrinkled like
old people's skin.

You told me
living is an evanescent act of love
The cook whispering ay dios mio in the kithcen corner,
our takeout and warm posole.

I forgot the gentle crashing thud, thud
waves against our beach
and the cool weight of sleeping sand.

Water washing watercolors-
 an osmosis of study and unconscious defeat
 faded memories peeking through torn seams of perfection
 A little girl tied to an anchor,
 rusted chains against tender skin
 the whoose of the current pulling down, down
 further

The sundial betrays our mourning
 Shadowy puppets hug my eyes
 dancing in the light of champagne i drank last night
 They only say i'm gorgeous when alcohol blurs the details
 then, sometimes words for loss are too beautiful to be repeated aloud

I question the darkness
 gracing the wind with dancing fingers up and down
 my spine
 Lips-stained purple by blackberries, i stab another

It's a sad meal,
 Far from the humors of childhood.
 Rather, we sit in sad consumption
 Sometimes it's hard to distinguish between love and
 remorse for fields of pumpkins rotting
 Fall wastes herself to winter, weary wandering to cold - i
 live and die, as well. ■

It Takes a Village

EMILY TRUMAN

My grandmother lives in a nursing home

One resident has died of COVID-19

She is confined to a small beige room

My family called her today and when we hung up I cried

Five residents have died of COVID-19

The caregivers love my grandmother and I am grateful

My family called her today and when we hung up I cried

The tree outside my grandmother's window is called a ginkgo biloba

The caregivers love my grandmother and I am grateful She's having shepherd's pie for dinner

The tree outside my grandmother is called a ginkgo biloba Nine residents have died of COVID-19

She's having shepherd's pie for dinner again

Her caregivers brought her chocolates and a scarf Twelve residents have died of COVID-19

My grandmother wants to survive the fire

Her caregivers brought her flowers and Werther's Fifteen residents have died of COVID-19

My grandmother wants to survive the fire

She wants to move back home

Sixteen residents have died of COVID-19

There's only one way to leave God's waiting room She wants to move back home

Everyone wants to help her

There's only one way to leave God's waiting room My grandmother danced in a ballet company Everyone wants to help her

Her British neighbor will bring soup and casseroles

My grandmother danced in a ballet company Nineteen residents have died of COVID-19 Joanne will drive her to doctor's appointments I want to hold her hand and kiss her cheek

Twenty residents have died of COVID-19 Margaret will make her cookies and bran muffins I want to hold her hand and kiss her cheek

My parents deep cleaned my grandmother's house

Two ladies from down the road will visit every day It takes a village to save a grandmother

My parents deep cleaned my grandmother's house She is leaving for home tomorrow

It takes a village to save a grandmother

Twenty-one residents have died of COVID-19

Today is her first day back home

The teenager on the next block will shovel the driveway

Twenty-three residents have died of COVID-19

I visited my grandmother and we both smiled behind masks Her British neighbor brought her soup and a casserole

The new caregivers love my grandmother and I am grateful

I visited my grandmother and we both smiled behind masks She's having shepherd's pie for dinner

The new caregivers love my grandmother and I am grateful Joanne drove her to a doctor's appointment

She's having shepherd's pie for dinner again

The new president is older than my grandmother

Margaret made her cookies and bran muffins

The tree outside my grandmother's window is called a maple

The new president is older than my grandmother

Two ladies from down the road visit every day

The tree outside my grandmother's window is called a maple Her husband's funeral was one year ago

The teenager on the next block shoveled the driveway Twenty-six residents have died of COVID-19

Her husband's funeral was one year ago

My grandmother lived in a nursing home ■

swallow-boned

AMY WANG

In the summer I learn what it means to stick-shift every feeling into loss. A newborn cries as his grandfather falters in a hospital bed and we hold our breath as he breathes, making ourselves small so that there is more room for his eyelids to sleep. Our hands are empty of so much and so little, water pooling as it trickles and eddies. The gravitation of morbidity keeps us strung to his knees; we roll film against our tongues, white flashing into red as we imitate lawless sound. Here, there is a time for stillness — the only comfortable silence is the kind that chatters. Age provides no wisdom in the face of the sea before us. Against the white walls, we play the pantomime of an exhumation: an old woman's heart caved in, the blackened blue of a side-walk bruise, the coin-bright flash of a car as it tramples the white of pianos. In the waiting room we roll rust over one knuckle and naivete over the other; we are too young for bottled candor, too old to ask our mothers for the truth and hope for a happy ending. We are heavy enough to cradle, daughter enough to cry; so much smaller now that we sleep in the bodies of starlings, so much brighter now that we have swept the sun from the sky and called it life before art. The ventilator-hum of a body at work; we make a home of this grief and pull it over our heads. Underneath it, we whisper into our own shadows, watch as they slumber, ochre-boned, forgiving. ■

crabs caught in chain-link

RICHARD ZHU

noontime & my sneakers jangle
the chain-link fence like a crab trap.

hear—a ghost net yawning in the shallows
of soil, the whole prison yard slipping

into a steel-lined stupor & the trees
are shucked

driftwood
dangling from the barbed wire,
hollowed claws.

ivy writhes & i writhe
our struggle a mute duet screaming streaming
down steel shark teeth—

my lungs clang with breaths,
two swollen carapaces shoving
out of flesh still
skewered on metal rings—
when it rains, the fence opens his pockmarked maw
& gobbles in pleasure—
rust sews a garnet pall that strangles
our esophagus

& Time rattles
bloated rattles
weeping rattles—

when we're reeled up,
brick-red shells spill across the deck,
the sun simmering a tangy grin
someone stomps

& the *crack!* detonates like a bomb ■

Our Hands

CAROLYN LAU

Point to our broken down towns, and
turn your noses up to a place in the sky I can't see
The lines on my hands trace the lines of a track—
they say it ends in Promontory, Utah, but it runs through my ancestry for years
and many years still to come
There's a sickness spreading, call it my country is a river for you to
curse on Tie down wings and place a second bar over doors that are already
shut
These hands with lines are sweeping empty shops, and praying for the girl who
used to pour green tea across the street,
and all the people marching down Minneapolis, I can't stop until they return
Our tired hands with lines are finding heartbeats every day, body fully covered in
arms of blue, yet not shielded
our eyes manage to be enough for people to judge who we are
There's a sickness spreading, call it by its true name
It's not the one that needs a host; but the one that targets the guests
I remember my grandfather,
whose cheerfully squinted eyes—now closed—taught my mother,
who taught me, how to hold chopsticks, and brush paint different colored fishes
all swimming in the same ocean
These strong hands with lines are sweeping to nudge scales of healing off tree
bark paper ■

Elapse

YONG-YU HUANG

O eyeless swift, O mouthful of wind —
the days I unbuckled from
the empty road. What I fed to
a bushel of birds at the gas station.
Mirrorless, I taught myself to drive.
To watch dust settle over
a stilled flank, listen for the radio's death rattle.
In between shades of static,
I learn that we are still at war.
That the most vulnerable part
of any body is always on fire —
the comet's pale arc,
bird bones. Here is the pail of bleach.
The mercury I confuse
for medicine, mirrored fear.
I thumb through the calendar
in search of a cure & lottery tickets.
The days slip by.
Every photograph turns
negative print, stripped of movement.
I step on the skirts
of shadow people — forget the broken face
& its ticking hands or the window
to a lonely building. Rippling flags
& the soft pulse
of any unwanted speech.
These hands burnished with sickness,
a smear of blued nostalgia
across the cheek. Overhead, the crows fly straight
into burning fields —
a murder going to seed. ■

homage to home

ALANA ESPOSITO

here on this burning earth,
fire is spread from grain to grain.

colored by phytoplankton stains,
my angel tears
are left wandering under the influence of gravity
searching for warmth

in another world we traded gold for crushed flowers,
mined ores instead of oil for holy dresses,
anointed children with ocean's blood,
found the beauty in the fineries—
dusty, ashed clouds of color erupting from clapped hands—,
raided tombs for skin sheaths,

& varnished our blushes
to preserve our youth.

so what if the tides froze
not like ice,
but like silence?

we'd still have our glory,

we could build a salty temple to the ocean,
one of glass and brick
with the glass burned from sand that lines these beaches
and the brick heated and hardened from clay that fills the seafloor
both ovens lit by sunlight's glare

we can take her salty skin
and cloak ourselves
from the light

becoming prisms—

stained glass mosaics—

look at how we create the beauty
we've sought. ■

Dear Mother Armenia

HAGOP ALAJAJIAN

I sit now, vexed of external vices:

“And All is well, but reminisce I of

Your stirring of spices and roses; Sincereness and spirit; Strength and love. All is well, but captors spit and hiss

The weeded words, a congestion of mind.

And thoughts of sleep, solely sleep, to dismiss The pain, while caved within prison confines; Prodding poison of vulgarity yielded shots

Of soft suffering—sharp metal rods scratched me, While my insides were churned, the world forgot. With burning shocks, Azeris shattered me, History became today. As all went dark,

I heard the solemn songs of silent larks.”

In his final words, the POW gasped, “Live”

Yes. I stand With martyrs,

wounded brothers and sisters

Pushed by the red waves of Euphrates;

For chains will be broken,

And peace will be restored,

Change will be infinite and finite once more;

Anger will dissipate, as I walk past the threshold, Screaming, "I am free, body and bones, mind and soul; And mother I, your children, choose justice tenfold."

I am we.

No enemies will induce sufferings on your children, No forests will burn from white phosphorous,

No race or religion will determine privilege,

No denial of continual genocide will go on,

No ancient Armenian lands will be stolen, No serpent's tooth will latch on a lamb, No History will be forged by dictators, No Artsakh will die.

Only if... the world's wispy winds carry no signs

Of rotting hunger, tranquil turmoil, sincere apathy. Today, the sun lacks its shine.

Only if Hope carries. ■

the salmon people

ELIZABETH DUKE MOE

Mor, I won't be home for dinner tonight. gift the tribe a handful of white sage wrapped until it can't breathe, reminds me of my rib cage carved from *Ymir's* dried teeth. the journey: twelve hours,

scheming desert, stolen land. me: protecting an animal gone milk-sour in the sun, melting in water as it falls through bony, surgeon hands. salmon: pink stomachs belly up, bloated cadavers

with posterior plates falling off. tell them, the fish don't fly anymore. because everyone has heard the fish are dying. arrive bleak, arrive bare, arrive wishing this new generation didn't have

to stop the dying Oh. a twenty four foot carved totem pole browning in Idaho sun. and that is what made us Warrior once again. tell them the red road across white country is burning. tell

them it is made of maroon cycloid scales. it is worth fighting, it is worth heaving nights, moon-soaked mornings, it is worth fighting, please. tell them it is carved by Lummi Nation tribesmen, bloody

fingers shaking as an eagle's head emerges, as twin brother salmon kiss the wood, dancing. and if this fish wasn't coughing blood, my team of saplings hands dipped in grit, coals burning feet,

ears tired of salmon bodies slapping the dams never would have birthed. tell them every hand that touches the totem surrenders fragile spirit to its lightning flesh. time to end the stomping on

native throats, time to unify a community for if the salmon sinks, we lose. bury me in the mountains i died for, in dirt teeming with plastics. let it eat my skin, burrow into a girl unfinished. at least i

will last forever. totem pole, your story made my threatened salmon smile. travel thousands of miles to the white house's door, we will be swimming next to you. a house that never protected you

before, that made your ancestors salmon. salmon *meaning* endangered, cooking in hot, silted water. salmon *meaning* culture pulled like teeth. if you make it, totem pole, maybe we can, too.

tell them the sockeye drumming in my heart is glowing darker, choking dead. if they ask where i am, tell them i braided my hair and went to war. ■

Poet Bios

YVANNA VIEN TICA

Yvanna Vien Tica is a Filipina writer with a hearing impairment who grew up in Manila and a suburb near Chicago. She is the 2021 Hippocrates Young Poet and has also been recognized by the Scholastic Art and Writing Competition, The Kenyon Review, The Young Playwrights Festival, Princeton University's Creative Writing Department, The Poetry Society UK, and Aster Lit. Her poetry is forthcoming in *Rust + Moth*, *DIALOGIST*, *Hobart*, and *Shenandoah*, among others. She is the Editor-in-Chief of The Faith Review, an Executive Editor for Polyphony Lit, a Poetry Editor for The Global. Youth Review, and a Poetry Reader for Muzzle Magazine. In her spare time, she can be found enjoying nature and thanking God for another day. She tweets @yvannavien.

YEJIN SUH

Yejin Suh is a writer whose work appears or is forthcoming in Half Mystic, Glass: A Journal of Poetry, and Polyphony Lit, among others. A YoungArts Finalist for Short Story and a 2021 Pushcart Prize nominee, she has been recognized by The New York Times, Penguin Random House, and UK Poetry Society. She runs Wintermute Lit, a publication dedicated to fostering emerging voices in speculative writing and art. She is an incoming freshman at Princeton University.

STELLA LEI

Stella Lei is a teen writer from Pennsylvania whose work is published or forthcoming in Honey Literary, Milk Candy Review, Okay Donkey Magazine, and elsewhere. She is an Editor in Chief for The Augment Review, she has two cats, and she tweets @stellalei04. You can find more of her work at stellaleiwrites.weebly.com.

SABRINA GUO

Sabrina Guo is from Oyster Bay Cove, New York. She is a rising junior and the president and editor-in-chief of KEN, the award-winning literary and art magazine of Syosset High School on Long Island. She studied poetry at the Iowa Young Writers' Studio and the Kenyon Review's Young Writers Workshop. Her work has been published or is forthcoming in the Best Teen Writing, Alliance for Young Artists & Writers, Counterclock, Hippocrates Prize Anthology, and Polyphony Lit, among others. She is the recipient of the Civic Expression Award and an eight-time National Medalist from the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. She won the Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award, the Barbara Mandigo Kelly Peace Poetry Award, the Poetry Society of Virginia's Jenkins Prize, and received a nomination for the Pushcart Prize. She is the founder of Girl Pride International and Long Island Laboring Against COVID-19. The Disney Channel profiled her poetry, music, and humanitarian journey in its 2021 "Use Your Voice" social initiative.

MATT HSU

Matt Hsu is a junior at San Francisco University High School in San Francisco, California. He works as a poetry/prose editor at Cathartic Youth Literary Magazine and The Formula. Currently he's working on a YA novel about a lonely assassin. In his spare time, he enjoys playing tennis and eating dark chocolate.

CHLOE LIN

Chloe Lin hated poetry as a kid; she absolutely despised the thought of rhyming words, as it was clearly too simple for her 11 year old brain. Now a sophomore at Herricks High School, Chloe has come to discover that poetry is not as easy as it seems. Her work has been published in the Rattle Young Poets Anthology, as well as the Young Writers Imagine Anthology; she is also published in her school's literary journal, OPUS. When Chloe is not selling her soul to a Google document, she's an avid listener of chinese pop, enjoys messing up recipes in the kitchen, and folding paper cranes.

SOPHIE MATEJA

Sophie Mateja is a sophomore at Pacific Collegiate School. She is the Editor-in-Chief of the school literary magazine, The Finch. Her work has been praised by critics for its "evocative language and deep insight," taking first prize at numerous local competitions in the past two years. Recently, Mateja was declared a finalist in the Palm Beach Poetry Festival's ekphrastic poetry contest and published in Inlandia's spring issue. Mateja's work has been published frequently in the Half Moon Bay Review and other anthologies including AIPF's di-vêrsé-city. This year, she is competing in Poetry Out Loud and a variety of national essay and poetry contests. In addition to writing, Mateja enjoys playing orchestral classical music as the principal violist of the Santa Cruz County Youth Symphony and working as a staffer on political campaigns.

EMILY TRUMAN

Emily Truman is the 17-year-old founder of the Stay Gold Society, an organization dedicated to connecting youth and seniors. In 2019, she started the Holiday HappyMail program, and collected over 10,000 handmade holiday cards for seniors in nursing homes. Prior to the pandemic, she volunteered at a nursing home for over a year, spending hours each week visiting residents and running activities. She has a passion for writing and public speaking.

AMY WANG

Amy Wang is a junior from California. In her free time, you can find her crying over fanfiction or translating Chinese webnovels. Her work has been recognized by the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards and Columbia College Chicago, among others. She currently serves as a fiction editor for the Farside Review and reads poetry for Augment.

RICHARD ZHU

Richard Zhu is a rising senior at the Peddie School in Hightstown, NJ. His work has been recognized nationally in the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards and is published or forthcoming in Polyphony Lit, Eunoia Review, and Bitter Fruit Review. He has also been recognized by Temple University and Mercer University. He is an editor-in-chief of the school literary and art magazine Amphion. Richard loves hot oil noodles and Iceland's stunning waterfalls.

Poet Bios *Continued*

YONG-YU HUANG

Yong-Yu Huang is a Taiwanese student living in Malaysia. Her work is forthcoming in *Frontier Poetry*, *Passages North*, and *Counterclock Journal*, among others, and has been recognized by Princeton University, *The Kenyon Review*, and Columbia College Chicago. She is the winner of the 2021 Elinor Benedict Poetry Prize and the prose winner for the 2021 *Counterclock Awards*. In her free time, she enjoys listening to Studio Ghibli soundtracks and sitting by bonfires on the beach.

CAROLYN LAU

Carolyn Lau is a rising junior at Herricks High School in New York. She has won 1st prize in the Walt Whitman Birthplace Association's Student Poetry Contest, Carl Sandburg Student Poetry Contest, Ringling The Storytellers of Tomorrow Contest, and the Long Island Language Arts Council Gambone Writing Contest. In addition she has received Gold Key recognition from the National Scholastic Art and Writing Awards. She enjoys being the online content editor of her school's literary journal, *OPUS*.

HAGOP ALAJAJIAN

Hagop Alajajian, an Armenian American, has been very involved in the Armenian community. From a visit to Armenia he remembers details of camping in the mountains with thousands of Armenians gathered in one campsite. He is a leader in scouts and the Hamaskyne Armenian Dance Ensemble, the vice-president and secretary of the Detroit Armenian Youth Federation, and valedictorian of Manoogian School. He has also been part of his school community: as a class representative, secretary, and president of the student body. His love for poetry stems from a need to express himself, which he learned by taking AP Literature and AP Language. His poem is about the hashtag #StopAzeriAggression.

ALANA ESPOSITO

Alana Esposito is a writer and student from North Carolina. Her work has appeared in *HAD* and she has had the opportunity to attend the Iowa Young Writers' Studio and Kenyon Young Writers Online.

ELIZABETH DUKE-MOE

Elizabeth Duke-Moe is an upcoming senior and the student body President at Boise High School in Idaho. She is the leader of a volunteer group in Boise called Good Karma Club. This organization was started during the COVID-19 pandemic, and has created numerous opportunities for students to help their community. The most well-known consist of volunteering at a local Buddhist temple, helping at the Boise Farmer's Market, and numerous supplies drives. Liz hopes to major in biology and spends her time writing poetry, sculpting, and leading youth activist groups. She has been practicing Buddhism for two years now. She recently adopted a puppy and named her Kenai from Pixar's *Brother Bear*.

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