

Uncle Kevin – August 20th, 2006

As I lie here still,
beneath me a tarp meant to
catch whatever spills from me,
deep down my stomach churns.
Eager plastic crinkling – patience.
Father Fate's calloused hands
gently pin me.

Heaven at capacity?
I suppose Hell will work
just fine in a pinch. A trigger pull.

Kevin? Kevin! Oh God, Kevin.

Late cries over and over.
Mama, your too-late cries
nip into fresh nightfall
over and over and over.
Please dip your tongue into
quiet. I can't take this
racket anymore.

I'm sorry you're hurt,
but I'm not sorry.

Slip into a negligée of sleep.
Turn in the tides of your grief,
undertow ushering.
Very enticing, isn't it?
Xanthous seaweed caresses your legs:
yield, recognize, then return.
Zigzag in and out of living.

Jesse Thomas, Introduction to Poetry, Fall 20/E. Smith

The Path to School (학교 가는 길)

The autumn trees gesture with the wind: the path to school.
Painted with shades of yam and apple and everything in between,
they ascend and branch like the roots of perilla leaves within their soil.
These winding alleyways of patchy cement, these are my roots.
The smell of sweet potatoes, before they are roasted,
when they are thrust up with a swift hand
from a winter far too overgrown.
The earth may be bitter, but the fallen acorns
are sweet. Waiting on every path are amused grandmothers
with wrinkly smiles and small hands of abundance. They gently chide;
it is good manners to step quietly, but the scuffling of muddied tennis shoes
sends jagged gravel flying to fill the empty space of brass cicadas.
The spaces between are molten rock, a perilous crayola red,
and utility lines cast narrow stretches of land.
When the rain falls, the sharks prey,
but sometimes, it is only a path.
Sometimes the trees are not honey, but salt,
and the smell of the soil, without the sourness of soot,
is hard to remember; but the path nevertheless winds steadily,
beside oceans of rice fields and faded mustard bus signs
and the school yard. And like the roots of the perilla,
these roads merge to the path back
(See you tomorrow.)
home.

Kelly Sung, Introduction to Poetry, Fall 20/E. Smith

Maanbloem

When I pass by the table, I notice you.
You are supposed to be
The symbol of happiness:
the kind that we all want to have.

I reach out and slide my fingers
Across your petals—
Once soft and yellow, now brittle and greyed.
I can almost see death's
Breath on you.

A single salted tear
Down my cheek.
For you.

I cannot help but wonder
About your story.
Did you bloom as brightly as your brothers,
Reaching for the ever-loving embrace of the sun,
Then crumble under the pressure
Of being beautiful?
Or did you never even learn
What the sunlight
Felt like?

Did you try to fight it?
Or did you allow yourself to fade
Spinning in a swirl of greyscale and
Lost in your own loneliness?

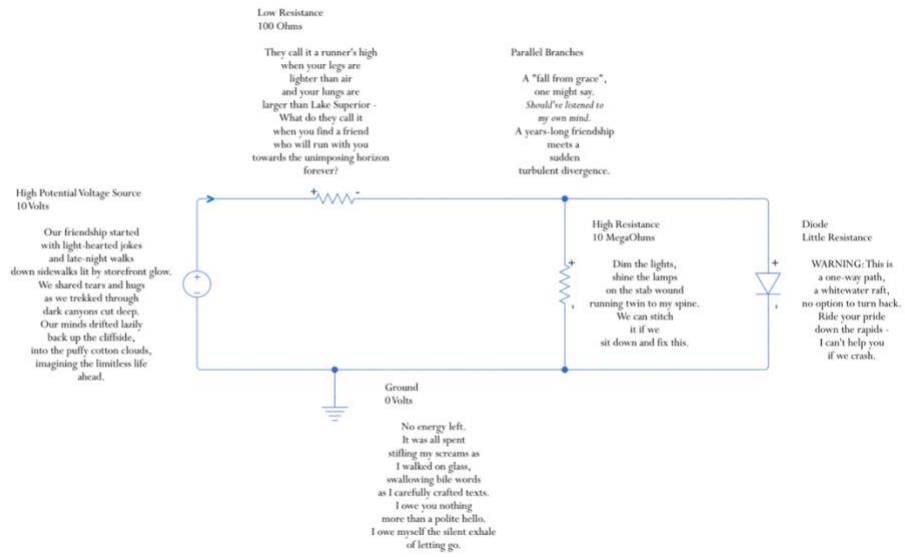
Oh child, you've become the opposite
Of who you are meant to be.
That's alright,
My moonflower,
I love you anyway.

I, too, know what it feels like
To not be the one they expect.
Forever a badge in the bouquet of
Disappointment.

I will never let you be alone.

Kayleigh Seskey, Intro to Poetry Fall 20/E.Smith

ODYSSEY
OF AN ELECTRON



Sabrina Helbig, Intro to Poetry Fall 20/E. Smith

The Gift

We waited – encased by whitewashed walls –
the sting of ammonia sharp in my nostrils.
Shoes squeaked on ivory tiled floor
and shiny smiles flashed off glossy magazine pages.

Her eyes so tired seeped with warmth, not tears -
so beautifully fragile, so tragically mortal.
I sat next to her on the bed as I watched
the dinosaurs on the television screen.

The neighbors brought casseroles to the door
and her hair fell out in clumps,
yet to my puerile brain
these events had no connection.

As Velcro shoes turned to bunny-looped laces,
And addition turned to algebra,
She wiped away every tear
With the strength in her soft touch.

“I prayed to God he wouldn’t take me from my girls,”
she says to me as she turns the steering wheel.
And her words in turn embrace me
as I whisper my own prayer.

Emma Vananzi, Intro to Poetry Fall 20/Ellen Smith

hades

spring

her gravity is immeasurable
from the moment i see her it is like
the

curvature

of

these

fields,

endless,

undying,

is

flattened against her body
as something burns hot and bright beneath

my face
the earth

hellfire or

something worse
that has a name i
dare not repeat

summer

she claims to understand the ways in which
i weave my way around
sorrow
and press myself against it, flat,
bearing the load of
tears that will never cease shedding
as if it is the sky i am holding back

yet when we find ourselves hidden
among the rows of lilies and the hanging ivy,

lost
in
and
woven
into
that
drapery
of
division

not a blossom has been trampled
and I know that i
can give her the first taste of a fruit
that she hasn't sown herself

autumn

our wedding is hasty, gray,
as if we mean to cover the tracks
of the seeds that lay inside.
her mother cries, somewhere, and the
heavens

open
and they are
purifying
baptizing
yet a shiver wracks her body
and when i open my arms to her
we

are
as
those
tears
and the weathered earth
that they impress upon

winter

she does her best to smile
through the days and at times
i even believe her
and she tells me that

it's complicated.
it's
love,
she says,
but she can feel it
the quiet dance
as the world above wilts

and though i have witnessed my fair share
of gardens turned to graves
it is the first time that i
am the one behind the spade

spring

i am no match
for the way the sun has
of pressing its lips to her cheek.
i am painfully certain of this
as

she
presses
hers

to
mine
and i wonder, during her ascent,
as i tend to do as of late,
how we so often

find
ourselves
against

each
other,
and if
we are

pushing,
when we
are,

or
simply
leaning

The Calm Before The Storm

A hush amongst the willows and the reeds--
The night buries itself within their shade
And glowing stars shrouded by cloudy haze
In tandem bring the nightfall to its knees
With daybreak, on the verge of its release,
About to follow never-ceasing fate
While rustled brush stands poised to meet its aid--
In little ways, their scattered whispers cease.

Then crack!

A light shot down as if by God.

A luminated stroke across the sky
As angry claws leave scratches in the air.
And bleed it does, the cuts open to floods
As rivers break their way through earth awry
And thunder drowns out deafened hope and prayer.

Rebecca Reese, Intro to Poetry, Fall 20/E. Smith

Where We Could Have Met

When we first met, really met,
each of us a person—although
you were mostly gone by then,
weren't you?—Mom sent us on a walk.
The back fields were a muggy gray
that sank our boots. I showed you
the rows of the matted and frail
leftovers, the sinkholes that had filled.
Only I knew their true depths,
having seen them empty of rain.
You walked behind me,
I don't know what you saw.

Mom said you weren't the same,
but I wouldn't have known.
You didn't try, I didn't try,
living together as strangers.
We worked in the garden.
With my sister I dug out a pond,
dumped the earth over the hill.
You and Mom made a garden
where there had never been one before.

We had many tools in our shed,
but never a scythe.
The scythe you brought all on your own,
the one Mom had tried
to hide and drown.
Did you scour for it, find
its murky shadow and dive for it,
or did it come for you
while lying in bed one night?

Lia Herman, Intro to Poetry, Fall 2020/E. Smith

“Lost”

Her heartbeat is a metaphor, a late

Storm wave, its own display case,

Like a stained-glass window.

She does not know

Her beauty,

The flicker of

A candle blown,

Like a planet’s only sun,

Euphoria trapped in a vial —

Longing to belong to

Somewhere or someone.

Hailey Nalitt, Intro to Poetry Fall 20/E. Smith

Methylamphetamine

Reborn and crystallized, she inhales
To preserve her unsightly corpse from rotting.
Geometric shards protrude from her cheek like cerulean blades.
Her muscles form stark, frigid prisms fragmented at her feet.
A smooth film rushes to glaze her translucent frame:
hypnotized, she is queen of her glass palace.
When morning frost strikes unpleasant to
the trembling servant at her feet,
he breathes warmth into her hand,
and she drips into his urges.
If she is as cold as ice,
his arms are frozen shut.

Lovely and raw, with veins a lattice of blue.
If she is as cold as ice then she's as beautiful, too.

Olivia Hanley, Intro to Poetry Fall 20/E. Smith

1. Teeth – Sonnet

*Honey, rosy, darling, maple syrup,
you are sweet like dew-drip from the sawdust.
Grasping baskets throughout hills of Europe,
we guzzled grape with our cherry tart crust.*

*Fairy gardens functioning as our faith,
we traveled miles of mountains in graze.
Whistle chimes though tend to ring up real wraith,
dazing slowly, I'm concealed by your haze.*

*Cylinder whisker baskets on the stove
arose to my senses, I held dead flowers.
Picking one by one I began to cove,
pouring down rain, crowded hours of showers.*

*Goodbye to nothing, plucking me from beneath.
Through chattering talk I can smell a liar, teeth.*

Brady Swanson, Intro to Poetry Fall 20/E. Smith

