



OPENING SILENT WINGS

PRESENTED BY
PEARL POETRY COLLECTIVE

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Preface

At the age of nine, I discovered poetry. I keenly remember the teacher asking us to write a poem and my first poem was simply entitled “Fear” where I wrote about what fear meant to my young heart. We had left East Africa due to political unrest and come to Canada with many promising dreams and hopes. In the writing of these lines—as I reflect on that now— I negotiated my parents’ fears and what this process of assimilation to a new unknown world must have felt like. When I shared this poem with my mother that very same day, this poem created a bridge of understanding between us and I still recall that sweet soft memory. Moreover, I remember how I felt writing that poem and the very process of creating the words. This was a place where I felt guided on the wings of poetic desire by a spirit that responded eagerly to my calling and gave me the path to write myself into some light of knowing. This was also the space where each poetic turn became a proclamation of a young life in its becoming. Poetic creation became a spiritual expression arisen out of a contemplative process. And there was healing here, too.

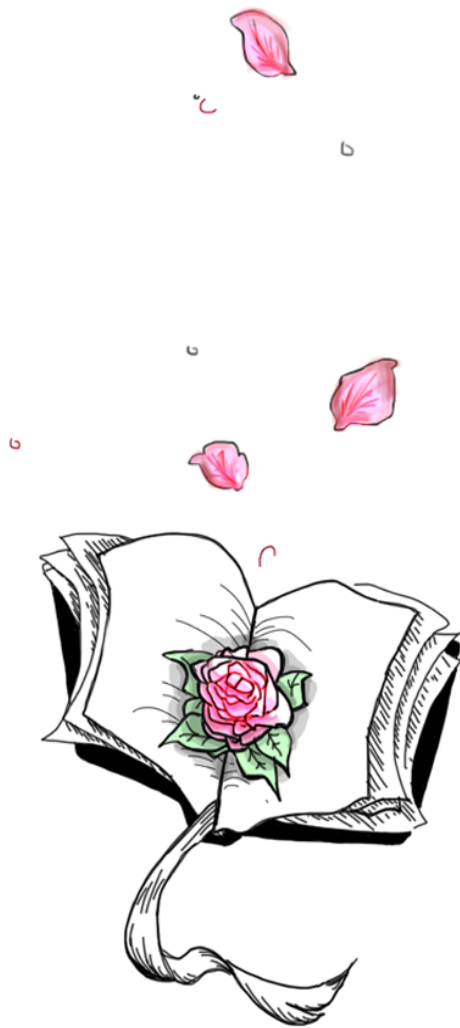
As experiences shape us, particularly educational events such as this one, I believe in the pedagogical power of poetry. As a teacher, poetry features prominently in my curriculum. We read, analyze, scrutinize, explicate, unpack and write about poetry. And when inspiration sparks, we *write* poetry. This collection is born from such encounters where students are drawn and compelled to words, when poetry leads to an opening, an understanding, towards knowing ourselves and also, Other.

Here, in this collection, there is both dark and light. Here, there is both despair and hope. These poems speak to the spectrum of human emotions and desires. I offer two of my own poems to commence this collection. “Night Flight,” feels the intimate mystery between the earth and the sky that leads me to a striking poetic vision. And in “Sandals in the Snow,” I reflect on a memory that my mother shared with me about the first snowfall we witnessed together. As a poet, poetry has given me affirmation and purpose. I believe this is its greatest power.

And I hope this collection takes you to places and spaces.

On the wings of words...

Dr. Anar Rajabali
Pearl Learning



*When I stop speaking, this poem will close
and open its silent wings.*

-Rumi

Night Flight

by Anar Rajabali

The plane pushes
Into the nebulous night
Soaring over the placid Pacific
Ocean
Moving with conviction
To the promise of the known
And the unknown
Between earth and sky
Between dark and light
The humming of the engine
I feel in the center of my chest
This is the closest to heaven I have felt
In a long while
Sublime
And
I begin to write poetry
As the steady breathing of others
Sleeping surround
My own sense of being
In this space where dreams inhabit
The milky white residue
Of promise
And
I imagine my words
One
by
One
by
One
Dropping into the ocean
Below
Foaming into the frothy crest of the waves
Lingering there for a moment before
Riding the rhythm of the tide
Onto the shores
Of my own mind—

One more small pearl of knowing
Into this great illimitable
Abyss

Sandals in the Snow

by Anar Rajabali

My mother tells me of
A memory
That I cannot remember
But is bone deep in me—
Like the cold of the snow
On that wintery day in Nanaimo
As she woke to witness
Her first fall of white covering
Our housing complex
Alone with me
Far from the African tropical rhythms
That she innately knew
Now muted by the silence of the snow felted
Morning
A hushing—
That nature will bring

I was only two
And I am much older now then
She was that day in Nanaimo
I imagine
Her gingerly opening the curtain
As I lay sleeping
To let the morning light in
To only see the white
Opening eyes peering into the sky
Looking up and up
Struck
With wonder
Awaiting

She wears sandals
And me too
Not knowing the cold
That the snow will bring
And we venture outside
A mother and a child
In the warmth of a shared moment
That I recreate now
A felt sense of a memory in those flakes of snow—

Of a little red jacket
In the white pristine
A pink baby tongue tasting
Crystals
A snow angel

And then
Me
Spinning
Arms outstretched
Eyes closed
Head uplifted
Feeling the
Melting

And the mother
Who looks on
And on
Not feeling the coldness
In a forgiving embrace
With the grace
Nature will bring—
A calming
In the lightness
Of the child
Now
That she will teach
To feel the
Mystery
Of
IT
All.

I Grew Up

by Irving Ding

I grew up thinking childhood
Starts from this poem
Lying under a tree
Watching the wind's rhythms
Eating berries

I grew up thinking this poem
Is the first step
As I grew, I was thinking
The trees were watching my step
Friends, forest and people were where
I think and live
I grew up
Learning haikus

I see my dad
A person with good wisdom
My brother sees it, too
I grew up sitting here
Watching my teacher
Read this

A Drop of Light

by Olivia Lau

A drop of light
A word of message
Has landed as a stroke of kiss—
To yield to heart
but of unending speech
Crave and deliver this everlasting piece
Your secluded feelings—leave them be
Distant, far
open up to me
And so, upon your angelic lips
A drop of light returns to thee.

I Am

by Hannah Zhang

I am a birthday gift—a red dress
in the cupboard forever
Every birthday, I remember it,
Miss my childhood.
I am the first friend that I have.
My name is Helen
Who talks to me on the telephone on a very chilly night.
I am the pet that my father gave to me—
The bird with yellow feathers and, now, dead in the garden.

I am my first school bag.
There is a cartoon on it, used every day.
Now, it's not in fashion.

I am the plane that took me to Canada
Big and unforgettable—
There is a blue sign on it
Like the color of the sky.
I am a flower on the way to the new school
Yellowish flower, beautiful and animated

Pride

by Jack Shi

Against the sea
of solemn
faces

the soul of
an entire
nation

Hurled the red
ribbon streaming
into the sky

I Was so Sad

by Ashley Zheng

I was so sad
Sitting here on the river bank
And wanted to jump
Into the river

Instead I threw
A stone into it
The ripples appeared
And disappeared

Only the tranquility
Remained
And I stood up
Then left.

Kiss

by Christina Sun

The oily face
full of pimples
and wrinkles

slowly approaching
with a huge red
mouth that can't close

forcefully leaves
a gross mark
on my beloved tender cheek

The Sea

by Jacob Ma

Inspired by Emily Dickinson

I lounge on a sand dune—under a tree—
In the evening sunset—watching the sea—
Hidden in shadows—where no one could see—
My soul drifted about—then merged with the sea—

I felt its power—so gentle and strong—
Its ancient waves endured—millenniums long—
The boundless might—mixed with endless calm—
Overwhelmed me—and bade me dream on—

Soothing peace—flowed through my veins—
Tender flow—that rid all my pains—
The loving embrace—of mighty arms—
Enticed my soul—with magic charms

Then suddenly—the dream fell apart—
Back on the beach—I woke with a start—
Reality sank in—I calmed down my heart—
I realized in the moonlight—I must depart—

On the road home—I began to see—
The enchanting connection—I felt in the sea—
The infinite beauty—it filled within me—
Had set my soul free—to be like the sea—

Summer Day

by Jenny Zhang

A summer day
in the gentle grass
The feeling of the sky
makes my blood
shiny

Majestic Moonlight

by Michelle Lau

Come and sway with me under this majestic moonlight
Subtle, yet endearing
The calling flute whispers as the sweet rose petals flutter
And the nightingales sing their melodic mystic song
And the fairies of the netherworld will come to join our sleepless walk
And bid us farewell on our twisted fated journey
But then the dark shadows covered our long-withstanding path
And shattered what is left of our tranquility
That our eternal love embraces the shards as a lark closes its wings
Revealing the lone heart that was vanquished from the start

Where am I?

by James Wu

Inspired by Rumi

I am not in the
Ground nor above,
Do not reside in
Heaven or Hell or any
Other world.
My town, *mayorless*
My gown, *groomless*
Neither wanting nor needing
I belong *here*
Have gone *there* and
Further and
That place
Rose and spoke,
Up, down, left, right
Only being—
Human being

Red Lamps

by Michelle Liu

I have a dream
when I am young,
of red lamps and red envelopes
And the delicious smell of chicken soup
like the sun in the winter, gold color
spices floating in the soup like decoration.
Hours of cooking
Taste of salt and sweet
Hot steam is floating in the air.
Everyone, greeting each other
"Boom"
I see flower blossoms in the sky.
"Happy New Year."

Dear God

By Kelly Qian

A found poem based on Alice Walker's A Color Purple

Dear God
Somebody crying,
Like his heart's gonna break
Oh Lord, what more you want?

I'm not pretty or smart,
But I ain't dumb.

Orchestra is coming to town,
Piano, Elbow crooked, hand on her hip.
The Queen honeybee is back.

A woman needs a little fun,
Dance, laugh, *Drag out* across the floor

I Am

by Winnie Chen

I am the ocean on a dark stormy day
filled with violent waves
crashing—in and out—
on the sandy beach

I am sushi that has just been made
delicate and complicated
wrapped up in layers
of dreams and goals waiting
to be eaten

I am butterflies in my stomach
during a speech competition
flying around in empty space
scared of the unknown

I am the forest
secretly, curiously
listening to anyone
who passes by

I am a seven-year old scar
that tells the story of my immaturity
of the time I fell
and crashed
because of the garbage that tripped me
in the streets of China
Not bothering to listen to anyone
but myself

Who am I?
Am I the ocean, sushi, butterflies, forest and a scar?
No, I am much more than that—
I am a mystery
Which lays hidden inside my flesh
A mystery is who I am

Ars Poetica

by Henry Shi

A poem should be intangible
Yet palpable like the wind
Mysterious yet bold
A taut string from the reader
To something unseen
And apparently unknown

A perilous journey
For the mind
And a suspenseful journey
For the body
An adventure with an
Inarticulate ending

Poetry is
Love of text
A confusing
Epiphany
And a language of the Spirit—
Spaces like
The gaps between
Great oak boughs

Breath, air

Clarity?

Not made to be fully
Understood like a
Moral in fairytales

A poem cannot
Be faithless as
An atheist
Or as irrelevant as
Wealth
To happiness

Poetry isn't work.
It's *Light*.

A Poem Should Be

by Yubo Jin

A poem should be daring and powerful
Like a faithful leap—
Resilient
As new machines to the senses
Powerful as the alpha male gorilla
As keyboard keys where the fingers have touched

A poem should be mysterious
Like a murder mystery
A poem should be endless in meaning
As the flower blooms

Harvested, as the season comes
Crop by crop
the rough-shaped field,
Dreaded, as the farmer wields the emotionless knife,
Seeds of seeds in the wind

A poem should be deep
Like a hole
in the sky

A poem should be revealed as:
Pain
For all the history of grief
An empty field and a dew drop
Swaying branches and the birds soaring above

A poem should not end—
But start up
again.

You Fit Into Me

by Irving Ding

Inspired by Margaret Atwood

You fit into me
like paper and fire
White paper
Red fire
Blue water

You fit into me
like a wrecking ball and a house
Pretty house
Black wrecking ball
I see *red*

Art of Mystery

by Iris Liu

Poems appearing—especially to one's eye
From the abstract clouds drifting
In a sea of sky-blue wonder,
To the scattered, perplexing stars
In constellations not yet fathomed.

The limitless possibility of expression
A white canvas for colour and potential

Empty spaces

Blank verses

A paintbrush of rhythm
Connecting ideas and emotions and spirits into one.

Words upon words upon words
Fitting the pieces of literary puzzles
Viewed in lights and shadows at *angles*
Seen only through your eyes.

Cycle of our World

by Jenny Zhang

Poetry is like nature,
When leaves turn to red then to white,
Sun turns to snow and rain,
And trees can turn to cherry blossoms.

Poetry can be like memories,
like the leaves on the trees.
Memories can hang on the tree like leaves, pretending to stay still on the wind.

Poetry can be like rain.
We open our umbrellas like a book,
And the rain falls down like words sticking onto the poem.

Poetry can be like Earth.
The words represent our country,
lakes and lands are titles and ink from words and books.

But they do not describe everything about poetry,
Poetry is like the trees, showing us branches of confidence
Also to write what is in us, and what we believe in poetry.

Aphrodite

by Amelia Tu

From the deepest sea
Rose a fair Aphrodite
Such shallow beauty

Why we Tell Stories

by William Xie

Because we used to think
in many different ways
and cry about how our friends never listened
We believed.
And we dreamed
filling our minds with wonder
and haunting our dreams
if we fear to speak

Because we grow old
because we forget.
We risk our wisdom
on the youth
teaching them the ancient art of imagination

As our tales and stories
pass through generations
of son and grandsons
they evolve
into ancient myths
where only we could understand

Because the tales we heard as children encouraged us,
enchanted us
to continue on
in our own stories
to hold on until The End.

Sole Man

by Li

Sole man forgot his lonesomeness
The moment he lowered his head
So does his shadow.

Frog Congee

by Michelle Lau

Hot rain drops raining from the murky, gray clouds
Mud puddles forming
Dusty cars honking
People walking briskly in the noisy traffic
Dogs barking as a newborn cries
Aroma of food fills the air,
A waiter calls for more beef-noodles
Steam pours out of the rain-streaked windows
Like an atomic bomb exploding rapidly
An old couple grimaces and gawks at us
Green peppers pile on the top of the porridge
Strange looking meat with protruding toes in the center
Stares gloomily back at my cold, dark eyes
Its unique taste quenched the hunger that was left of me
The waiter smiled, and pointed at the picture
My heartbeat faster than ever, the blood draining off my face
The sick feeling that builds up sky-rocketed
Green, white, stinky meat shot out like a gun from my acid mouth
The old couple let out a pig-like screech
Relief came with soft sighs that rolled off my body
The chef comes by, his face ready to cook an egg
A rude gesture with those furious hands
Outside, the workers continue to hammer
Leaving—ill as a diseased pathogen
The puffy white clouds clear up the sky
Happy like a lucky duckling chatting away
Released from the prison of Frog Congee.

Red Lantern

by Sally Chen

A red lantern,
Glowing in the dark
Swivels in the sea wind

The Ocean

by James Wu

The waves tumble and crash
Piling atop of one another, never ending
Running into rocks;
Breaking apart, falling back
A silver flash—
Struggles atop the shore
Twisting, writhing, suffocating...
All is calm.
The children play on the beach, laughing, shouting—
All is born again.

Fading Away

by Ashley Zhang

In a sober chamber
beyond blackness is the beauty
Two ballet dancers with scarlet garments
dancing in despairing posture
recklessly circling with leisure
in madman fashion
Gleamingly creating
Like snow in crystallization
A deep loud humming
whispers in the air murmuring
dancing and circling—
until the last of barbaric sounds
lost in lighter laughter
like an echo of steps
is Fading away

Blank Paper

by Olivia Lau

My eyes glued upon
The blank paper
Caressed by a pin
Beckoning as a snake—
Hissing inaudibly

I recoil—fearfully—
Hesitant of
The danger that lies
Within—
What it speaks

And, this fear
That consumes me
Disrupts—my
Thoughts
Motivation
Perseverance
To answer such
A voice

Yet, this fear, this emotion
That threatens my
Entire being
Answers the hidden voice
Unexpectedly

Drawing out—
My inner voice
Attached beneath
My fear

A Faint Chill

by Clair Sun

A found poem based on Katherine Mansfield's Miss Brill

A faint chill
soundlessly singing
A stupid old thing
sitting there listening
The young and energetic say:
Keep her silly old mug at home
in the dark little rooms, the cupboards

“Brilliantly fine.”
Ms. Brill smiled
glad,
delighted,
The blue sky powdered with gold.
How she enjoyed it!
How she loved sitting here, watching it all!
No doubt!
No wonder!
“I have been an actress since a long time ago.”

Yet, there was just a *faint chill*
hurried, unclasped
Without looking, something is crying.

Coming for You

by Sam Yan

A found poem based on Louise Eldrich's Windigo

Coming for you,
I rolled on snow,
I broke your life apart,
I carried my wood for a fire
the grass shivered from under the snow
as I walked past you.

I stole you away,
I spilled on the beating ground,
I was scolded.

Coming from the North
I dug out your soul
then carried
You home.

Under the Grey Sky

by Vivian Hao

A found poem based on Kate Chopin's Story of an Hour

Under the grey sky,
a soul died,
gently,
hints were veiled.
Unsolved mystery,
Treated as an accident.
Composedly,
the wife went home.
Sank into the chair,
exhaustion concealed.
Storm of joy,
creeps out...
With her tender hands,
Fear and grief,
she beats them back.
Love?
Love?

What a trivial matter.
No bitter moments, no fear haunted
the coming years, they belong to her.

Triumph running riot,
like a goddess of Victory.

I Wake Up

by Jim Li

I wake up in the middle of the night
And stare into the vast darkness
at the sky decorated by ablaze fireflies
They are dancing a waltz distance away
Suddenly, they speed up their tempo
The fancy figures make me dazed
As if teasing my inability
I blinked my eyes and it all went away
The light has gone; taken over by decay
Then a lighting bug flew over my head
He lit up a tiny window
Then,
In front of my vivid eyes
It is beaten, decapitated, and eaten
The fleeting light has vanished

A Spell

by Michelle Lau

A found poem based on James Joyce's Eveline

The spell on her life mused and clanged
she felt an impulse of nausea and blew a passive whistle.
In the mist he called to her heart,
But the prayer was drawing her into a maze amid the seas
as she drowned in her mournful duty.
His footsteps deepened and the yellowing cretonne was closing in on her
She caught a glimpse of his pale lips
moving in terror when the little children ran out the dusty field
Fools! she cried in frenzy as her tears tumbled down her cheeks,
yet as she listened to the fervent calls she felt a strange dead silence
and closed her heart.

Use of Force

by Jessica Chen

A response poem to William Carlos Williams' The Use of Force

I smiled
A metal gate
I coaxed
A metal gate
I approached
A creak
Unbroken, I gathered my soldiers—
One too weak, one a traitor
We charged under the heat
Of the sun
Metal gate, golden gate, wooden gate
In splinters and aflame.

Silence

by Jay Luo

A found poem based on Tadeusz Borowski's Silence

Odour of food,
liquified fleas.
Americans are unhappy,
So are we
The lot at the back, or
One of the pits
Both work fine, we whispered
Do not commit lawless deeds, he said
Yes, we all agree
Hate and revenge are only understatements
Retribution, yes!
Justice, hurrah!
We must not dirty our hands with crime and sins
And so, after dusk, and all is quiet
We snuck back
To our lovely homes, feeling delighted
Found the sirloin, from the top of the bunks
Smothered, gagged, dragged, the entire slab
The entire block, as if they've never been happier

Leapt at the meat, eyes filled with elation
And in absolute silence,
They, and their silent and greedy forks and knives
Sliced, buried and trampled it to death.

Haunted

by Mia Zhang

It is a cold gloomy Halloween night
A lonely house in the dark
Jumps into our sight
Opening the rusted iron gate
Then the ancient wooden door
It is magnificent
Illuminated by the dim light
As dimly as a sole star in the dusty night
The hallway is a black hole
Leading to the endless darkness

Wait.

We hear something
A single tone with a peculiar note
Resounded through the oppressive air
Coming from the second floor
The sound as a mermaid's singing
Allures us to the stairway
The ancient stairs squeak furiously as we step
Clear, loud, deep.

Singing one last time
An echo of the dulcet note
It is the sharp cry
It is the final scream
Miserable, sad, but *peculiar*

Ode to Thanksgiving

by Miller Liu

An oven,
A table,
Of ingredients,
A raw turkey
Ready to
Be stuffed.
It's Sunday
One person
Adventurer of
The unknown path
Is stuffing things
Into the turkey
Sour bread,
Vegetables,
Butter,
And spices.
Thanksgiving is coming
Knives everywhere
They made
One feel
Like the
Grimm reaper.
Time is
Running out
And people
Will come soon.
The turkey
Is in
The oven.
The adventurer
Takes a
Quick nap
Hoping that the
Turkey would
Turn out nicely.
The time came
The turkey is
Golden brown
The smell
Of gravy and
Turkey hung

In the air
Like a thin
Layer of mist
Enveloping everyone who
Comes into
The house
The cook asked,
How is it?
With a feeling
Of depression if
It turned
Out badly.
It is wonderful
Came the reply.
The cook let
Out a sigh
And sat down
To join
The feast.

The Black Cat

by Sally Chen

Inspired by Edgar Allan Poe

The Black Cat
From across the street
Perched between the dark green bushes
And stared
I *fell* into its eye
Its single yellow eye
An ocean of no emotion
And yet so much in there, too
Complete calmness
That coated all emotions
It was an empty well
In which dark secrets were soaked
And buried

It stared at me
For at least a minute or so
With its single yellow eye
It pondered upon my facial expressions
Analyzed my moves
It broke me into a thousand million pieces
And meticulously studied each of them
It stared into me
Right through the muscles and bones
Into the heart and the soul
My sympathy and my fear
Who I am and what I do
Nothing could be hidden
The Black Cat was the inspector
And I was the inspected

It stared through me
As if I were a thin layer of transparent air
It was not shy
Nor was it timid
Yet there existed the unknown
In its eye
The answer to all questions
The reason for all phenomena
The beginning and the end
The rise and the fall

I *fell* into its eye
A miraculous world
Inside a yellow eye

Golden Moth

by Vivian Hao

Inspired by Annie Dillard's Transfiguration

Biggish Head
Golden Wings
Caught by Fire
Struggle for freedom

Curled Legs
Flapped Wings
Dropped Head

Splattering Sounds
Legs Ignited
Rising Smoke
Wings Blackened

Head Jerked
Antennae Burned
Darkness Gone
Light Appears

Body Glowing
Keeps me Amazed
Keeps Burning
Dancing
Ceaselessly

Hamster Wheel

by Allan

I would often stop by the pet shop
On my way to work
And today it seems they have a new addition—
On the other side of the window pane
A hamster
Oblivious of its surroundings,
Ignored by others
Running at its own pace on a hamster wheel
Sometimes speeding up until
The axis shakes the wheel violently—
Then it would stop for a water break,
Only to repeat the process
over
and over
Like a movie stuck on a loop

Past the display
The store clerk would help customers
Day after day,
Behind the back
Walks a row of white-collar workers (just like me)
On their routine to and from work

I turn my head back to the insignificant little creature
Its still—undisturbed, unaffected
Still, contently running on a hamster wheel
In a shop in this nameless city

Ode to my Closet

by Jack Shi

Inspired by Gary Soto's Ode to the Yard Sale

The slow creaking
And folding,
Of two wooden
Doors, reveal
An under growth
Of cotton,
Linen, wool,
Denim, and cloth,
A jacket there,
A pair of
Shorts here,
And a jumble
Of colours everywhere.
White, yellow,
Red, blue,
Black, green,
And grey,
As colourful
As a candy store,
But within
The mess,
Muddle, and mix
Of colours,
And shapes,
There exists an
Order, a pattern,
Defined by
The folds and
Stacks, the
Rows and columns
That police the
Pieces of clothing
Into orderly,
Manageable, and discernable,
Groups and sections,
A log
Of days,
And events,
Gone by,
The rugby jerseys,

Sheltering memories
Of games
Both lost
And won,
The old grey
Hoodie, still cold
With the mist
From the dark
Mornings
Before swim
Practice.
The school blazer
Which I
Have worn
Every Monday since
Grade 7,
The tie,
The belt,
Uniformity
Saved me from
The wrath of
My teachers,
The old pair
Of track pants
With numerous
Holes in them
From all the
Sliding I
Used to do
On the gym floor
Back in
Elementary school,
The ski
Jacket, and pants
Once coated
With gentle
Snowflakes,
The red baseball
Cap speckled with
The paint from
The walls of
A faraway school,
Swimming
Shorts dipped in
Water from
The four seas,

When I look
Into my closet,
At these
Fragments of
Memories
I am reminded
Time and time
Again that
I have never
Needed any souvenirs,
For this clothing—
Guardians of
Time and
Experiences,
Of the places
That I've been
To, and
The things
That I've done, For
These clothes
Make up my
Life story,
They are a
Part of my
Past and present
Identity,
And that
Is why I choose
To never throw
Them away.

Ode to the Garage of Memories

by Bill Lin

A shovel,
A stack of
Cardboard boxes,
A can of
Used Paint
Covered with dirt.
It is a stormy Sunday,
Shadows of
Rain dancing across
The rooftops.
I stand by
The dusty door
And peek into
The dark garage.
A garden fork,
A pile of
Old newspapers,
A broken printer,
A scratched pair of skis—
The bruises,
The wall of snow,
Shivering in the cold.
With a flick,
An orange light
Illuminates the garage.
A box of
Empty bottles,
A recycling bin,
A mini
Hockey stick,
A beautiful tennis racket—
The elegant swing,
And the rhythmic
Beats of the tennis ball.
Strolling across
The room,
A Range Rover,
A paint brush,
A tool box,
A daring Skateboard—
The skeleton design,

The thrill of *wind*
pushing against
My face.
On the other side,
A worn-out chair,
A little grey spider
Hanging on the wall,
A BBQ grill,
An old and rusty
Black and White bike—
The groans of
the petal,
The moans of
the brakes.
Suddenly,
Footsteps cease,
Pairs of
Baseball gloves on
An old
Bookshelf.
And there it is,
A plastic box
Filled with toys
On the left,
A dozen soldiers
I used to adore,
Each with
An unique expression,
Angry, or determined, or
Thoughtful, or frightened,
On the right,
A shiny and
Smooth YoYo,
A flashback:
Big kids showing off
Their mesmerizing YoYo tricks
"Sleeping Beauty,"
"Power Spin-wheel,"
"Roller coaster" and
So many more...
Now I pick up the box
That carries my memories
and my childhood,
Take one last glance
At the garage,
and close the door.

My Poetica

by Michelle Liu

A poem is like our instinct of loving things,
It is wordless,
It is a feeling, an emotional thought.

Twink

As birds singing to their soul mate
Silent,
as the perfect reflection of the moon
Lying,
on the surface of the lake—
Sinking.

A poem is like an art piece,
Expressing an artist's purest feeling
A poem is like a dandelion seed,
Free and light,
dancing in the field gentle wind

You know it's a poem because it lights up a flame in your mind
You know it's a poem because it sounds like a stream flowing through your heart
You know it's a poem when you can feel the ice and goose bumps cover your arms.

You know it is a poem because you can sense the smell of flowers in winter,
and feel the edge of wind in summer.
A poem should be equal to—
Infinity

An open inkwell and yellowing paper
The Lily on the Marble stone
Memory
Like the fragile petal blooming in the wind
A poem should not value anything
But just exist.

It Always Goes

by Henry Shi

Inspired by Robert Frost's poem Nothing Gold Can Stay

There are colourful, delicate flowers
That emanate the most gorgeous smells.

There are cute and cuddly animals,
That have soft hair and patterns on their body.

There tall, proud mountains,
That are covered with swaths of green forest.

There are different coloured gems,
That glisten and shine.

There are the unforgettable seasons,
Steaming summers, freezing winters, green-filled springs and autumns of
which promise falling leaves.

There are beautiful blue skies,
That contain the ever-moving white puffy things we call the clouds.
Mystical mist, that fills you with an eager sense of adventure.

You probably like it all,
And so do I.

But...

The flowers wither and die too soon,
The animals don't live very long.

The mountains are not always in sight,
The forests are easily burned by wild fire.

The gems are targets of robbers,
And aren't easy to dig up.

The next season takes a long time to come,
The skies are denied from you when you're inside.

The mist is not always there,
And that gives you an unbearable longing for it.

Everything will go in the end, yes
It always goes.

It Shines

by Andy Zhong

It shines a light bulb on Poe's dull dark day
Like a blind person's guide dog giving insight to a colourful world

It is a designer's drawing
It is an aerospace engineer's rocket
A lawyer's debate
A doctor's medicine

It resembles an iceberg
Simple on the surface, with hidden and surprising meanings
It has little to tell, a lot to show, and much more to express

It is simply a flying soccer ball—
Soaring through the air, unstoppable, taking imagination with it

Fighting for civil rights, until the sun goes down, and winter approaches
It reminds us that only light can drive out darkness, darkness can't
Moaning the tragedy of a love one
Recalling that the soul will always be with you

Celebrating the togetherness of a once shattered family
As tears form rivers and love warms hearts
Understanding the beauty of the supernatural universe
From the mystery of black holes, to the seven wonders of the earth

*Poems show, express, understand and share
our own values
what brings importance,
the nature of life
and who one is.*

The River Merchant's Windigo

by William Xie

A found poem based on Ezra Pound's A River Merchants Wife and Louise Eldrich's Windigo

You knew I was coming for you, little one.
I played about the front gate,
You came on bamboo stilts, playing horse.
In the hackles of a dry brush a thin laughter started up.
Two small people, without dislike or suspicion.

At fourteen,
I never laughed.
You saw me drag toward you,
You dug your hands into my pale, melting fur.
I stopped scowling—forever.
I stole you off,

We went on living in the village of Chokan.
The leaves fall early this autumn, in wind.
Bushes we passed.
You have been gone five months.
Forever.
At last morning broke the cold earth,
Over the grass in the West garden.
I would darken and spill,
Grow older.

If you are coming down through the narrows of the river Kiang,
The river shaking in the sun,
Let me know beforehand,
And touch me with your warm hands
Shovelled full of the ice and snow,
Lowering my head—I speak in the cold trees.
You hurt me.

Butterfly in Brightness

by Winnie Guo

A poem should be a puzzle
As a deep trough of
Lost self
Still eager of the solution
As water spilling on an ink-dot
Blurring the boundaries where imagination thrives

A poem should be a fog
As motion of mist
Orderly tangled in
Chaos of noir et blanc
A poem should be a butterfly in brightness
Glaring
In and out of sight
In the beauty of *coincidental* existence
Misinterpreted

A poem should be equal to:
Uncertainty
For Loneliness
A girl on a swing and Sakura in winter
For beauty
A cloud on a rooftop and an empty lighted road

A poem should not speak
But lead

The Dead

by Olivia Lau

Inspired by Emily Dickinson's I Started Early Took my Dog and Visited the Sea

I see a dead whale drifting in the sea
Its hollow side revealing bones
Clenching and cracking—
painfully
And seagulls—on the harbour
Came down to the scene
Ignoring me and eating
Upon the dead, stilled sea
But I stood there—

Till nothing was left of the whale
Hearing a child shriek
And I see people come
And I see the open bones of the whale
And I pass the bones
In the cold murmuring breeze—whispering—
Caressing the cold harbour
Lingering on me
I turn and see
The evil eyes of seagulls—
Making unbearable noises—
The cruel, impassive look
Implanting an image in me
People came and saw—
Exchanging pitiful glances—
But no one bothered to see what I see.

The Ballad Of Harry Jones

By Derek Liu

Inspired by Gwendolyn Brooks' The Ballad of Rudolph Reed

It was Harry without the cigarette box-
And Harry was only a child.
And Harry was kicked out from an English school-
And Harry thought life was sad.

The office bars were the metal bars-
Where Harry Jones sat by himself.
When he sat by his roommate when they talked-
Was only his eyes were blue.

It was Harry without the cigarette box-
Waiting for time to pass.
Half hour after the closing bell-
He would be surely going out.

Oh, blue is the waiting for death he cried-
And it cannot be too long.
Oh pity Harry by himself-
Carrying the tune of a song.

Out came the sad old Harry Jones-
It was woe for our Harry now.
He wore a shirt with rips in his pants-
With water dripping down.

It was Harry alone without the cigarette box-
Yet drunk companions had he.
Harry on Harry with a bullet in heart-
Harry on Harry to be.

Hideous

by Mimi Amornteerasawas

Inspired by Shirley Jackson's The Lottery

Hideous
Is the sight of blood.
Shrill cries of despair

Echo Echo Echo

One decision between life and death—
Rumors of the bizarre dare
Still remain in the small town
Haunting those who choose to believe
In the ghastly tales
Of the dead
Where barbaric crimes are committed
And send people to their graves.
Gothic looking people
Fill the land

Cackles, whispers, and screams

Fill the air
The horror, this terror
Suddenly takes control
Of your mind.

The Fireplace

By Deborah Jin

Inspired by Annie Dillard's Transfiguration

The fireplace
flamed and frazzled.
Fine
smoke

*c
u
r
l
e
d*

Up
from the
blackened
wood.
A piece of paper

Flapped

into the fire,
frying
immediately,

disappearing
utterly.

The sparks
CRACKLED
like
pistol fire.

Unmasked

by Clair Sun

Inspired by Edgar Allan Poe's The Masque of Red Death

Great gates of heavy metal,
sharp pains, the horror of blood,
faces of victims all emerge in half an hour
Devastation

Improvisators, ballet-dancers, musicians,
there was Beauty; there was wine.
Then the clock chimed,
the echoes of Death, nervousness and folly
disconcert and tremulousness
To conceal the fear,
Against the music swells
To conceal the fear,
Who dares?

Unmask him, the nameless awe, said the fearless prince
Rage and the shame of his cowardice,
the colour changed from vividly blue, purple, green, orange, white, and
violet to a deep blood colour, the Darkness and the Red Death
“no one followed”

Then,
Everything died away, the ugly, the strange
The Fantastic, the surprising and the frightening.
All these happy cowards faded away in horror

The Lemonade Stand

by Irving Ding

It's Saturday
Grab a pitcher
Take some
lemons
Add some
sugar
Take a table
Tape a sign
on it
Take only
one chair
"Lemonade,
lemonade for
fifty cents"
Time passes by
a kid stole his
pitcher
A bird pooped
on him
He felt lonely
He fell off his
chair
He messed up
his hair
until
a customer
came and gave
him a dollar for
two cups
But a minute
later
a robber came
and stole all his money
and so
he closed
the lemonade
stand.

Tell Me

by Sally Chen

What has the moth been through
In its short but meaningful life
When it burns bright in the flames
Of a lavender scented candle?

How does a fragile leaf in November
Fallen from between the branches of a roadside tree
Tainted with the gold of the sun
Sneak up to my feet?

With whom will I be walking
Through the dark of the night
And the light of the day
And the pain and the joy
Embedded in the bed
Of the flowing waters of destiny?

Who does pinch the sharpened peak
Of a ray of sunshine
And stretch it over the whole city
As if it were a warm blanket
Made from scattered glittering gems?

Why do long sleepless nights
Have a unique fragrance
Of an old oak tree?

And for what reason,
Does a cold wet breeze of March
Carry the salty tears
Of the heartbroken sea?

Poetically

by Derek Liu

Poems should not be understood
But *felt*
Meaningful like a kiss

Poems should not be kept
But shared
Like a bouquet of flowers

Poems could be backstabbing
Surprising
Like a band of run away thieves

Poems could be cliff hanging
Undetermined
Like a lottery

But a poem should be you

Be the "Poem"
And soar across the ocean of words...