

Age: 17, Grade: 11

School Name: Lee High School, Huntsville, AL
Educator: Michelle Sisson

Category: Poetry

at the table were stalactites that egged on your blagues!
swept above us all like icicles as you wittily spoke punch-tags.
perhaps you still do so in the company of may and august
whose departures mirrored double-crossing if my regard was honest.
but i'd let it slide in the hinges of the endlessness i'd touch
since they'd slip by the deadline even despite the endurance of my clutch.
even waterless, one could see the grotto-goers shearing through:
how you danced with the stalagmites, not aware they were spearing you,
and in the ease of night it had gone unseen by all and sundry;
although i'd not lay there, we all rushed in a great hurry.
there'd been quicknesses afloat in the air with which we ran,
but they proved not quick enough to raise your ship from under the sand—
wrinkled sails and sunken hulls left tucked in by grains around,
little grains falling as gravity failed to undo what would be downed.

and i cannot know what they are
nor why they hang in the dark—
was the capture too sudden?
or the help wouldn't come in.
here i can only suppose trace of the rocks,
of what came over the sense before shocks,
that they may have resembled promising towers
melded by how the hindsight channel scours,
because none of us could bear the alternative
of a yielder convinced that absence was curative.
say, it would be far easier to ask than to assume,
but we're no exception to the distance-heeding means of the tomb;
it met me so newly as its net had my kindred caught—
away and away and away now is the lot.

a short while preceding the fact, on the outskirts of the burrow
(well, now, to me it may as well have been sprout-spurts ago),
we went and watched you in your good place of pivot joying
where you played and sang melodies: tender though un-cloying.
the small bunch of us saw it, then, as just an instance of many,
not knowing the edge would claim it to leave as a memory.
but the difference between what was here and my post-discerning
is that the time without you by our side lacks that very learning:
one cannot digest wisdom before knowing guilt,
for the day cannot change until the earth completes its tilt.
and the both of us stay filially unremedied to this date

she takes my hand and says to me,
“glide ‘long the aqua while i steer.”

i nod my head and down we go, near the floor of the third river,
come right up like the self-proclaimed coward rumored by guppies aquiver,
then i take my meager, restless time to warm up to the second's tone,
love even more that it preceded you and to compare i needn't pour my own!
and while your smile reaches farthest out, hers just softly gleams;
if i must travel back to shore myself, then say the word and i will by all means.
and you are sun 'n moon, cat 'n dog; may i be the cheshire?
i know better than to be the hose that puts out your fire:
for to love the soil, see, is not to stop the rain,
yet, knowing me, i'd take its seeds and claim
(after i've gone back in time),
“this tree ensued, this here is mine.”
though to do such a thing would deny what i've firsthand felt,
you've got plenty more joy under your belt,
and my skin is burnt, but i've not stepped outside—
run far from me, grass! tell the bushes to hide!
felt in a taunting resemblance i deny with all my being
with echoing instantaneous intensity upon seeing
is the flooding, boiling, stagger-splashing, frost-biting,
quenchlesst. A Gha e no il e no ilo e hee grg i e he

i fib impetuously for your g

as the warblers i saw last night, close in song and in snug feathers!
i turn to you and see the same eyes we've nurtured through our regime,
wanting never to look away, for, dear, i love you and our team.