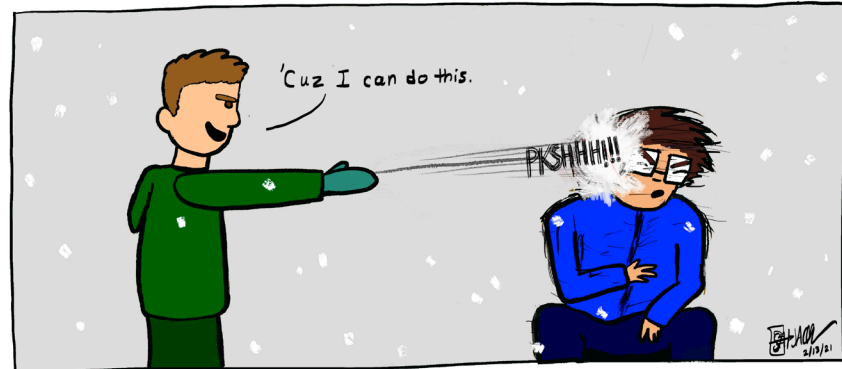
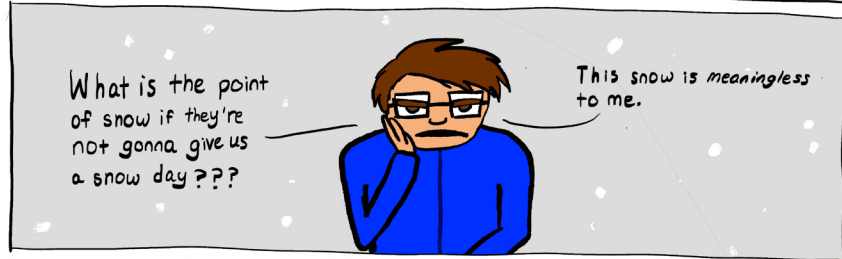


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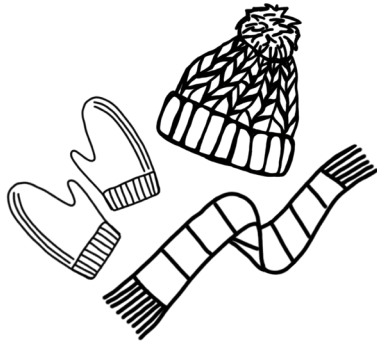
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THE POEM THAT I LOST

Esai Jacobson

I have writer's block
To the billionth degree
No ideas enter my brain

I have writer's block
And it's killing me
That I have nothing to say

It eats me up
Because every passing second
Reminds me
Of the poem that I lost

The poem that got away from me
When it escaped my memory

The poem that I forgot

That poem was the best thing
I ever put on a page
If you heard it once, you'd never forget it
Its words could never age

It was complex
But crystal clear
A banquet for the mind
Sweet music to the ear

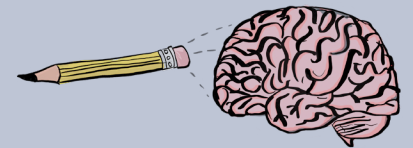
It had a line about a spider
The next about Billy Joel

(Or something like that... I'm not sure
because I can't remember a single word.)

When I wrote it down, it made me cry
Because it seemed to express everything I feel inside.

That poem was me

And losing it
Leaves me nothing
But this lousy poem
And writers block to the billionth degree.





icy snow day

Ye Zin Cho

Angels in the Snow

Ming-Jing Qin

my mother once told me,
angels rested in the snow.

their wings defeated,
legs stretched out wide,
they longed for soft blankets,
to wrap them up tight.

eyes closed,
they bathed themselves in a cold touch,
and as they laid in silence,
their bodies would finally begin to heal.

won't they get sick,
i would always ask.
they must get sick
from the cold.

angels don't get sick,
my mother replied,
they just get
very,
very,
tired,
sometimes.

i don't get tired,
i told my mother,
i'm as wide awake as a bird.

she laughed,
a sweet soft laugh,
and smiled,
her perfect smile at me.

the skin around her mouth wrinkled,
but her eyes lost a bit of shine.
my child,
she said,
her words soft and quiet,
do you know what makes the angels tired?
having too much fun? i replied,
sometimes, she said
but more often it's because of the wind,
the harsh wind makes it hard to fly,
does the wind make you tired mommy?
something like that,
and then just she closed her eyes,
and smiled again,
holding me close in the snow.





Freeze the Day

Hafsa Ali



Crystal Clear

Hafsa Ali

the north wind

Angela Li

blankets on the trees with
branches bowing at the passing breeze
above them:

fragmented rays of a
sunshine waterfall,
they look for nooks to fill

but disappear in a puddle of silence
I sink deeper away from the
invisible tease,

and the wind blows
snow flurries into my hair
(that I tuck into my pocket to keep.)

I shiver under the snow's embrace
its arms twist - the pressure of infatuation
I turn, smiling

my smile seeks the object
of its affection, and
seeps into the snow white all around

the north wind comes again,
pressing gently into me until
we become one

(oh, how the boundary bleeds!)
the cloudy fulcrum,
how heavy my mind feels

when it's peering over a waterfall,
streams of silver,
and I take the leap.



Bitter Cold
Lindsay Elfant



Drip

Esai Jacobson



friendly snow

Stacey Na

the white snow reflects
the orange street lamp by my bedroom.
it's nice to have millions of mini fires
next to you to keep you warm
when you can't fall asleep
because of your cold thoughts.

i don't really like nightlights,
and the fake light it casts.
i'd rather have the diamonds in the snow
come through my window and propose to me
with dreams that I remember in the morning.

winter without snow is just
coldness
in black.
being alone at night with your thoughts is scary,

but with snow,
albeit gradually melting
and ephemeral snow,
snow whose friendliness is overlooked
by most,
i think i'll be okay for today.

Our War

Michael Papadopoulos

“Those are the mighty giants,” my uncle told me, resting a calloused hand on my shoulder. He raised one trembling finger to a sprawling mountain range in the distance.

Peaks upon peaks lined the coast, expanding endlessly into the horizon. Each one drove upwards into the heavens, like drills piercing into the azure. Cradled in their ridges were boulders, stones in the slings of warriors. Little forts adorned the cliffs on the mountainside. *Kastros*, the people called them; castles, tiny remains of battle left to the ages. My uncle laughed when I mentioned this. “Fortresses built upon the soldiers of our war!” he declared, his deep, raspy voice carrying a thick Greek accent.

“And those,” he started, both of us grinning ear to ear. He turned his finger to the right.

“...were the dragons!” I cried excitedly. “Up, up!”

“Aw, we are both too old for this,” he chuckled, placing me on his shoulder.

Those mountains were not as tall as their rivals. Instead, they arched over the greenery at their bases. Their summits emitted wispy cirrus clouds, a frigid veil that hovered menacingly over the zeniths. Jagged rock formations were strewn around them,

the claws of terrifying beasts.

“And of course, their glorious battlefield!” he bellowed, sweeping his hand across the sea.

The oceans of Kefalonia were a clear, almost ethereal turquoise, dazzling in the sunlight. My uncle described it as *galazzoprasino*. “Blue-ish green”, yet with an underlying significance to it, a level of collectively shared awe that language could not express. The sky, too, was deep and rich, devoid of a single cloud. Castles and cities, houses and heroes, all that ever was and all that ever would be. An eternity, captured in a picture, framed in my mind forever.

“Do you remember the story?” My uncle asked.

“I do, but I like it more when you say it.”

“Alright, then.” He walked closer to the water, his bare ankles submerged in the sea.

“No, don’t go there! There are crabs over there!”

“What’s life without a little risk?” he replied with a smile on his face.

“Well, long ago, before I was born and *definitely* before you were born, the giants and dragons lived on *Kefalonia* together.

The giants were angry,” he started with a pretend scowl, “because the icy breath of the dragons made it too cold. Every year, the giant’s animals died and their crops froze. They would always survive, but one year they decided they would not lose their loved ones again. They vowed to kill *all* the dragons.”

“Yeah, kill the dragons!” I cheered, knowing where the tale was going.

“Now, hold your horses,” my uncle chided. “The dragons, they weren’t freezing the giants for fun. You can see how big the giants were. Every step they took shook the island. When enough giants were walking at once, it made endless earthquakes. And dragon eggs were very fragile. If the dragons didn’t kill the giants, they would die instead.”

“So, they went to war,” he said with a nod.

“Who won?” I asked, hopping down from my uncle’s shoulder.

He waved his arm in an arc. “Well, they met on this battleground, and they fought. They discovered that they were equals in every way. Neither side had an advantage, either in skill or numbers. They battled and battled, yet nobody could be killed. Eventually, they began to lose their energy and started slowing down. But they never lost their wills; they would never run away.”

He paused. “After a few thousand years, stones began growing on them. A couple of centuries more, and their entire bodies were covered, head to toe. Yet, their battle still rages on to this day. If you look close enough, at just the right time, you can still see them moving.”

I observed the mountains, looking for any sign of motion. For just a second, I was bound to the shore, lost in our reverie. Perhaps there was a grand meaning to our legend. A moral to instill, a higher idea that encompassed the myth. A thesis, nestled deep in the heart of the island, that I could extract.

I returned my gaze to the landscape. The flow of the waves, the sky-scraping mountains. The cypress trees and hermit crabs. The gentle breeze ruffling my hair. The ocean, deep and rich and *galazzoprasino*. A photograph that would never leave me - no, one I would never let go.

Maybe the destination was the journey. Through our imagination, we had given ourselves to nature. By doing so, we returned as masters of nature, lords of the monsters, rulers over the dragons and giants that towered before us. In our fable, we were nothing less than gods; we had constructed a world. I took one last moment, the water lapping at my feet, to embrace what we had made.

My uncle turned around. “Let’s get going, *paithi mou*.”

a brisk cold day

Lukas Tegge

How I wonder what all days in the early months of a year may bring.
This day the streets are filled with frost and layers of ice.
In the air I see many white dots coming down in the months before spring,
and an email from an administration that will suffice.

Waking up after eight and feeling joy with hot green tea,
I certainly will enjoy this mid-weekday to my best.
After shoveling the snow and not being in classes with glee,
I am able to throw a couple snowballs and take more rest.

I know I could do a million and one other things this day.
I could just be stuck up working on endless project from on
high, but this day I would rather be merry and play.
Sometimes it is best to have worries and concerns just be gone.

How I wonder what this day has brought,
With ice and snow and joys to be taught.



Folded Fawn

Sera Hamilton



let it snow

Mariam Ali



Signals
Esai Jacobson

heliocentric

Anabelle Accetta-Beman

whoever was the first person
who looked at the sun
and thought of her
God
wasn't me

a perfect circle drawn with one stroke
gliding across the sky as if she were on ice
basking in her own halo of brilliant light
a burning chariot that rides predictably
rhythmically comfortably reassuringly

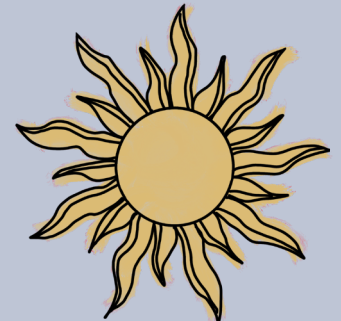
she greets each morning with her color
saturated and bright to mark her arrival
and as she rises she brings with her
the light the rays the warmth the blue
that gentle blue that never changes
and even if it did I would not notice

a dozen times or more she's made that trek
tracing the edges of the sky and my periphery
climbing the heavens to fall from them again
shunning the heavens to welcome them again
but do not be mistaken for the sun is no phoenix
she was not reborn today or yesterday or any day
her reign will come to an end eventually but for now
she's a murderer

for she slides back down just as quickly as she climbs
dragging her feet lazily clumsily but never hesitantly
pulled along the same path like an invisible rope
drawing the curtains behind her without warning
as that sweet orange becomes a pale sickening yellow
maybe it will be lavender or gold or magenta today
tomorrow it could be violet or a deep deep navy instead
but somehow she can tear down every single wall
bleeding spilling seeping red until the sky goes black

the night in her wake is neither fiery nor raging
but is cold and smoldered and long abandoned
dark with no memory of mere moments before
as if she was never here never existed to begin with
because no matter how brutal or vicious she is
a hundred million billion colors I couldn't be
without her to string me along the sky
every dawn and every dusk of every day
she could drag me under before I even realized
I was bound to her naturally helplessly willingly

the sun will be the same tomorrow
but I won't.



The Pandemic's Impact on the Hungry

Ava Cuomo

No one could have ever predicted or imagined the global pandemic that occurred this past year. We are now going into the 15th month of this pandemic. Last year around this time, we were being forced into quarantine, which was a surreal and somewhat frightening experience. The pandemic has created economic challenges for many and it has caused a massive increase of food insecurity within the state. Families even from wealthy communities have had to resort to waiting many hours on line for a bag of food in order to feed their families. Soup kitchens and food pantries are experiencing three times the normal rate of desperate, hungry customers. As sad as it is, seniors, veterans, homeless, and people with mental or emotional difficulties make up most of this group. It's absolutely devastating to learn that students, hospitality workers, teachers, nurses, construction workers, professionals, and even therapists need assistance. These are the people who once had steady incomes.

However, there are ways that, as a community, we can help. One organization called Table to Table collects food from donors, such as supermarkets and restaurants, and delivers it the same day (free of charge!) to shelters, food pantries, and homes of people in need. Table to Table is organized by brilliant people who give their lives for this cause. Check out these appalling statistics!

- Although New Jersey is the fourth wealthiest state in the nation, there are numerous areas in northeast New Jersey where the poverty level far surpasses that of the national average.

- One-third of New Jersey's residents do not earn enough to afford food and housing.

- One-third of the state's employed residents live below the poverty line.

- One-in-five children in New Jersey live in poverty.

- There are over 1.1 million food insecure people living in New Jersey. More than 1/3 of them are children.

- More than half of the children living in poverty in New Jersey reside in one of the four counties served by Table to Table.

- Children suffering from poor nutrition during the brain's most formative years score much lower on tests of vocabulary, reading comprehension, arithmetic, and general knowledge.

Although these numbers are shocking, it is important to note that we can make a change. If you are interested in helping this cause you can donate to the link below or even just help raise awareness!

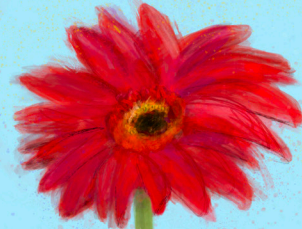
<https://www.mightycause.com/story/Ruutcf>



Perfect Snowstorm

Amishi Mittal

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