

home

Emily Cummings, 2017

a few years ago i would have said,
ive been lost for a long time,
combing through dusty dead stars,
clinging to cold planets,
cleaning through gases and climbing
climbing climbing up.
my life has been mostly out of my hands,
some outside force always having its influence,
but it never told me who i love.
on my long climb, ive met others and others,
lovely others, terrible others,
lost kids and adults and boys and girls.
they are expansive as the universe itself,
and we are not done yet,
the climb is never over, but we are leaving--
no,
i am leaving this solar system,
i may be back,
but i can see the edge now, the last lone planet,
dusty feet print, mine and my friends,
the nights we sang together and gazed
out into the universe's givings together,
pointed to the stars together,
told each other that we wanted to go there,
to travel past each other,
to some day no longer travel together.
i am not angry,
im the happiest ive been, hypothetically,
because in this journey i have been found
not by myself, but by my companions.
i have not been lost so long as i have a hand to hold,
in this journey we all don't know where we will go,
and so we make our maps by people,
we mark our journal entries in names of
hopeful strangers and lost regrets,
and i hold all i have to my heart now.
i am not lost anymore.
i found myself in other people,
i collected myself from them,
wrote my story with lines from them,
grew their favorite flowers from my heart,
and now i, an accumulation of everything i know,
am leaving.
im terrified, but we will never be lost again.
the story of me is never impossibly far,
my life is in those stars,
my fate is as hopeful as suns,
i will always be able to look out and know:
in these stars i love, my people lie,
and they will believe in me, as long as i believe in them.

they will never fade.
we are each other's universe.

New Mythology

Emily Cummings, 2017

the fireflies shine for us,
as us,
with us.
the world has a love,
for all things beautiful but time
kills all lovely things and so,
we made a new hope.
the stars felt overrated so they burned out,
and darkness took over but
darkness has yet to learn infinity.
so,
when our world fell dark and the adults
didn't know what to do
the kids got up and smiled.
we smiled so bright that we brought back
a shine to our world,
and we kept going from there.
we kept our hope and kept our happiness
and we flickered like the stars once did.
we took
the weight of
"that's not our problem!"
and molded it so we would be remembered
as the new stars.
history won't remember us,
no,
but in a thousand years, kids will look up,
and they'll see us and know where home is.
we will be the new symbol for fire,
we will be the ambassadors for a world of sunshine,
man-made but genuine.
the fireflies have always been our friends.

orchids

Emily Cummings, Class of 2017

a little girl does not stand in a field of goldenrods and forget-me-nots,
she sits in front of a TV and wonders why the world is too busy for her.
her Parents stretch into one unit,
a dark and tall theory in her mind that says, sorry, we're busy,
and nothing else,
and her friends are all imaginary, and the city she lives in doesn't even give her trees to climb.
she's scared of heights anyway.
i'm still scared of heights, anyway.
and how do you tell which tree to climb?
what if the branch isn't strong enough, do you just suffer through the broken arm?
i would rather stay inside,
where the danger does not come,
but even when my friends that i've made with a bit of magic and glue,
call me out to play i stay inside,
i am too comfortable, i am too tired, but i tell them my mother won't give me a ride.
they split into two separate entities, both of them nightmares to deal with on their own,
but i've become a lawyer, my own cause as the defendant.
prosecution is tough these days, and what is the punishment, exactly?
i guess that's still to be decided.
i think i make myself sound rather hollow, though.
when tomorrow comes,
who am i?
am i still scared?
is the little me still waiting for the Good tomorrow, the tomorrow that fixes me?
i am not just all fear and waiting, though,
i am not!
there is passion in me that has been seen,
even back to the sapling,
when i would draw eight fingers on one hand and say i was a good artist,
and i would speak like i knew what i meant,
i still do both, but at least i have the correct amount of fingers on my sketches.
i laughed, too,
during all the worst cases and lied that i didn't care.
there's parts of me that is anger and fire, fueled by my own angry tears and the
'listen to me, *dammit*,' that i can scream louder than a girl scared of falling should be,
i face my fears by looking over the edge and questioning how much it might hurt,
by telling the prosecution that they have a botched argument,
i live by pure stubbornness to live and that concept alone,
because it took a lot of work to get me here and i'm going to figure out some damn way
to have fun, even on the worst of days.
i have what i need to survive,
i've got the water and my roots are thin
but i can stand,
so screw the fact that i don't go out into the sun each day.
i'm just a small tree now, i'm not fully grown into some wise being just yet,
but i am going to be the biggest tree with the branches that block out the sun, that
the town asks to cut down but the little girls say no, no, please let this one live!
in my shade i'll grow all the flowers that couldn't thrive in the constant sunlight,
and i will become a masterpiece of the peace and harmony
that i can't always reach.
i don't care what tomorrow holds for me,

because i have so much to give to tomorrow, and the next day and the next.
the next year better be ready, because i pleaded not guilty and won my case,
my Parents reach doesn't stretch on forever,
climbing to the top doesn't involve looking down,
i have the rest of infinity and freedom to do what i want with the world,
and my waiting is done.

a pile of photographs

Emily Cummings, Class of 2017

summer came to me in sepia,
washing away the silver-blue of winter with its intense sunlight,
the smell of summer is sweet and the thickness in the air heavy.
i need to dust my house,

we haven't done it in months now, i should probably get to it.
dust is a little memorabilia, though, of who i was, the skin that's been shed, literally.
on second thought, i guess it is kind of gross. i'll dust in an hour.
tomorrow we have nothing to do, so maybe i'll lay in bed and wait for the moon.

does that mean i won't get up until moonrise?
i think it means im going to stay up tonight, but maybe ill surprise myself tomorrow,
give a gift of unearned unproductivity. it's fine. we all need days off.
i found a box with a pile of photographs the other day,

i think it's part of the leftover stuff from when we moved,
but i don't know. i was supposed to be cleaning, but i looked through them for an hour.
they were pictures from my youth, covered in dust. my parents gave them to me as gifts.
it's the first day of summer tomorrow.

we should've moved during summer, you told me one day over breakfast, but then you paused.
"on second thought, it would've been very warm. spring rains too much," you replied.
moving is just inconvenient, i told you, but that didn't matter now. we'd settled in.
my mom used to tell me sometimes i'd have to settle,

but i never understood why until i was eighteen and about to move out and i saw her
look at my father like he was some kind of man she regretted meeting.
i realized then why i never dated during high school.
the car my parents bought for me for college was a purple, ugly thing.

when we first met, it was because you were leaning against my car and i needed to go.
i was uncomfortable talking to you at first. we didn't look like we'd have anything in common.
you joked that my car was the worst thing you'd seen this year. i threatened to hit you with it.
house shopping is bizarre.

everyone you speak to just wants your money and they're the one type of salespeople who
don't really hide it. i never liked any houses that had a person to guide us through it.
i was so happy when i found out about open house nights.
the first time i moved, it was to the city.

i promised myself i'd spend a few years being a city girl before i went back to suburbia.
you told me about all the best coffee shops,
and i bought plants and settled in, but i never had to settle yet. that was another promise.
"maybe we should just be squatters and never live anywhere permanently," i said once,

you laughed and i did, too.
we were eating dinner on your small balcony ten floors above ground.
it was microwaved chicken and tater tots and gross coffee, but the candles were nice.
the first time i heard my parents fight and scream at each other,

was the first day of summer vacation my junior year.

i was always scared of summer after that day, because i was worried about what i would hear.
i think i preferred to be not there, i'd rather the divorce hit me by surprise. it didn't.
when you first held my hand,

we were getting out of the one class we had together sophomore year of college,
and i think it had genuinely been an accident.
but we held hands, and i thought about why a person would settle.
the divorce came a week after i graduated college.

i didn't cry for them, neither did my mom. my dad was upset because she took the dog.
i guess she gave him the dog after a while of consideration.
her lips trembled once, when she gave me my baby pictures when they were moving out.
you asked me to move in with you at some point during a movie,

we had been out of college for a year, and both had somewhat stable jobs.
i wasn't surprised. we had hung out everyday that week. kissing you goodbye was getting old.
i decided to stop settling for sleeping alone. my yes was through a mouthful of popcorn.
somehow, i don't remember how, you convinced me to paint our room green.

it was a nice green, at least. it used to be my least favorite color. you get used to things after
years of waking up to them. i think that's how people learn to settle,
but if my settling only reaches the extent of a bedroom color, we'll be alright.
i don't know if i want to get married.

i whisper to my plants all the time that i don't want my parents to see each other
in the same context of a couple joining in happy unison. ring shopping is boring,
too. diamonds are overrated.
one morning i woke up early and make a big breakfast.

i burnt your toast but you smothered it in butter and ate it like it was wonderful.
our kitchen table was brown, but our tablecloth was white to offset the blue on the walls.
i hated the tablecloth, though. i had to clean it, after all.
i called my mom a few nights ago. it was thunderstorming, so the call was choppy.

i asked her finally what it meant to settle, and she was quiet for a while. i thought she hung up.
but she told me, she whispered it hoarsely,
"something terrible that i thought all women had to do. but, you taught me i could stop."
when summer came the first year we moved in,

i was terrified.
i thought we would have our first serious argument. i was waiting,
i had always been waiting, to learn what settling mean. to understand my mother.
instead, you bought me an engagement ring.

it had no diamonds on it.
it was gold, pure gold, and had our initials engraved on the inside. you told me,
that it reminded you of summers passed by.
i never thought i would want to get married.

Universe

Felicity Parrott, Class of 2017

My body is constructed of galaxies
My mind a collection of constellations
My blood is a river of diamonds, rubies and gold

My hair, vines that flow kinking and curling down my spine of titanium
Strong and light.
My eyes that are stars gleaming through the dark.

My heart is the sun brilliant with everything revolving around its existence.
With the moon as my soul, a great pale light glows blanketing everything in the night

My skin as soft as rose petals, velvety and smooth
My touch silky and delicate like a butterfly's wing

A creature of all realms
I run with wolves
Swim with sharks
And soar with eagles
Ruling them all

I can move like a shadow
hidden in the depth of night
or burst through the door like a beam of light

As mother of all
I dine with gods feasting on fruits of rejuvenation
Drinking wine from the fountain of youth
I am reborn

When rage fills me lightning strikes
When I scream, tornadoes rip across the land
My tears fall like raindrops replenishing the earth
When I smile sunshine beams from my face illuminating the entire planet
There is no escaping me

My creativity colors the earth brilliant
Reds, blues and yellows
Violet sunsets
and gray mornings flow from my mind

I dug wisdom and truth from the farthest corner of existence
And found ignorance and lies on the shores of a black abyss
letting them go within myself;
without control for only a moment

I float on the river of time
I fly in a rewinding sky
moving forwards or backwards,
however I please

With a voice strong and moving like ocean tides, I will everything in my wake
With my pen I write innocence, romance and betrayal wrapping it around my body
I carve every ocean, river, lake, and stream into the world effortlessly
For I am the
Universe.

Itch

Felicity Parrott, Class of 2017

The itching starts when I hear the words that make me less of a person;

Words like

“Do you do that because you're...”

Itch.

“You must like that because you're ...”

Itch.

“You only can do that because you're...”

Itch.

The itching continues with what the words do to me

They seem to transform me into nothing but a shade

Itch.

Into the creature that binds itself with the night; a moonless sky

Itch.

A soul so dark you can see it in broad daylight

Itch.

The itching stops when I'm nothing but flesh and bone

Now there is nothing; are you satisfied?

Itch.

Our Plight

Felicity Parrott, Class of 2017

Bright illuminating light
The moon brings solace to people lost in the night
But she is always left
She takes the using, the abusing
And weeps silently by herself

She whispers her sorrows to me
I understand; I have been treated the same
I have been a place of solace in a dark time,
And forgotten as quickly as those times had come

She tells me about her love for life and mankind
And the pain she feels:

Humans praise the sun, love to feel his
Shine on their skin
He does not care for humans;
He burns then and leaves his heart fire so hot
They can never touch his surface
And yet He makes them happy,

In their darkest hour, he leaves
And they turn to her
They weep in her consoling glow,
And ask her to comfort them
But as soon as the sun comes up
They turn away and embrace Him
She knows the light only lasts as long as their suffering,
As long as the night lasts

She becomes crestfallen
And turns away for a time
But, her love is absolute, so incredible
She always returns to protect them,
The life she adores so much

Do you see now her predicament?
She enters phases of coming and going,
But can never escape humanity's gravity
Pulling her round and round
Never letting her close enough to touch,
But never letting her go.

I let her tell me these things
And she thanks me by shining her light on me,
Giving me dreams of hope and the possibility of happiness
We better each other
And our story gives us both hope for a better day.

Untitled

Alyssa Paul, Class of 2017

I don't matter anymore
I won't be seen anytime
I am just dust bunnies
waiting to be picked up
I start feeling spinny
maybe our galaxy
has a sense of emotions
could that be a weird oozing
from the thing eating me
guilt just glares
as if it was my fault
later, I realize I'm the opposite
I matter
I will be seen
I am a person
won't be waiting anymore
I am stable again
the universe has feelings
the oozing turned into butterflies
people now stare away
it never was my fault

Untitled

Alyssa Paul, Class of 2017

When you can't write
Blobs randomly appear
Making absolutely no sense
Words continue to glare
But shine still can't fix it
An explosion has ruined art
My own brother didn't
So lets blame you loser
Games heat up any lier
They stop speaking close by
Sounds rank from above
As I sit without feeling
Should I be an alien
Where they don't exist
Cause honestly
Without emotion
Your absence

Untitled

Alyssa Paul, Class of 2017

I must be a lobster
I get trapped, boiled, and eaten
But never been freed
To answer the harmony lying beneath
What am I saying
Fish don't get a chance
Small, weird, ugly
Getting tossed and smacked
Your breath had to be taken
Next something different appears
At first that something is good
Well that something pungently turned in
Nothing holds me together
Crumbling each and every day
As the boiling water slowly cooks
My chance of trying to boogie out
I act stronger
So my loneliness won't be a bother
Im free at last

Hannah, Death and the Feather Boa

Sylvia Small, Class of 2018

Hannah always told me
That when she imagined death,
It wore a feather boa,
And a short skirt.
She said it was the only way she could think of it
Without crying.
When Hannah's father died,
She was only ten years old
He was full of life one day
And gone the next and she
Couldn't imagine why he'd been
Taken from her.
That was the year she started to think about death.
Not in a self-inflicted sense,
But just in the way you think about
What you're having for dinner,
Or what to watch on TV.
She began to sit and think about what
Death's favorite band was,
And what it liked to read in its spare time –
Did death like broccoli? What about carrots and peas?
When Hannah was sixteen she came out as a lesbian
And her grandmother stopped talking to her.
She was still thinking about death,
But she wanted something more,
So she came up with the feather boa and the short skirt.
She needed a laugh,
And it delivered in spades.
By the time Hannah was twenty she was all alone.
Her mom and grandfather both gone,
Her grandma still silent,
And she decided that death's favorite band was not important.
What was important was that it had taken away
Everyone who still loved her and it
Wasn't even
Trying.
When Hannah was twenty one she decided that personifying death
Was a waste of time.
Because to her, death was just a word,
Used to describe
Suffering.
And besides – no one likes feather boas anyways.

Faggot

Sylvia Small, Class of 2018

What an ugly word.
A universal slur
Making others
Feel less than
An inaccurate display
Of verbal violence
Used to cut deep
Into the hearts of many
We try to take it back,
Use it jokingly
Commonly
But people with malicious intentions
Sure are persistent
Refuse to let go
of the word they turned black
refuse to let us
give it the rainbow makeover
it deserves
they scrawl it all over
Youtube comments
And Tumblr posts
Use it as a weapon
In Tweets
And Facebook messages
Faggot has become
A battle ground
Like so many words before
Following in the steps of queer
And nigger
Getting a makeover
From the very people it targets
Yet still tinged with hate
When it comes out of our mouths
And keyboards of
The biggoted folks
Faggot is used
As kindling for the fire of shame
That burns inside so many hearts
Wood added to the funeral pyres of the innocent
The people who think of the afterlife
More like a party they're late to
Who plan the formulas of their deaths
In the margins of their chem notes
Those who imagine their funerals
As ticker tape parades
Faggot
Is the bullet in the gun held to their heads
The bigots take pride
In every domino that falls
Fail to imagine their victims
As sons and daughters

Wives and husbands
Mothers and fathers
It's not just kids your words can hurt
Faggot is
Burned around the edges
Burned by the flames of hatred
And oppression
Its well worn black paint job is
Brought back like new again
Every time it comes out of the
Haters' mouths
But history speaks for itself
Soon enough, the language of the oppressor
Is taken by the oppressed
Used as a message of hope
A new slang term, or identity
I may not live to see the day
When Faggot is used
As a compliment
But eventually there will be no more
Dressing like a faggot
Just like there is no more
Acting like a queer
Faggot,
Like queer was years before
Will be stolen
Back.

Desdemona

Sylvia Small, Class of 2018

My whole life,
People have looked down on me.
Like I was some paper-thin silhouette
Backlit by the stage lights of reality.
I wasn't a real person to them.
This was how I felt when
Russell got first place in the science fair
Even though his data was false,
And mine was sound.
This has been the background music of my life,
Ever since I was old enough to hear it.
Oppressors masquerading as people who knew best
For me,
Pushing me down until I was
Just enough for people to handle.
Not too loud,
Not too smart,
And when I was, I was simply ignored.
As a woman, I was taught by other women
That this was normal.
That I was just supposed to lay down my head
And accept my overlords like some
Lapdog.
But I knew better than that.
My heart cried out for recognition,
So I went out and got it.
Because, unfortunately,
At this point,
That's the only real option there is.

Davenport

Sylvia Small, Class of 2018

1

Don't say it's over.
Don't say you can't try.
Don't say it's helpless,
Davenport, I need you to stay with me.
I can't stand it when you're gone,
I can't think while you're away,
I love you too much to let you go.
Don't let them win.
Don't tell them you've changed.
Don't roll your eyes at me,
Davenport, they've brainwashed you.
I know you're the same guy.
The bible can't change how you feel about me.
I know you are because you said so
Don't push it away.
Don't "work through it."
Don't for god sakes date that girl
Davenport, I see the pain in your eyes.

2

I still talk to you sometimes.
You smile, and tell me
How right I was about you.
As if that was what I wanted.
Don't give up.
Don't forget your true colors.
Don't let them push you again.
Davenport, I trust you.
As for me, I've found something new.
They're shy, and kind, and strange.
Just like...well...you.

Untitled

Brianna Ladaga, Class of 2017

His words meant galaxies to her,
But the end and the beginning were always so clear.
Space was supposed to extend forever,
The sky was supposed to be the limit.
He guided her through the planets
Showing her what could be,
When he didn't believe things could simply just be.
Her painted her demise with a trilogy of lies,
Licking his lips each time to soften the blow.
Each word had cradled around her heart.
Slowly, but surely,
Squeezing each drop of fear
To make room for false statements.
His words were an infinity to her,
But her little infinity seemed to have an end.
Until she reached the last stop of his guided tour through the planets,
and realized that he was only a lunar eclipse.

Untitled

Brianna Ladaga, Class of 2017

His trained tongue stripped her of her truths,
Leaving her with an armor of lies.

Untitled

Brianna Ladaga, Class of 2017

Living in a generation of stale news, overpriced coffee and velcroed feelings
Can get boring,
But I try to remember to play in the rain.