

Make sense of two senses

He was in the middle of the pine trees. Their scent mingled with wet dirt. I could see him just breathing these shallow, exaggerated breaths as if doing so would make it real. The quiet murmurings of the forest comforted me naught; his silence was forced. Did he know I was there? I doubt it. If he did, maybe he would have said something. There was no crunch of leaves or out-of-shape huffs of sharp breath, there was no sound of humans for miles. I believe that is why he was there in the first place, though he seemed rather put off.

And then he was gone, and the forest fell into a dangerous, unnatural silence that made goosebumps rise on my body. When I started walking back, I noticed that the leaves didn't make a sound, yet I could hear my heartbeat drowning out my breath. Walking faster only made me realize that the colors were fading. Looking around showed me more muted colors of fall than just a few minutes earlier. It was as if I were in a photo and someone lowered the saturation. I felt the crunch of the leaves under my feet with no sound to match, and soon the world was colorless.

I started walking faster and taking deeper breaths as if that would quiet my drum of a heart. It did not, but I was much more intrigued by the shimmering of light in some places. Bending down, I saw a shimmer of the most vibrant shade of orange on that leaf than I ever have or ever will. It reminded me of pumpkin pie and some of the poppies outside that building I go by every day.

Walking on then, and, eventually, I heard a crunch as I put my boot down on the leaves and startled at the slight return of sound. The murmurings of the forest gently increased as did the vibrant, beautiful colors to my vision.

When I stopped, the colors faded to their normal hue, and to my disappointment, when I halted in my tracks the sound was the same. And yet the goosebumps I had had previously returned, and I heard the boy breathing near my ear. He whispered about flowers I can't name or draw, events I've forgotten, and ideas that have been lost to this world. One more step and his voice stopped, and since that day I have only received questions and a frustrating lack of answers for that day.

— GIRIJA GRIFFIN, 15, MONTPELIER



YOUNG WRITERS PROJECT



“Tomato Vine,” by Abrie Howe, 16, Stowe

My creature of fog

There was a creature of fog
outside my window.
Now it's creeping in.
First it tapped on the frosty glass.
I think it knew it'd be
subject to my writing.
It came in feetfirst.
I heard a slight rasping as the window
scraped open.
Its fingers grasped the sill
as it unfurled itself.
Lay down next to me, touched my face
with fingers like cool silk.
Gave a throaty laugh
as I pulled out my pen.
Think it knew it'd be
subject to my writing.
I traced my hands over its tattoos,
the swirls and leaves
that painted its shoulders.
Its eyes were gray in the dark.
The October wind
spilled out from its pockets,
cool and warm
and smelling of new-old beginnings.
It knew it'd be subject to my writing.
There was a creature of fog
outside my window.
Now it's in here with me.
After extracting itself from the veins
of the sycamore leaves

and wrenching away from the shadows,
it whispered into my room.
Felt the bed dip
as it came and lay down next to me.
Kissed me deep and breathed fresh air
into my lungs,
let our colors mix.
Knew it'd be subject to my writing.
My creature of fog
talks to the devil
sitting on my left shoulder.
My right one too.
But not my angel,
because I don't have one,
though it insists I do.
Its tongue splashes words over me,
of quicksilver
and purple rain and jade rings
and mountains that taste like chili peppers
and sky that feels like mango.
It'd be subject to my writing.
There was a creature of fog
outside my window,
standing in the grass that was struggling
under the weight
of the wild blue...

— SIRI DUNN, 15, MORRISTOWN

*Excerpted; read complete poem at
youngwritersproject.org/node/41877*

The book

She sees it on the ground,
people kicking it out of the crowd,
and it is weird
how people don't acknowledge or notice
the paperback that has worn pages
and a roughed-up cover.
But she does.

And they do not know what a book
could do for her.

But she does.

Because to them it is just an old book,
but to her, well,
she has never seen anything
so magnificent in her life.

— LILY MEYER, 12, MONTPELIER

Piano and candy

Hands held in tight conversation,
tongue bitten in sweet concentration.
Sticky piano fingers
stretched out like rainforest frogs,
and my rainbow toes
pressed up against the body of the thing.
Just to feel your heartbeats
played out in tune.
Your hands weave a spell
that holds me frozen
yet makes me yearn to be heard.
Just to feel your candy lips.

— WILLA WHITAKER JACKSON, 14,
MARSHFIELD

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