

CROP

Vol.17



CROP

Creativity Rising Original Production

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SEEN AND UNSEEN

CHILDHOOD

Yuka Kameyasu

When I was
making you, I could return
to my childhood again. I did not
care about getting frostbite on my hand.
I was just happy to feel the cold. I was
not thinking about train delay. I was just
rolling, rolling and rolling snowballs
and you became so big. I picked
up some stones and flowers
and made you smile. I said, "It's done!"
Then, I stood up and the world looked
completely different from two seconds ago. My
hands were so red, and I felt terribly cold. I went back
to inside of the house and poured a cup of hot black coffee
immediately. I felt comfortable touching the hot. When
I was checking my phone, I sighed because I realized I
could not take my usual train. My hair was mess and
hurried to pull out rain boots. When I was locking the
door, you looked at me, and I thought
you were so small.

ADAM AND EVE

Hyuma Erabu

a d a m a n d eve

th

en

e d

f o r b i d

d e n f r u i t s

f o r b i t t e n

t h e n f u l l . . .

(then)

(FL

A

S h e s !) v i v

I d e a l

We are a we

some!

IN THE MOVIE CLASS

Haruna Motoki

I found the girl sitting in front of me was crying while watching the movie

I was watching the movie

I found the girl

the girl sitting in front of me

the girl in me

I found the movie

the girl was the movie

I was crying

I found me

FATHER AND CHILD

Hyuma Erabu

eYe s
of
Father
Weakly
Leek ing
d
o
W
N
the
(LIT)
tle
((Angel
Golden-haired
-sap phire-
EYED
Pearl-skinned))
in the CRADLE

COMING OF AGE

Haruna Motoki

Adolescents' sparkle eyes Create the shape of crescent

Drown in the moon river, heartbeat of 20 years popping

Up. I heard you have been alive. I heard you have just arrived.

Lean on race, everybody was a child

Dear adult, keep your child heart sparkle in your mind.

VISION

Hyuma Erabu

Pale and deep in green, unfolds the sea,
Embraced a-golden, begins the dawn.

Leaps the dolphin, fins in twinkling green.
Dressed in a water-veil, lush and splash.

And, foams of lights.

"December Tree"
Red rises. Fire fragments
Flow and glow:
Maidenhair tree.

"The Ray"
Under the water
Crag do lay themselves

—Colorless— and crevices, and corals—
Herd of glittering fish goes small and swift.

There, on the crags
Remaine'th rested— the ray.
Still, there so still it doth stay,
Hardly dead, or could it be—

There the Othrys,
—Crevices, crags, colossus—
Shrouded in the glorious ray of sunshine,
Taketh its first breath, profound and long.

“Thy Hair”
Thy Hair, soft and sinuous:
A moon-lit water in the dark;
Wind that waves the grass;
Come, through my fingers.

“Crow”
Leaden shock of lumping, Black out— break, out.
Smashed slimy liquid the bird shape, shadow:
A crow has fallen.
The gentleman spruces up in black and walks
Bowling rapidly to passerby.
But he turns to show
A flaw of the shad'wy, a flow of the slimy:
Crooked feathers on his left side.
Rapidly he bows and walks and walks walks, step step, step.
Rocking his head back and forth, the gentle crow goes and walks.

Hardship and Growth

MY HUSBAND

Ayako Yotsubayashi

Yesterday, my husband was dead. Before I got married him, I had used to think falling in love with someone is something fantastic. But now, I feel so annoyed too much. Whenever anything gets stuck, he hit and tie me with rope.

"You are useless! You can't finish your tasks. You don't care how you and your family are helped with my property!?"

It's true that he is rich. At once I was so surprised to hear his propose, despite I'm not rich. I used to be one of celebrities because of my father. However, Before I married him, father's company was bankrupt and soon Dad died. That was a sudden death. I mean I lost everything.

"Are you listening to me!?" He hit me again. Then, emerald necklace on my neck was dropped and his foot smashed it.

"My father's eyes! "

Before father died, he gave it as an amulet to protect me.

Though I was freezing for a while. Eventually, I stood up.

"Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhh!" Husband suddenly cried next moment.

Because I scooped his eyes with a fruit knife. I've owned it in my pocket all along actually.

"An eye for an eye, A tooth for a tooth!" I shouted and next moment, I penetrated his body again and again, finally he died.

I whispered by his ears which never listen to me anymore,

"You always said, "You are always useless, you bastard!", but I will use your bodies and organs for my family. I appreciate you."

After I cannibalized his bodies, I changed my blooded clothes. Her bare skin blooded with hers and his like patchwork. The body never figures woman's anymore. Mixed with both spirits of man and woman, she says goodbye to her past days. She doesn't know what she used to be.

"Knock Knock Knock!" Someone is knocking my house door. I stand in front of it.

I greet the one behind the door, "Hi."

"Hi man, please don't underestimate woman's face. Perhaps it might be not a woman's, but a monster's and kill you".

STUDENT ID

Yuzuki Yamada

Just one card
yet
once invincible

From tomorrow
it will be
something expired

I felt
as if this single card
were protecting me

A tranquilizer
taken
for four years

Now
there is no way
I can let it go

As its power fades,
will I be dropped
unarmored
into society,
alone?

We are
left as we were born,
able to hide nothing

At least,
I hope this feeling
of having been protected
stays with me

As I
let go
of this single card

WHAT THE PANDEMIC HAS GIVEN ME

Rinko Ishii

When the world fell silent, I finally heard my own voice.
During the time we couldn't touch, my words reached you more reliably.
The uncertain future gave me the freedom to choose and a lot of time to think.
I had too much time on my hand, so a new me was created.

There was certainly a loss. But it also gave me a gift.
It made me realize the depth of this moment rather than the uncertain future.
Living means continuing even when you stop.
The world seemed broken, but each fragment revealed a new shape.

FROM BEYOND THE FENCE: A DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE

Misaki Abe

The barbed wire splits the sky
and the sky above feels far away.
But in my hand there is light
I hold my hidden lens and capture the moment.
The smiles of boys
the lines on a mother's hand,
weeds that bloom like hope in dusty land
I will not forget
the names, voices, and dreams of the people here.
The soldiers point their guns.
"They say it's for safety,"
but their eyes are chains that bind us.
I take photographs
to show the freedom inside our hearts.

New Year rice cakes, laughter in the school,
farmers standing in fields, hands holding harvest
our daily life
still breathes, even behind chains.
I record it all
the pain, the quiet resistance
the bright moments of unforgettable days.
Someday, someone will see these photos
and know, "They were just living."
Every time my shutter opens
a small freedom falls here
beyond the fence
hope is still alive.

LOCKDOWN DAYS

Akeira Watanabe

I dyed my hair in the middle of lockdown
out of boredom, just scrolling TikTok
and thinking, why not?
No school anyway, no one to tell me no.
Tried makeup too.
I learned how to bake.
Made some cookies for my dad
on Valentine's Day.
School sent homework through the mail.
No need to wake up early,
no rushing to catch a train.
I stayed up late, slept in,
life was slow and quiet.
Honestly, it was kinda nice.
But then I'd turn on the news.
Numbers rose, people gone.

And I'd sit there
With blue hair and a face full of blush,
In a home that smelled like cookies,
wondering how the world could be falling apart
while mine felt almost calm.

WATER

Kaho Watanabe

In the bathtub
when I finally put down my phone, decided
to quit sliding through endless
YouTube shorts – scrolling through each links of a
steel chain, just that it moves and sounds — and place it
down on the bath lid
My assignment awaits on my desktop, white
and blank, because picking words and making it into a
shape feels like picking flowers I hesitate to pick, because they
quickly wither, even if you water
them in a little vase

I sit by your bed,
chin leaning on the edge
you in your little cleansed white cradle, reaching for
air, your arms blooming into dark purple roses
each time they meet the rail
Babbling something, something like “ice cream” or like,
“water”
I could have just ignored the nurse and gave
you a sip of water
gave you a little hydration before what was waiting come
to pick you

AN INTERVIEW, AFTER SYLVIA PLATH

Rinne Kinoshita

First, let us confirm this:
are you properly unfinished—
blank enough for entry-level use?

What are your selling points?
Your appearance? Your degree?
Your endurance? Your obedience?

Do you truly admire us?
Can you sign on time,
all at once, with the others?
Be honest now.
Why must it be us?
Why do you keep smiling like that?

We would like to know your shelf life.
You have no reset button,
so we need to estimate
how many years you can keep performing.

Don't worry.
We've prepared the manuals,
the scripts, the correct answers.
All that's required
is that you follow them.

This is an interview,
but there will be no questions from you.
We already know what we need.
You are here
to be selected.

Look at the lane next to you.
See? They look just like you.

Same suits, same words,
same carefully trained smiles.
So don't be afraid.
Uniformity is safety.

You'll be chosen.
Or you won't.
Either way,
thank you for your interest.

SHAKING

Rei Hayakawa

The desk is shaking.
The chair is shaking.
The TV shakes its silent screen.

An empty car trembles,
as if it might run away on its own.

My mother shouts,
her voice louder than fear.
I only watch her—
still, while everything moves.

Plates cry out,
clashing like breaking time.
The house remembers the sound.

Everything shakes—
the desk, the chair, the TV.
And me, too.

Night falls.
Dark outside, darker inside.
Sirens scream too loud to ignore.

From my window, a house burns.
Fire eats what once was home.

Then—
a streak of light crosses the sky.
A shooting star.

In this painful, shadowed world,
that light lights us,
if only for a breath.

The world is cruel.
Cruel, and still turning.

Morning comes.
The light returns.

Nothing is left—
the same house,
the same park,
the same school.

And yet—
one tree stands, unshaken.

Roots deep,
branches reaching,
it gives away its strength
without asking.

Someday,
I want to be that tree—
standing,
shining,
still giving light
even after the shaking stopped.

Silence and Sound

DUMP POEMS

Hyuma Erabu

1

Dump on the road
Barely perceptible and
Flat, as the matter of course.

Gray and red,
The deadly dusk shrouded with
Clouds, with orange beaming from the

Crevices, seems to be where it came from.
The clouds are some gray and some
Whiter, light and fluffy as

Feathers. To take a momentary rest
It descended, landed
With its yellow
Talons.

2

Clouds thick enough to veil the sun
The gray
Pigeon flies in the suffocating sky

As though unable to stand the thickness
The gray walls are so thick,
Almost impossible to break
Or tear apart.
But the Pigion can still get out of the prison
Leaving a doomed crevice from which
The sun should leak its hectic life-lava
Lights,
But O how the lights and the sun itself

Are dry and stale!

The sky, the sun-trace all veilded to death
With muddy clouds so gray, hard and

Concrete down here. The pegion is never
To fly again. Pegion, picture, the cold life-lava
Rock, blood, squeezed flesh, and the sun again.

3
Fairly recognizable even in the midnight dark
Dimly lit by street lights: A dump that is to be
A cat.

The head quite smashed into flat
Balloon with little air in it,
Nose-mough-fangs hard to tell, but still well-shaped

Eyes reflect the street lights: watery with glass.
The dawn is coming. Dark brown mountain
With the dawning sun, the great vastness

Of yet-to-be-gone night.
The dawn should be nigh.
Eyes with reflected light.

4
Dump of dead duck
(Neatly set and laid
On the bridge, high above from the stream,

Sleepy eyelids, sleek neck,
Smoothly arranged, silky feathers,
Polished-round as a marble urn,
Fat and dull as a fluid-filled lumping,)

Starts to tremble, wag, quake,
Under the fluffy fall of snow.

5

Cold night,
A dump on the read, a
Lumping,
Quite smashed, flood-
Ing fluid, thin, black, reflecting
Numb, pale lights:
A crashed fruit.

MORNING IN THE LONG WINTER DAYS

Ayako Yotsubayashi

Ho! Ho! Winter is coming this year,
Father wakes up first in my family with trembling his hands.
I'm still on the bed, scaring winter spirits let me scream voice of fear,
Father says, "Morning" to David and Sam.

Mother wakes up next and says, "What shall we have today's plan?"
Winter spirits are always so mean every year.
Whispering with its breath, "Why do you stand in this land?"
To attempt to shut my mouth and ears.

I notice Mary's eyes are about to open,
Her eyes never get through any slight light.
But, I know she knows her breath more deepen,
That is stronger than the one they tried.

I can't hear their voice anymore,
Her warm hands say "Morning, Laura" like someone knocks door.

SILENCE

Marie Fukuda

In 2020,
the world fell silent.

Mornings echoed
with only the song of birds.
Afternoons carried
the faint sound of passing trains.
At night,
the chorus of insects filled the air.
Each day passed
to the same quiet soundtrack.

Inside my room—
a glowing screen,
and me.
Between me and society
stood a thick, invisible wall.
I exchanged messages with others I couldn't see,
but never spoke a single word.
Days slipped by
in silence.

2020 to 2025
Now, my world is filled with sound.

The voice of a neighbor,
the laughter of friends,
the music of shops,
the buzz of the streets.

There is no wall anymore.

I talk face to face.
I laugh out loud.
And in that moment,
sound guides me—
back into the world.

Sound shapes our days,
and moves the world forward.

THE RIVER

Yuka Kumagai

I went down to the river at dusk—
where light spilled like milk over the water,
and the trees stood still
as if they, too, were listening.

The cows stepped in without fear,
mud curling around their ankles
like a quiet offering.
A calf bent low,
its reflection rippling softly.

The sheep gathered near the reeds,
silent, except for one distant bleat—
more question than call.

The sky held itself in colors
no brush could keep:
coral and blue melting
into each other's arms.

I saw a man in the distance,
a crook in his hand,
his silhouette
stitched into the hem of the land.

Nothing moved fast.
Not the river,
not the animals,
not even my breath.

And in that stillness
something was forgiven—
though I did not know what,
or by whom.

FAREWELL

Tatsuya Kashimura

Don't say farewell, 'cause nothing is fair or well
Let's talk a lot today, 'cause tomorrow we can only chat and call
I emptied my house room, so tomorrow let's fill the chat room
The airplane makes me go up, but my fear and pain make me go down
Let's keep the chat room up to date, 'cause I'll be up today
I can't say "I'm going to stay here," I can only say "I'm going"
So you say the rest, "stay here," but we know we're gonna split up
If we split, be flexible with the environment

Why do you have to leave while sadness has to stay?
I knew you'd leave like a leaf on a tree that'll go away
I'll cry and grieve in the sea, let my tears sway to your bay
My tears go to you, even if you're overseas and far away

NONESSENTIAL

Honoka Abe

A winter without my friends
Time keeps passing, and I cannot do anything.
Only the calendar changes the seasons.

Spring has come, and the town is filled with cherry blossoms.
But there is no entrance ceremony, no need for a uniform.
The matching scarf I got with my friends remained unusual.

Early summer, when the greenery deepens.
The baseball team is silent, the brass band plays no sound.
I cannot hear the voice or laughter anymore.
It feels like no one is here.

My high school memories are...
I remember the silence of the classroom and friends wearing masks.
“Please refrain from any nonessential outings.”
Was our youth just “nonessential”?

THE PIANO

Nozomi Maruyama

I found a piano
in an old house of my grandmother.
Dust settling on its back,
The wood breathing an older king of air.

When I lifted the lid,
it creaked awake.
Yellow keys, uneven and notes.
Some would not speak at all.

Who played it?
Who loved it?
What rooms once shook
with its music?

The piano knows
songs I've never heard,
hands I'll never meet.

And that silent key
not broken,
but worn from too much playing.

Still, its trembling voice
glimmers.
In my home now,
it sings again.

UNDER THE SHINING STARRY SKY

Shion Tadokoro

Beneath the stars, the terrace softly glows,
Its secrets only silence knows.
The dizzy view, the amber light,
Reminds me of our shared delight.
I sit alone, my thoughts run deep,
As faceless shadows gently sweep.

The flickering shapes on cobblestone
Are visions I don't call my own.
Their laughter lingers in the air,
And still- I wish that you were there.

Firsts and Freedom

A LETTER TO MY PAST SELF

Mei Mizuno

Dear Me,
Do you remember that long time—
when the music stopped,
and everything changed?

No crowds.
No cheers.
Just masks, silence, and distance.

You cried—not from weakness,
but because you cared.

Still, you showed up.
You moved.
You believed.

Even without words,
we spoke through our eyes,
our steps,
our bond.

Looking back,
it wasn't a lost season.
It was a lesson in strength.

Thank you for holding on.
One day,
you'll cheer freely again.

With love,
Your future self

WE ARE GOOD FRIENDS

Ayako Yotsubayashi

When I do something good,
Her face appears in front of mine.
And she says, "Shall we go for a walk?"

Take me on a journey to find Frog and Toad,
With your magic handkerchief.
Your voice will be a wind to take me to them,
Your laughter will be a ring of bell to call them.

On the way to where they are,
I had a dream that I become a Toad.
That boy with similar appearance has a beautiful green body,
My friend with the round same black eyes is able to jump higher than me.
A tear dropped on the river,
And I arrived.

Frog is there,
But, he is crying by a post next to Toad's small house.
"Why are you crying?" I asked him,
Taking a letter with his hand, he said, "The wind is not blowing."

Frog sings a song.
When the wind blows through the leaves of bluebell,
It's time to lean on it to me.

I would say to spirits of the wind,
Where you take me is where my friend awaits.
When I listen to its last lyrics,
I closed my eyes on the dream.

She is besides me on the grass,
And reading a book,
Which we bought for our birthday present,

She reads the title of the book,
We are Good Friends.

To you, who shares the same name

This is the first English letter I wrote for you. Since we've met, you've led me to have a lot of opportunities to see something new with your passion and kindness. Even though you are stuck in your way sometimes, you had continued to keep jumping into where there is a light who shines you. Whenever you inspired me, you are my star at night. I send my appreciation and Thank You here to you.

Sincerely, Aya-Toad

PURPLE PHOTOGRAPH

Haruna Motoki

Maybe, I cherished too much
The heart was transparent from the outside
Still it takes distorted shapes

It was not a lie
The color of the sky after sunset
Glittering stickers and thin walls

Didn't mind the crows behind us
They were chasing on the grounds
We were floating on the clouds---

It was the armchair theory
Still lingering in the old wooden room
Can't reach anyone nor outside

White crow wakes me up from the dream
Takes away the sky from me
Then I realized that I was falling

I recognized you from my broken wings
I wasn't flying in the sky you collected
The spring sky you cherished was not that color

Talking to a single lily
That it was the defensive mechanism
That it was a youth's delusion

OUT OF SYNC, IN STEP

Mei Mizuno

In the corner of my living room,
the couch pushed back,
I danced to the same song
you were dancing to somewhere else.

No mirrors, no gym lights,
just the buzz of a phone camera
and the thought of our team,
scattered but still moving.

"Try lifting your arm higher."
"Love that smile!"
Advice arrived in tiny notifications,
and somehow,
your voice still reached me.

Our counts were off,
our timing flawed,
but our hearts—
they were aligned like always.

Alone, we danced together.
Out of sync,
but always in step.

FIRST NIGHT LIVING ALONE

Runa Kawashima

The first day of living alone.
Inside the room,
There is no sound.

No voices,
No footsteps,
nothing moving.

The silence wraps around me,
and I realize
how heavy it can be.

There is no sound at all.
I cannot sleep.

The quiet feels frightening,
So, I put in my earphones
and let YouTube play
until my eyes close.

The room smells new.
Clean.
Unused.

The air is slightly cold,
and I pull the blanket closer,
listening to someone else's voice
So, I don't feel completely alone.

MY WAY

Mei Mizuno

I still remember
the day I arrived.
Freedom felt wide,
almost too wide,
and I didn't know
where to stand.
I kept asking myself,
What do I want?
What should I do?
Who do I want to become?
The questions always walked
one step ahead of me.

At first, I thought friends were only
people who shared classrooms
and disappeared after lectures.

When I felt lost,
they stayed.

In the library, late at night,
we studied, prepared for the future,
and kept going
together.

Each time an airplane passed
above the campus,
I looked up.
Somewhere up there,
my future felt closer,
and I believed
I could keep going.

I entered this place
knowing nothing
about myself,
or the road ahead.

Here, I found people,
kept asking,
and chose
my own direction.

The university was not a place
that gave me answers,
but one where I found
those who could face forward with me.

I am no longer
the uncertain person who arrived.
Now I step toward what comes next,
ready to depart.

REACTION PAPER

Akeira Watanabe

I enter university
without knowing anyone.
Through social media,
I find someone in the same department.
She invites me to go with her
to the entrance ceremony.
There are six girls, including me.
We all go together.
For the first few months,
all of our classes are hybrid.
In-person classes are only two days a week,
and even on those days,
not all classes are held in classrooms.
Some classes are still online,
so I take them in the cafeteria
or in open classrooms.
I write my first reaction paper.
At first, I am confused and worried
about what I am supposed to write.
Freshman first semester
is spent in the cafeteria taking online classes,
in classrooms one seat apart,
and in my room,
wearing a casual top
with pajama pants

during Zoom classes.
My first summer break is memorable.
There are a lot of firsts.
For the first time in my life,
I do not have summer homework.
I just enjoy almost two months of break.
I go on my first girls' trip ever,
to Hokkaido,
with my friend,
with no chaperone following us.
Freshman second semester,
All my classes are finally in person,
except for one French class.
I still wonder what that professor looks like.
That year,
I walk in the fashion show
at the Shirokane festival.
It feels nostalgic.
When I was younger,
I used to attend a summer modeling camp every year.
My freshman year becomes
the foundation of my friendships.
If I could go back in time
and give myself advice,
I would tell myself
to treasure the people I meet during this year.
I also get a boyfriend,
to top it all off.

During my first spring break,
I go to Hokkaido for the second time,
this time with my boyfriend.
I also go to my motherland, the Philippines,
with my university friends.
The Manila trip is unforgettable.
We have a lot of fun.
That feeling is balanced by the moment
when the plane back to Japan
takes off without me
and one other friend.
We are told
that all flights are fully booked
until the next day.
Sophomore year goes by quickly.
I have fewer classes than in freshman year.
There is a lot of going out
and going on vacation.
I go on six trips that year,
almost one every two months.
Junior year,
I have even fewer classes than in sophomore year.
I only go to school three days a week.
I start researching the airline industry.
I have always wanted to be a flight attendant.
Since I was a little girl,
I have admired how tall and beautiful they are,
and how they travel to different countries

while working.

It is also the year when
everyone start job hunting,
so I try.

But I come to a realization that
it may not be the end of my life
if I do not land a job
right after graduating from university.
I start thinking more about the present
instead of worrying too much about the future.

Junior year summer is also when
my boyfriend goes on an exchange program
to San Francisco.

It is my first long-distance relationship.

Junior year is full of vacations.

I experience riding the subway
in different countries.

It is a culture shock.

Not all subways have signals like in Japan.

I travel outside Japan and the Philippines
for the first time.

I visit California,
go to LA,
and know my ten-year-old self
would be jealous.

Senior year,

I take only two classes.

I take one class alone.

I do not have friends in it.
It teaches me responsibility.
If I miss class,
there is no one to ask
what I missed.
I take my last class as a university student.
It does not feel different.
I sit, listen,
and write a reaction paper
probably the last one
I will ever write.
After the last session,
it feels like I will still have class next week.
It has not sunk in yet.
The past four years feel
like the summer vacation of my life.
I learn about different types of friendships:
friends I say hi and hello to when we pass each other,
friends I only meet in class,
friends who ask favors and about homework,
friends who ask me to save them a seat,
friends I meet after school to drink
and have deep conversations with,
and old friends I see only a few times a year
but never lose the connection with.
As I finish writing this poem,
it will probably be the last poem
I will ever write in my life.

I can say
that my university experience
is truly one of a kind.
And did I mention
I have bleached hair
when I started university?

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