

Saratoga Loves

Poetry

A poetry contest for students in grades kindergarten through 12 who live or attend school in Saratoga!

Maya Tian

2022 3rd Prize

Grades 9 - 12



About the Author:

Maya Tian is a sophomore at Saratoga High-school. When she's not doing schoolwork, she's daydreaming about story ideas that only sometimes make their way onto paper. She reluctantly started writing in 5th grade with much persuasion from her mother and now finds it to be her most prominent hobby. Maya is also an avid reader of all genres, and the only thing she loves more than writing is curling up with a good book, insisting she'd finish it before she sleeps.

Poem:

Hope is not a thing with feathers:

Hope is not a thing with feathers
Not while she anchors to your heart
Searching for air in the rib-cages of whales,
Swallowing shells to fill her lungs
If she had more time she'd find a way to breathe, she begs
But the world keeps spinning, and is it not you and your temperament
That drags Hope's love-worn body to be undrowned

Sinking knee deep into earth, cold and meaningless, but dry
Sleep among split open fruit leaking sweet nectar
And smell nothing but the rot
Skin washed out from wallowing in waves, dust, and sentiment
Finger ache from loving to many lost things
You amble, lit eyes blown out like candles
Skyfacing palms bleed on the edges of petals
Finding direction through the veins of leaves to follow until
Hope learns to breathe, breathe in the smell of those chrysanthemums
Those white chrysanthemums
She will rise wiping dirt off her dress, grit off her face, blood off her knees
Latch onto new meaning, new purpose, and soar

About the Poem:

The most obvious inspiration is Emily Dickinson's "Hope is a thing with feathers". I loved this poem and how it portrays hope, but also how a lot of other writers reference hope as a more baseless desire that does more harm than good. White chrysanthemums in many cultures represent death and are reserved for sympathy and remembrance. I wanted to balance the themes of grief and hope and how they feed each other in some ways. I tried to showcase the five stages of grief while going through the poem, though I'm not sure how well that came through.