

[Poetry Anthology]

[Winter]

Zach Hammack

Period 8
Creative Writing

Elegy for Spring

The guillotine of wintry Death,
Brought forth by icy breath,
Lands on petals crimson red,
And chills the rooted soil bed.

Snows from heaven's highest spire,
Fill the trees and flood the briar.
Gardens turn to oceans white,
Reflecting nature's doleful light.

Silence muffles the eerie dirge,
Of flowers' voices that feel the urge,
To cry for help amongst the cold,
And escape Death's choking hold.

The trees cannot sound the wail,
To tell the gods the wintry tale,
Where snows serve as unjust foes,
Bringing Death to the rose.

As the earth is covered now,
A bird peels from a bough,
And tells the clouds high to know,
That Death is carried by its snow.

But the clouds heed not the plea
That nature begs on the knee,
Asking why Death comes so fast,
To Spring's verdant, fabled past.

It's Death's dark duty to sound the horn,
That says winter be quickly born,
Onto lively gardens vast
Foretold before, they would not last.



Nigh Storm

Swollen clouds press on,
Winds sweep down over the field,
Fair children, go home.

The Schoolhouse

When the schoolhouse was one,
After the sun had drifted into its zenith,
The pillars and castles of clouds came in,
Lithely moving into position.

Once the teacher had taught the lesson,
The students went out to eat,
On the threadbare wild grass,
Where the wind blew steadily.

The snow came down and never stopped,
In ferocity it covered the ground,
And in minutes, feet accumulated.
The clouds were now fixed, not moving.

The kids had gone far off,
To a canopied gully to play near the stream,
Away from the teacher's gaze,
As the blizzard fell.

The teacher darted through the snow,
Shouting names and buttoning her coat,
The snow made it all invisible,
A fog of suffocating cold.

They had not a cap, nor any mittens
But ragged coats to keep them warm.
They began to trudge towards a direction,
Unknown to them; blindly they marched.

The names were shouted, but muffled,
By the increasing snow,
The teacher had no choice,
But to return to the schoolhouse.

Upon hopeless feet they tread the snow,
The students in one circle,
Holding hands to keep from being lost,
Like the hidden sun, they moved.

And whether from divine help,
Or the choice of fate.
The children found their way back,
And ran in through the door.

The teacher, relieved, hugged them all.
Her guilt was no more.
They waited in the house all day,

And when night came they could not leave.

For now the snow was nearly six feet high,
Planting against the walls.
The violent creak of wooden planks,
Made them shudder in the frozen air.

When daybreak dawned once again,
The torch shone brightly on the wasteland.
And on sled came a bearded man,
Looking for the schoolhouse.

Like a stoic statue, the building stood,
Plastered by the arctic mess,
The rescuer whipped the dogs further,
"There it is!" he yelled.

His shout rode the chilled air,
And the schoolhouse turned to gaze,
Through the door they saw the sled,
And shouted in angelic glee.

"To save us all!" they announced,
To the tormenting snow.
Freezing, shaking, they embraced the man.
He had come to take them home.

And through the streets,
Of the valiant village,
The schoolhouse rode,
Among the sled, overflowing with joy.

In two weeks the snow was nearly gone,
And the schoolhouse returned,
And when the sun was in its zenith again
Teacher and students were one.



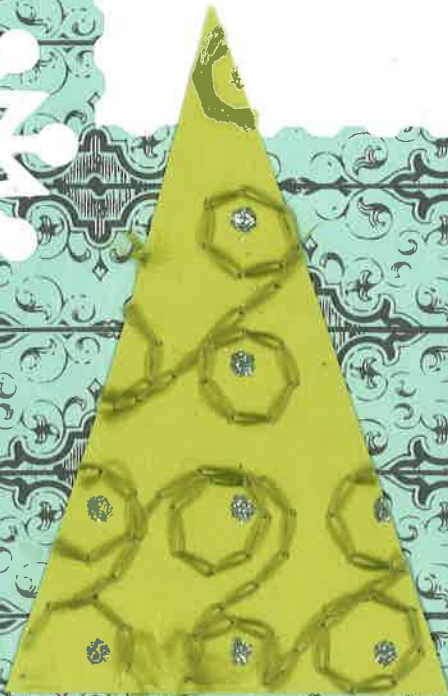
The Hunter

The tumult of a sleepless night,
To be awoken by the cold,
And find your mind absent of light,
Your cabin flooded by candled gold.

You hear the cry come weaving
Over the wooded vale,
You grab your gun and start leaving,
The cabin, dark and frail.

Into the shadowed woods you go,
Hunting down your prey,
A mysterious fowl hanging low,
Near the river's way.

And with a shot you end it true,
The prey and its piercing cry,
And trudging through the morning dew,
You hold it by its talons high.



THE FROZEN DRIFTER


ONCE THE STORM HAS CEASED TO TROUBLE
THE VAGABOND LEFT AT NIGHT,
LIT HIS LANTERN AND GRABBED HIS SHOVEL,
AN ORB OF STEADY, KEROSENE LIGHT.

HE DUG A TUNNEL IN THE SNOW,
CARVING A PATH EVER SO FINE
DESTINED WHERE HE WISHED TO GO,
TO THE BENT, BURDENED EVERGREEN PINE.

FOR WHEN HE GOT TO THE CAVE,
MADE OF BRANCHES HANGING LOW,
HE FASHIONED HIMSELF A FIRE TO SAVE,
HIS FROZEN LIMBS ENCASED IN SNOW.

AND TO THE REALM OF SLEEP,
HIS MIND WENT TO BURROW AND HIDE,
BUT THE MAN FORGOT TO KEEP
THE FIRE STOKED, BEFORE IT DIED.

SO AS THE ANGEL FLAKES FELL,
ONTO THE WEAKLY PINE'S CORE,
HE COULD NOT ISSUE HIS YELL
TO THE COLD; HE WAS NO MORE.



Cycles

Winter

Biting the air

Breathing its soul

Into each flake

Setting the icy mold

To be contorted

By wanderers

Left to melt

Under March skies

And again the cycle

Is redressed

Repeated.

Spring



Poetry Anthology
Author's Note

This collection of poems revolves around the theme of “winter”. Instead of painting a hopeful picture filled with fluffy, optimistic words I contrast the usual perception of winter as a “white wonderland” with my idea of winter as a tool for suffering. Humanity is stuck within winter. The only way out is through diligence and waiting. By the end of anthology, winter leaves, but it will return. That is one my themes that I subtly point out in my poetry: that life is cyclical, that all suffering comes to an end, that peace will reign, and then suffering is reborn once more. There is nothing humanity can do to transform the laws of nature. We must wait for the infamous wheel of fortune to once again turn, and turn, and turn...

Author's Note
"Elegy for Spring"

This is my introductory poem, detailing the death of spring and the birth of winter. Its primary function is to set the scene for the rest of my poetry, where winter serves as the agent of suffering. I think through "Elegy for Spring" winter is shown as a bitter inevitability. Everything that is to follow is not the cause of some determined evil, but as the product of nature.

Author's Note
"Nigh Storm"

Now that winter has descended upon my anthology, it is time for the great storm, a storm that will announce the presence of winter determinedly. This short haiku is in fact, a preliminary poem to "A Schoolhouse" where the entire story is put into narrative form. "Nigh Storm" acts as a suspense-builder.

Author's Note
"The Schoolhouse"

The heart of my anthology comes in the surreal form of this narrative. It is yet another example of brutal, suffering that contrasts with the general views of winter as a beautiful time of the year. The Schoolhouse is a symbolic representation of humanity as a whole and the suffering it must endure because humanity is a part of nature and must take part in its side effects.

Author's Note
"The Hunter"

This poem purposefully makes no mention of winter because it is to be implied. Since it comes during the latter part of my anthology, I believe my readers will assume that winter is an invisible part of my piece. I apply more symbolism here. The fowl is representation of man's conquering nature, which will in fact commence a new season of hope and life: Spring.

Author's Note
"The Frozen Drifter"

This poem is straightforward, journalistic. It details the death of a homeless wanderer. I paint this vivid picture to show that everyone is affected by nature and to display the empty hope we all carry in this world, even if we don't know what will happen next. The absurdist qualities of the piece show that fate is random; nothing is predictable. The fire burns out not because of some intervening force above, but because nature randomly selected it to do so. There is nothing humanity can do to truly change the essence of nature, except through careful diligence.

Author's Note
"Cycles"

This is the conclusion to my work. Winter lets out its last roar, and then is melted away. Spring reconquers the earth and the reign of power is shifted. It is an optimistic poem, it should give us hope. Humanity has been saved; the brutal force of winter will leave for the time being but will return. Life is the same way; it is built on cycles of good and evil. We have up times and down times. It is constantly spinning. Nothing lasts forever.