Madeline Gorman
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I float through the wind like a parachute
or a bird with its wings outstretched, feathers blowing.
My memory began in a blinding room
filled with food that glinted from fluorescent lights.
I was made from the minds of humans, the hands of machines,
Until, suddenly, the world whizzed with colors
while I danced along in the wind.
I was tossed and turned like floating leaves
through canopies of green.
It only took a little bit before I felt water filling me up so full
that I sunk sunk sunk and sunk.
I thought I was done for when I caught onto something—it swam up to the surface and I was saved!
Sleeping on this creature I felt secure.
I held onto the rough back for days,
though finally it came to pass,
a wind so mighty blew me by
and I sunk down to the depths, lost forever more.
Yet don't worry, I found another friend to hold so dear...

I am a turtle,
Swimming through crystal blue water clear as glass,
waves that ripple old songs and memories.
I float day by day, humming my song
until all that changed.
Plastic now covers my eyes from light,
So sheer yet so dangerous—
I swim and fight though I know the end is near.
I rest upon a rock with barnacles clinging for dear life,
My stomach yells for food
yet my mouth is unable to open.
I was ready for the end...freedom.
I swam and swam...safe at last.
The little duckling and the tasty plastic bag

Wading boats rocking in the subtle ripples
of the pond,
an agile dragonfly skimming the surface
of the water, like an aeroplane landing on the smooth concrete
of the runway.
Gorgeous morning!
Barmy leaves blowing from the rheumatic branches
into the endless depths,
fragile dandelion tufts flying in the whistling wind,
landing on the glistening water.
Lovely day...
and look at that delicious looking seaweed running across the street, like a gazelle fleeing a bloodthirsty lion.
Boy, am I hungry.
Little duckling, waddling towards the mouth watering “seaweed”.
Just one bite...
and...
BAM!!!!
Run over, flat as a pancake.
At least the wee duck had the chance to taste the number one killer in the world.
I am the oak, tall and brilliant, looming over the other trees of the forest
Grand, proud and strong
Forever unbeaten
Deep emerald leaves dancing about my branches.
Suddenly, something catches in my branches.
   A bag.
   Ensnared
   Caught
Hanging on to my trunk.
Not enough to vex my strength.
But then a second comes
   And a third
   More and more until I am
   Overcome
   Overwhelmed
   Incapable of continuing
   I forfeit the battle
   Beaten by something so weak
   And yet earth changing.
Rayzie Benjamin
John F. Kennedy Middle School
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i remember it
deep pearly-clear some days
some days dark blue mysterious
frothy, bubbling, rushing.
hadn't been around to visit in awhile, forgot how much i'd missed her.
went over to the shore, but i couldn't recognize her
reminded me of the sensation of
reuniting with a friend who fell out of touch, or
a pet who ran away
and showed up awhile later on my red-brick doorstep
but we no longer shared the special bond.
it was like that, when I decided to take a swim after years of not
and I realized, as my toes fell beneath the glowing sand, that
good things can often disappear before your eyes
but loyalty comes in disguise
loyalty: something that never lasts forever if it isn't returned
can you blame the ocean, really?
wouldn't you get tired of doing favors
for everyone except yourself
and nobody gives you anything in return.
now the ocean, she's tired of it, and who wouldn't be?
it's bad enough, people taking you for granted
but it's worse when people treat you horribly
when all you've done is given them favors.
but alas, we've ruined her
we assumed she'd always be there for us, but she wasn't
after what we'd done to her, i'm surprised she was ever
so kind to us in the first place.
anyway, my visit isn't going too well.
I can't swim or frolic in the sand with all my children
who will never, ever know
the first place I called home.
I Am The Ocean

I am the Ocean.
A shining sapphire gem
Cradling the Earth,
Gripping many wonders of the world.
Every day,
You humans destroy me little by little
But I know

You can also stop this

Every day an assemblage of plastic and trash
gets dumped onto me.
Soon enough,
    all of this non-decomposable debris will cover me in a giant blanket,
like you who snuggle into your comforters at the end of the day,
And do not recognize this painful headache

It seems alright to you to do this, but you are killing.
Killing the sea animals and rocky coral reefs
    even though their lives are just as important as yours.
Your microplastics and non-biodegradable objects are toxifying me,
    and all the plastics that look like a pleasant school of fish
are taunting and confusing.

Your pollution, making me a vile place to be,
when once I was so pleasing and useful to you.
What is the point of me talking about this to you now?
I want you to hear me,
and to know how hard it has become
for me to
    be the
Ocean.
Plastic Poem
The Death of Mother Nature

Everything is plastic.
From a middle school perspective, that is.
From people to emotions.
From plastic water bottles to the sad smiles.
But we still have the green of the earth, beckoning us to
just sit in the shade of our favorite maple tree and read.
But we can't,
Because underneath that old, old maple tree,
Lay an abundance of different plastic and other materials
People
"Forgot"
To throw away.
Or that classic
Excuse
"It's not mine!" with those
Colossal
Bright
Doe
Eyes that always seem
To work with
People,
But never with Gaia.
So I suppose we don't really still have
Good of mother nature:
No, I suppose we only have the
Landfills with newspapers from the 1950's and that
Plastic bag your mother
Used at Whole Foods, 2006.
So we just sit inside,
Mocking
The people who try to
Help.
I am a tree,
majestic,
unmovable,
a wooden giant
who has withstood
the elements
time and time again.
Watch me dance
with the wind
swaying,
to a nothing tune.
Watch the rain
bend my limbs,
as if I
could not support myself.
Yet as the years go on,
I find myself unable to breathe,
able to feel
anything other than
the plastic bags
that now cover my once
exquisite branches.
My leaves have no room
to grow,
and I am slowly dying.
Plastic sands
cover my roots,
crawling over them
with an unfillable need.
I am fighting a futile war,
against the ever growing
plastic army.
Intertwined

What disheartens me most
Is to walk in nature.
To see the brilliant sunlight filter through a pellucid plastic bag
Finding a home in the branches of a tree.
The great umber stalks of oaks
Surrounded by dust filled amber bottles and silver cans,
They beg me to free them of this mess.
Save them from the fate that seems imminent.

The aurelian sands of crowded beaches
Littered with the remains of visitors past,
Like corpses on a battlefield.
Which in a way they are
Warriors have gone to arms
To protect the earth we know and love,
Armed with garbage bags and gloves.
Prepared to fight.

But not all people are like this.
Rivers of detritus still flow by
Debris still builds up across the globe.
Our way of life is
Unsustainable.
It seems
Unconquerable.
But I won’t give in just yet.
I refuse to watch the earth crumble.
We can fix our mistakes,
Right our wrongs,
And let our broken world mend.
Candy Flowers

I see mallards floating along the surface of the pond,
    Letting the wind sail them around.
    I take a closer look,
    It is not a flock of mallards,
    But a group of colorful soda bottles
    gliding around the edge of the water.

I spot golden dandelions speckling a hill.
    I take a closer look,
    It is not a patch of luscious yellow flowers,
    But neon candy wrappers scattered along the grass.

    I notice the long billowing
    branches of a nearby willow tree.
    I take a closer look.
    It is not leaves swaying in the breeze,
    But plastic bags caught on one of the branches.

Candy flowers, plastic trees, and decoy ducks.
    Is this really us?
The tree stands on the beach,
At the junction of worlds,
Where the rocky grass fades
Into smooth, golden sand,
Crystal blue waves lapping at the shore.

It stands firmly,
Hundreds of lifetimes buried in its roots,
Thousands of secrets hidden in its branches.
It watches quietly, contentedly, as the world spins on,
Grateful for the roots and soil keeping it bound, safe.

Things begin to shift.

Strange, brightly colored objects
Begin to invade the once empty sand.
Crystal blue waves turn dark, murky.
The tree watches, a bad feeling growing in its roots.
The only visitors are the birds.
They peck at the objects, curious.
The tree's bad feeling grows.

One of the birds edges closer
To a bright red hunk that glints in the sun.
The tree watches,
Frozen.
The bird shifts, its beak opening.
The tree strains,
Cursing the roots and the soil keeping it bound, trapped.
Trying to call out
NO!
But the words don't come.
The bird lunges.

Time seems to stop.

And then the bird
Swallows.
Trapped in Plastic
The Life of a Sea Turtle

I push my beak up against the wall that's surrounding me
Smooth and moist, like dewy morning grass.
I fight the pressure pushing back on me,
CRACK! The shell gives in
I peer out the small opening to see a blanket of blue-gray sky hovering above me.
This egg is no longer mine.

I wiggle out of the gap
And climb out of the sandy hole I was tucked in,
Revealing myself to this new world.
I feel grainy sand brush up against my wet fins.
It sticks to them like glue.
Hundreds of other baby turtles burst out of their eggs, exposing themselves to the scary world
that's waiting for them.

Together, we waddle our way to the water
We reach the sea,
but we've lost many turtles along the way,
to hungry predators eager for a meal.
The waves grab the survivors and send us plunging deep,
Into the cold, salty water that will be our new home.

Strong, powerful, waves force us to spread apart
And we scatter like a flock of birds, when a human gets too close.
I'm all alone in this new habitat.
Watching my new world open up to me.

Curiosity takes over my mind.
And a colorful shape surfing the waves catches my attention.
I glide across the water chasing the object, like a game of tag.
Finally, I catch up and see that it's a bright and friendly green.
My stomach growls, and now I know it's food.
I swallow it down without a second thought.
Little do I know that this is a marine entanglement.
A piece of plastic lost in the ocean.
An object that will end my life.
Teaming with life
rippling waters
imagine my horror, my disgust,
as I watched sparkling emerald water
grudgingly consume our waste.

Mnipotent river
groaning as
the plasticine rubbish
thudded into the deep,
a thorn, stuck in the depths of the river's soul. Like a

Xenolith, it will stay
embedded in the riverbed
until after years of agony
the mighty river withers
into a caked collage of synthetic bones.

Immortal bits of HDPE
may remain longer than the
skeletons of our friends and family,
eexisting in corners no human could reach.

Created by our ancestors,
and has taken on a life
of its own.
Now only we
can save the river before
it becomes... [See Large Font]
Roan Dunkerley
John F. Kennedy Middle School
Northampton, MA 01060

Dear Plastic,

Why?
Why do you drift, blowing in the wind?
Why do you move, going, but going nowhere? You constantly seek what is always out of
reach, like the sun almost, but not, touching the moon.
You origins are scarred with terror, a tumultuous pummeling as you emerged into the
sunlight, ripped out from beneath the earth’s crust. But there is no excuse for the torture,
and torment you’ve caused your own mother, and all creatures of the light and dark alike.
Unwanted, but needed, there is no future where you are gone, so you stay, still drifting, still
going.
You always end up with your kind, on land or sea. Heaping piles of waste, for that is all you
are.
When the end of time has come and our beings and bones are gone, you will still be here,
still, drifting, wandering, like my thoughts, but still, going nowhere.

Sincerely,

Earth
James Stauder
John F. Kennedy Middle School
Northampton, MA 01060

I am Big Blue

The vast ocean that stretches across all corners of the earth. I am the habitat for billions of creatures and billions more depend on the bounty of resources that lay in my waters. Some worship me. Some fear me. But some do not care for My importance. Their foul machines pollute my waters dumping chemicals and Trash into my waters. My heated waters are Spewed with every object imaginable. The time is overdue to remove this trash from are great Blue—act now before I disappear and plastic withers away on my littered floor.
Christopher Huntley
John F. Kennedy Middle School
Northampton, MA 01060

I Am the Wasted

I am the wasted
The hated
The lost
Caught in the wind
Carried far
Stuck in a tree someone--pulls me down
I blow away
And help make a baby whale drown
I was thrown in the trash
And sent to a landfill
I did not stay
I blew away
And that's all that I can say
If I were recycled I could be free
And maybe
Just maybe be,
A bench
A slide
A bike
A car,
Or a fan
A fence
A desk
Or a wall
I could be a ball
Or a toy that is small,
But instead I am
The baby whale killer
The landfill filler
And the global warming fulfills
I am a plastic bag
Dalia Dembling
John F. Kennedy Middle School
Northampton, MA 01060

The old folks tell tall tales... of whispering trees.
The trees used to speak, and listen with their leaves.
Travelers would never be alone in the forest,
For critters dwelled there...
Bright colored and many-legged.
Leepos and Cherry Ants and Five-Eyed Fireflies,
Would dance, and sing songs 'round the fire,
For the trees to sing along.

But soon as did perish these petite little bugs, along with the trees
   As the forests caught fire
   before they were discovered.
Sapiens came along, but wise they were not.
   They trashed their planet
   With distinct rudeness and flare,
And the trees did not speak, they never did dare.
But their eyes still follow weary visitors of the forest
   Hoping one of them will help them
   And start treating earth fair.

So someday, perhaps,
   A little boy or little girl,
   Will pass through the forest
   Looking for squirrel or for bear,
   And find instead a small beetle
   The color of the sun.
   A small orange creature,
   Buried under a rock
   The last of its kind,
   Alone and forgot.
And unless these children
   Have been raised to really care,
   This child will leave the poor beetle
   To rot.
The lighthouse watches on its rocky perch
As Mr. Sun begins to lay his sleepy head.
His eye sweeps around the island
Watching.
Baby birds coo softly nestling into their mother.
A faun, fast asleep.
Nuzzles against her father.
As the inky blackness of night
Spreads across the sky,
The wolf gives one last howl.
Ocean waves lap up against the shore
Slapping the stones.
Another night.
The watchtower closes its eyes
Dreaming of seabirds
Scooping up wriggling.
Silver fish in their strong beaks.
But then
His eye snaps open.
Something strange
Has hit his rocks.
A plastic bottle thunks against the cobblestone.
A shopping bag caught in a tree
Waves limply like a flag in the wind.
The ocean spits out colorful bottle caps and straws.
The lighthouse watches in horror
As a turtle swallows
A bit of plastic cup.
A strong wind whips through the trees.
*I'm sorry*
It whispers.
*I'm sorry.*