



“The Death of Summer” by Kyndall Cook
3rd Place, Poetry 13-15

It's dark and quiet

Moonlight filters through ripped-cotton clouds,
cicadas sing in morse code, and crickets play broken violins
as the night fades into day and the day breaks through to night.

It's a never-ending cycle of burning and bursting
and falling and fading,
and the confusion of summer's adventurers swirls up
into dusk's air like the smoke of a soaring bonfire.

A blurring collage of nights fast-fading from your mind,
A rebellious rendezvous
of your best and your brightest
and your oh-so-shiny-est memories,
a toxic evening spent alone
and surrounded by acquaintances
that you've never been acquainted with,
a night spent drowning
in the endless endings of a careless youth.

Her funeral is black.

The only splash of color sits delicately
in the coffin of your memories,
to be thought about
once you've stopped fighting for every breath

and taken a moment to smell the flowers at your feet
instead of choking on the dirt.

A service of tears and goodbyes
and perpetual promises that will never vanish,
but rather dull in the back of your mind
as you slowly relinquish your ability to remember,
to think back to simpler times.

The next morning's sunrise is a stranger.
It is not the sun that kissed your face until you blushed,
that sent condensation dripping down your skin
as you roamed the length of her perfect beach.
It isn't a sun at all,
but a cruel reminder of the days you were happy,
a replacement in the sky as if nature couldn't handle
its perfect chaos a second longer.

You're wearing black for a long time,
waiting for the day when you too might leave
for a while and come back to find yourself
deep in the throes of youth and bad decisions.
But for now,
you'll stay in black.