“The Morning Routine of a Ghost”
by Alexa Wicklund
1st Place, Poetry 16-18
my tongue is heavy
i have nothing to say.
i slip out of covers
-undercover-
the matted carpet rising
to meet my bare feet
they carry my body
to the bathroom sink
used toothbrushes and cosmetics
my eyes lift to the dirty reflection,
detached;
hair matted
lips chapped
thin fingers brush my skin
tracing the wrinkles
i turn away in denial

if you don’t see it
it didn’t happen

my soles pad down the stairs
cold blanketing the steps
airless bones
levitating
toes barely brushing the floor
am i even here?
hand reaches
for the
tasteless coffee beans
liquid milk
cascading through
the bottomless mug
down to the floor
-i don't bother-

pause

how long
have i wandered
into vacant mornings
and
through dreamless nights

inanimate
lifeless

as if
i have already fallen
into oblivion
already a ghost
before becoming a skeleton
already gone
with breath still in my lungs
already wasting away
with flesh still attached

be a good steward
my mother told me
steward the time you have
before you don’t
fulfill your calling
before your grave does
with gritty dirt
over your wooden coffin
inhale your air
my son
deep breaths