



Whispers From The Wood

Winter Editon

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Zoey Gill

Stuck

Currently missing the humid heat of the summer,
the freedom I had at night,
forgetting the education that made me lose my worth.
It wasn't about learning, it was about passing.
Doing everything I can to feel the winter mist,
taking hours that'll stress me out.
I'd do anything to get out of this house.
It's been too long.
Time to gravitate towards being an adult.
College is out the picture
until I can afford it myself,
Or maybe get a scholarship.
Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Spring break,
aren't breaks anymore.
It's just no school but I got a lot of things in store.
Soon I will be shoveling snow off the pavement,
lips chapped and faces kinda ashy,
holding onto the warmth in my coat.
I hope next year will keep me afloat.

Amani Hamiel

A Different Christmas

It's morning!

Feet running down the stairs.

Gifts filled under the tree.

Randomly ripping gifts open...

Only in my dream.

My morning...

Feet races to get more food...

Only the tree is the one outside...

Standing in line to eat...

““Yes, may I get more please?”

Merry Christmas.

Steffanie Powell

Phoenix

The year of 2021 will be the year of the phoenix.
As we rise up from the ashes of 2020,
We become stronger,
More united,
More willing to take a stand,
We will be reborn.

Sarah Verbeck
Winter's Distance

As normalcy dissipates,
I can't help but wonder what this means.
A family,
already separated by distance,
ripped of the opportunity to reunite.
Winter's cold touch hits hard.
A joyful holiday season has lost its magic,
leaving behind golden memories.
A time for coming together is gone,
replaced with winter's distance.

Erik Davis

**It's Beginning to Look a lot like Quarantinemas
(Parody of It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas)**

It's beginning to look a lot like Quarantinemas
Everywhere you go
Wait why is it suddenly nine, I could have sworn that it was five.
With Peppermint mocha in my Starbucks cup.
It's beginning to look a lot like Quarantinemas
With masks in every store
But the prettiest sight to see is the holly that will be
On your own front door.
A box of premium mask and hand sanitizer that doesn't stink
Is the wish of Barney and Ben
Hearing somebody talk and going for a walk
Is the hope of Janice and Jen
And Mom and Dad can hardly wait for recession to end.
It's beginning to look a lot like Quarantinemas
Everywhere you go
There's a tree in the CVS and one in the park as well
It's the sturdy kind that doesn't ind the snow
It's beginning to look a lot like Quarantinemas
The coughing will never start
And that's because all I do is school work
Right within my home
It's beginning to look a lot like Quarantinemas
Masks need t be worn in every store
But the prettiest sight to see is the holly that will be
On your own front door

Erik Davis

O Quarantine (parody of O Christmas Tree)

O Quarantine
O Quarantine
Your days are unchanging
O Quarantine,
O Quarantine
Your days are never-ending

You were boring even when summer was here
and also when it's cold and drear
O Quarantine,
O Quarantine
Your days are so unchanging

O Quarantine,
O Quarantine
I want to leave my house, pretty please
O Christmas tree,
O Christmas tree
I want to leave my house, pretty pretty please

How often has the Quarantine
Given me existentialism
O Quarantine,
O Quarantine
Much dread you do give me

From March to December
You're so mundane
The only splendor in my life
Is when I leave the house at night.
O Quarantine,
O Quarantine
You're really driving me up a wall.

O Quarantine,
O Quarantine
You're really driving me up a wall.

Alex Clarke

New Beginnings

The cold but bliss air of Christmas morning will feel a little different this year.
The warmth and light of family coming together has been dimmed.
I feel Christmas cheer no longer holds the same weight as it once did.
The ball dropping won't hold the same suspense.
No more New York crowd yelling at the top of their lungs.
While we go into this new year I hope we are welcomed with a new beginning.
A reset to the things many of us have experienced.
I believe we as people will hold on and continue to prevail against the odds.
And hopefully "New year, new me" will have a much greater meaning this time around.

Martina Jeudy
Hues of Blue

Weather changes,
for somber phases
of what new life looks like.
Now is the time to catch up,
see family and relish in the new,
but we are held back
by the regulations
that are the new normal.
Computer screens host
the dinners and vacations.
Making the gap much wider,
holding simple communication
at a bay.
Happy Holidays,
From the digital view
of the past life.

Jordan Powell

This Year

The end of autumn and beginning of winter have always been my favorite part of the year.

There's something about the holidays that just bring endless joy.

Whether it's all the decorations,

The family gatherings,

Or the urge to be generous and give,

It's the part of the year that I always look forward to most.

But this year, it's different.

The one thing we can all agree on, is that this year has been the absolute worst.

So I was more excited about the holidays than I've ever been.

I was hoping they would make this year a little more tolerable,

But no.

This year the lights don't gleam like they normally do,

We can't look forward to seeing family, without fearing for their safety.

Before, joy during the holidays was a given.

Now, we have to fish for it.

Diamond Hicks

Falling Ice

Light sheets of frost come with time,
signalling how joy and cheer is around the corner.
Trees are sprouted within homes,
and socks fit for bears get hung up on walls.
Boxes are wrapped in decorative paper,
and warm chocolate is made with swirled cream on top.
Now where we would normally go play,
throwing snow like children and laughing.
We now stay inside locked doors,
looking hopelessly out at windows.
Too afraid of others to even glance across the street,
alone stuck behind our prison wall.
Yet, we improvise,
We get creative with cookies and treats.
Working around our struggles and our disputes,
if only to have peace and sincerity for this one time.
Stress has haunted our year,
letting it break away and ease into calm.

Melissa Downs

The Frozen Pond

A pond coated in ice
Still as could possibly be
Aquatic plants poke out their stems
Like little islands in a vast sea
And the snow sliding across it's frosty sheet
Seem to resemble gathering clouds
Until there comes a pair of boots
Shoulders holding layers of shrouds
There are many other routes to go
But haste has fogged their mind
Without another thought they decide to take
The easiest path they could find
They take one strong step
And see they've took no plunge
And so walk across the bridge of ice
While their shoes leave a trail of grunge
The pond's beauty is now disturbed
They couldn't see it's worth,
And their pressure has now cracked
This small and fragile earth

Norah Sheldon

My Wish

The world is changing
Our traditions are gone
Is Santa coming?
Or is he staying home...
With his green and red mask
What about the elves?
Are they working in the toy shop or are they home?
If Santa doesn't come... how will he grant my one wish?
My one wish... to make this madness end.
Covid-19, protests, hate towards people.
Just please santa...
Grant me this one wish

Ayali Thomas

A Winter Day and A Winter Night

Though days in winter are short and fleeting
I love to play in the snow
I run and slide and jump around
Until it gets too cold
Then night come and i must go
As my nose turns red and glows
I wiggle in warmth of my fluffy pajamas
Hiding my toes from the cold
These are day I cherish and hold
As winter days and night passes faster than most
So I'll play today and enjoy my time
And I'll see you next year at winter time

Anthony Valentin
One Little Thing

What are the holidays to you or to me?
To most, it's the presents wrapped under the tree
The festive lights and the sweet smells
All clambering to sing along to Jingle Bells
Red and green strewn throughout town
Snowflakes falling softly to the ground
The cool breeze contrasted against the warmth
Of the great red jolly man from the north
Ginger bread, eggnog, the past's morbid ghost
Adults clinking glasses and cheering a toast
Kids laughing, smiling, and talking
The babies and elders stretching and yawning
It's a wonderful thing, the 25th of December
Gathered around an open fire, breathing in the embers
Nothing could ever take anyone away
From that one little thing called Christmas Day

Rebecca Meze

Star-crossed Lovers

Blankly stared at the stars above from my porch. I connected the dots from star to star, drawing shapes that no one else could see. Then I was suddenly interrupted.

“Stargazing?” Some boy asked me out of nowhere. I flinched before turning to him.

“W-Woah! Where did you come from?”

“Oh...I just moved in next door!” He softly smiled before extending his hand for me to shake. I stepped back from him a bit. “No?” I uncomfortably shook my head.

“Stars.” He said as he pointed to the sky before turning his attention onto the night sky.

“Mhm.” I nodded.

We stayed there for a bit before I heard my mother call for me from inside the house. I turned to where David was but he was already gone.

“He must have gone inside already.” I sighed.

“Angelica!” I shivered when I heard my name called again. Partly because my mother scared me, but mostly because it was freezing outside.

“Snow do be cold.” I laughed to myself.

“Angelica Juliet Scott!”

“Comin’, Mama!” I groaned.

The next night wasn’t much better weather wise. It had snowed in the morning so the porch was completely covered. I used the long sleeve of my sweater to wipe off some of the snow on the railing before putting my arms over it and looking up at the sky.

“You’re out here again!” I heard someone call from beside me. I turned to see David from last night. He smiled so I tried my best to smile back. “Do you come out here every night?”

“Umm...I guess...” I mumbled.

“Well, lemme watch with you!” He cheered. I softly nodded, since he seemed excited about stargazing with me. He looked back down at me with a big smile on his face.

“Stars?” I said at the same time as him. He looked at me with a shocked expression before smiling again.

“Stars.” He said with a nod before we both looked back up at the sky.

Jadayah Parker
Why I Stay Away

If words were as warm as hugs,
Distance wouldn't hurt,
Space would be our fingers intertwined,
Our souls dancing together.

If words were as loving as hugs,
My heart wouldn't ache
For all those moments that we wasted,
All of the silence and all of the laughter.

If words were as comforting as hugs,
Your voice would stick to my stomach
Like warm soup on a Winter evening,
A call wouldn't feel like an empty cave.

If words were as tender as hugs,
I wouldn't miss you half as much.
And even though I hate this,
I'd rather be apart than departed.

Shelby Powell
A Gift Not Wanted

Distant love.
It isn't what you wanted,
but maybe it's needed.
Appreciation can falter over time,
as we get used to our daily lives.
But love can only grow,
As things change,
And we are separated from the people we love.

Kaitlyn Gardner
New Year's Cheer

I sit across the table from Aunt Susie. Uncle Mel is there too, and just to the right of them is Grandma. We talk with one another about school and jobs, discussing everything that has changed because of these “uncertain times”. The same conversations we’ve been having ever since March repeat themselves as we watch our own tvs and wait for the ball to drop. I’m hoping that our wifi will hold up long enough to keep the Zoom call in sync, so that our “happy new year” exclamations don’t come in late on the other end. Mom squeezes my hand as we watch the television, and whispers something to me about how things will redeem themselves once 2021 arrives. It’s 11:59. It’s almost time. “10, 9, 8, 7...” We all count down in unison. This is it. Maybe next year we’ll be able to sit with each other, hand in hand, to watch the ball drop once more. “3, 2, 1. Happy New Year!” Although nothing significant has changed, I feel a weight lift off my shoulders. Everything has to get better this year. Things can only look up.

Jakayla Harris
Winter Woods

The crisp cold air is blowing slightly. Small snowflakes are falling from the thick white clouds. The snowfall is slowing down now. There is already plenty of fresh snow on the ground from the night before. The Sun shone ever so brightly, peeking from behind the clouds. The Sun was bright but not bright enough to melt the snow or warm the air. Nothing could ruin this perfect landscape. Pine trees stood tall with pounds of snow resting on its leaves. A couple of birds flew by and found a place to rest on a branch. Their soft chirps filled the woods with sound. Their chirps echoing from branch to branch. The tall mountains were sitting perfectly in the background. Each rock and curve had just the right amount of fallen snow placed on top. Everything just blended together, it was almost too good to be true.

Lucky for a certain Liam Baker, this winter scenery was real and he was the first to see it. Liam stepped into the woods ready to take this beautiful scene in. His light footsteps left a deep footprint to be buried deep in snow. His boots crunched loudly on the thick untouched snow. Liam took out his camera from its case and started snapping different shots. He got all these incredible different angles, but he wasn't satisfied just yet. He needed the perfect picture. This one picture was different than all his other work. This picture was for a photography contest. If Liam won the contest, he would be awarded with \$10,000. He desperately needed this money to pay for his little sister's medical bills. So Liam wasn't leaving without the most perfect picture of this landscape.

After two hours and 23 minutes Liam was still working. Still after all this time had passed, the woods stayed in its original place. It's like the woods wanted him to win as well. Like all of nature was on his side. Just as Liam was about to quit, he felt another round of snowfall fall from the sky. He looked up and a snowflake fell right into his mouth. He tasted the cold icy snowflake on his tongue. Somehow this gave him energy to go back and try to get this picture. As Liam turned around, he knew now that his perfect picture was right in front of him. He got on one knee and took his picture. The only difference between this picture and the failed ones from earlier was the new falling snow from the clouds. Now the woods were sprinkled with fresh snow from the sky. This was it. Liam was confident that he would win now. Before leaving, Liam whispered a little something under his breath, "This is for you Laila!"

Zack Jenkins

The Grievance Of A Goddess

In the midst of wondrous cheer and tranquility
At the impending sight of snow glistening my lands
Why must I, a being whose life extends far beyond the reach of your mortality
Be left without the light of my life to cherish in my hands
My lovely Persephone, whose beauty outshines that of Aphrodite
My sweet, gentle iris, who knew not of any pain or sorrow
Has been snatched from my grasp in the ambiance of night
And, now, she wilts and withers away from the radiance of Apollo
At the first shed of snowfall, I weep my own tears
From my tears, I bring you and many others happiness
A feeling I wouldn't have fathomed, and still so, even after all these years
Yet, the joy that shines through your fragile hearts makes me reminisce
Of times that seems not so long ago
When I would cradle my baby girl to my chest and hum a lullaby
Just as mothers do for their little ones by the fire as the wind will blow
And, sing about reindeers that soar through the winter sky
Oh, how I wish a man of elderly age and youthful glee
Whose jolly laughter fills the chilly air
To grant my wish to bring my love back to me
So I may feel that joy of the colder season that I seem to find so rare.

Naiema Camm
Covid Christmas

Wearing these masks
Makes it hard to do Christmas tasks
Normally people shop til they drop
But now they can only shop from your desktop
Shopping online isn't as meaningful
As going out and being cheerful
Being able to go out because you have time
Instead of just going on Amazon prime
Riding planes with no fear
Spending time with a school peer
Spending time with the ones you love
The ones you hold above
To give gifts to show your affection
Like a gift to add to a friends collection
Or a charm bracelet
With their favorite places
If only we could be with the ones want to on Christmas

Jillian Coddington
Well Wishes

Merry Christmas
Happy Hanukkah
Happy Christmas
Happy Kwanzaa
They are all different, but are all the same
They all say,
“Find joy tomorrow and today”

Sanai Roberts

Masked

Ah! 2020, what a year of surprise.
What a year full of strife
What a year full of lies.
What a year started with hope
And ended with loss.
Shall I explain?
Let me start from the top.
Donald Trump
What a disgraceful man.
Let discrimination occur
In almost every land.
Honesty's the best policy,
That's what they all say.
To him that was bogus.
He needed things his way.
Valentine's Day.
That was a blur.
Gen Z can't hold their own
Here love is a curse.
St. Patrick's Day.
That month took a left turn.
That's where it started.
The disease of no return.
A virus broke out
This we all know.
So we're locked in the house
With nowhere to go.
April Fools!
Nothing was funny.
Easter flew past.
No church and no bunny.
For birthdays we had to sit in the house.
For if you had plans
Don't forget your mask now!
Cinco de Mayo.
Could throw no such party.

Immigrants treated poorly.
Please don't get me started.
Columbus Day.
We've learned a lot.
To celebrate Natives
Who were robbed of their spot.
Halloween.
Nothing exciting.
Haunted houses aren't big.
When you live in a scary environment.
Now we're on Thanksgiving.
Thank you for my family
But this year I could barely handle it.
Black Friday is next.
I didn't forget black lives.
Justice for Breonna and Floyd.
Why were they stripped of their life?
Now Christmas is up.
But how can we get into spirit?
The world might end.
Good to know, but sad to hear it.
New Years will approach
And I hope with some sense.
2021 I hope the months you give
Are the best ones yet.