

Poets & Writers

2017 Amy Awards

Liza Katz

Holly Mitchell

Sreshtha Sen

Crystal Yeung

Liza Katz

Boxwoods

We didn't tokenize our grief with candles
or crosses. Harbored no belief in ghosts,
though we wondered about movements in the boxwoods,

the horses' sudden startles, the dim flickers,
inexplicable, years later, in the house.

Wondered what the moths that scaled the walls,
groped the windowpanes for solace,
were hiding. The dead are territorial:

this we understood. We knew why mothers
named their daughters after things that cling

to the ground, so many Rosemaries and Ivies,
Hazels and Lavenders begging to be buried,
the scent of boxwoods sticking to their skin.

Holly Mitchell

And the Fullness Thereof

after "As for the World" by Yebuda Amichai

As for the world, I am a forehead
guiding dome & little else in the push.

As for my life, I am a reaction
wonder led a student to oxidize.

As for action, I walk after years
of listening in the seat of a Volvo.

As for the palm of your hand, I am
the orange held in its warmish shape,

reading the wrinkled print beneath.

As for the signals, as for the plans,

the writing, the place, the fertile drift
of spores in the air, I am like someone's

inscrutable invention. And as for fate,
it's not in my dusted makeup.

As for the silence, I am crumbs
palmed away from a wedding plate.

As for the cry, I am a butter knife
making serrated whispers into bread.

Sreshtha Sen

Ghazal For You

When you leave, brash bodies cool my sheets for you.
Even now, awkward aubades leak concrete for you.

Saleem from 81st street asks where madam is these days.
Knives bloody with concern cease to sculpt meat for you.

What do I do with these stupid cats? Fleshed fur resist
purrs—their voice only used in greet for you.

We began in blue: digitized pulses, somehow end as this
too—rum-soaked thumbs stalk tweet after tweet for you.

I've changed the rules before. Once, willing to win
at Scrabble, I allowed my letters to cheat for you,

So even if Shahid's worst fear is this—uncoupled
ghazal hung half-rhymed on me, incomplete for you—

what is Sreshtha to do when there just aren't enough words stretched against us two!

Crystal Yeung

a butterfly unwilling

i wonder if bodies ever just
lift from rooms,
maybe like a peeling
of the cranium
to offer a pink sack
to the sky,
to see the actual smallness
of kings and how fire
can feel cold sometimes.
i know i do often,
of invisible storms
eking out from the eyes.
i'm like you
praying to a god
when i'm troubled or lonely
or maybe to my alter ego;
she's sleeping in the ceiling
above,
only breaking the
four walls during the day's
afterheat,
like sweat breaking surface pores.
i wonder how i'm fated,
how goddesses sit by machines
cranking out stories for us,
or how Kongzi's ashamed of me
because i'm thunderstruck
with greatness at youth,
dodging Moloch and Death
like Ali dodging beestings,
because like me, you cannot hear
the reaper's bell
or know the crush of failure;
we could be
a god's handful of
butterflies,
unaware,
unwilling to die in the winter.

Liza Katz's poetry has appeared in *Poetry Northwest*, *The Cortland Review*, *The Cumberland River Review*, *Vinyl*, *Poet Lore*, *Omniverse*, and elsewhere. Her essays and criticism have appeared in *The Critical Flame*, *The Quarterly Conversation*, *Open Letters Monthly*, *ArtsFuse*, and *Taos Journal of International Poetry and Art*. An alumna of the Bread Loaf and Sewanee Writers' Conferences, she teaches English as a Second Language in Perth Amboy, New Jersey.

Holly Mitchell is a poet from Kentucky. Now based in New York, she is a graduate of the Creative Writing MFA Program at New York University. Previously, she earned a BA from Mount Holyoke College, where her awards included a 2012 Gertrude Claytor Prize from the college and the Academy of American Poets. Holly's poems have appeared in *Day One*, *Narrative Magazine*, *Paperbag*, and *Washington Square Review*, among other journals.

Sreshtha Sen is a poet from Delhi, India. She studied Literatures in English from Delhi University and completed her MFA at Sarah Lawrence College, New York. Her work has previously been published in *Bitch Media*, *Breakwater Review*, *MACK*, *The Margins*, *Meridian*, and *Vayanya*.

Crystal Yeung is an MFA in Creative Writing student at the College of New Rochelle and is almost a poet. She hopes in all sincerity that her works are genre-bending. A basement-dwelling second-generation Chinese American born and raised in Brooklyn, Crystal received her BA in English literature and MA in Language and Literacy from The City College of New York. Her poetry is forthcoming in *Rabbit Catastrophe Review*. Crystal also serves as a committee member, mentor, and judge of poetry for the annual PEN Prison Writing Program writing contest and coordinates programs for incarcerated writers.