

# Serrina Zou

**Bio:** Serrina Zou is a seventeen-year-old high school student from San Jose, California in the United States and a 2019 California Arts Scholar in Creative Writing. Her poetry and prose have been recognized by the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, Just Poetry!!!, the Asian Pacific Fund, and the Bay Area Book Festival. Her work appears or is forthcoming in the National Poetry Quarterly, In Parentheses, The Rising Phoenix Review, Bitter Melon Magazine, Manuscription Magazine, The Battering Ram Literary Journal, and Eunoia Review. When she is not writing poetry, she is either catnapping or avidly devouring novels.

## **Moon Ties**

From the wake of summer

We pick citrus smiles

Twilled from the spirals

Of hundred-year-old trees

Seedlings like we before

Our mothers poured

Our names into

The sacred reaping between

The delta of christening.

The gardener

Calls us sisters and I

Cannot bring my lips

To correct him,

Without sinning. Come

Moon Night we hold

The navy shingles

Under heaven's gaze

Paper perfect oceans

Creased with origami.

This is how I fold

Our skins, together

Immortal in crescent

Crane grace. Our god

Stares at us from heaven

And this is where our

Mothers mistake

The rabbit curled up

Like a cat in the shadows

Of lantern light; our eyes

Follow the camera

In a 360 degree arc,

The way ink follows

Felicitous blessings

Bleeding rouge in

Peach blushed gold.



We don't eat mooncakes

That year; instead, we

Soak the yuzu citrus

In sugar crystals, and

Taste the sun for the first time,

A bizarre, benign reckoning.

In chronicles, we live again,

In ebony and ivory, the

Language of eternal love.

## Quarantine

In the new year we beseech God

For health and happiness, hung for him

The body of our ancestors, the vitruvian

Anatomy parcel unfurling like lotus;

I am told in spring with its skies

Arcing with drip fires and dandelions

Wisps God will take scorched earth

And fold a miracle, his hands deft

With origami, the ageless wrinkles

A testament to his omniscience

And protection. That year, we prayed

With invisible threads entangled in invisible

Threads, the telegraph wires to God

Intercepted by antiseptic sting; time

Cutting the glass of each of us drenched

In welts of Purell and isopropyl alcohol.

In the spring, Grandmother turns

To her primroses, lullabies undressed  
All the uncertainties knit into her  
Creasing brow, the postcards of  
Her youth burning against immortal  
Crooning and I imagine her in her  
Bed of petals silk sutured to her  
Skin, the earth's pulse slick like  
Baptism and I dream of her dreams,  
Sixteen -year-old fragility steeled  
To the spine. In the war years, she  
And God took clear tea and rationed biscuits  
With their protests, the crumbs trailing  
To the horizon and back. Grandmother  
Signed her inheritance to Entropy whose  
Skylines of biscuit crumbs unravelled  
Like a skein of bloodline; grandmother  
Thrust from her cocoon body a reaping  
Of unsown sinners, impervious to the

Immortality and gospel hymns. She  
Sang them anthems and nursery rhymes,  
Hoping that they were enough for just  
One more spring. When Grandmother  
Sears the history of me into the steam  
Of her God tea, I am always abortion,  
A child tumbling from the splinters  
Of heaven, innocent and unwanted;  
I hear the stories too often, a psychedelic  
Haze of mythology and tragedy drowning  
In the chest of God, so when Grandmother  
Dies on a sterilized hospital bed with heart  
Monitors and dripped morphine the next  
Spring, God goes with her, mouths  
Contorting poems and elegies, all  
Their wishes fleeing like shrines.



## Adularescence

Summer sunset, diaphanous stammering

Light, a heartbeat with rain dancing

Against the windowpane, glass

& windchimes & teeth

Beating against the chatter

Of stars the hue of November frost

Rimmed in fiery maple leaves,

Beating for no one, beating for nothing.

I puppet death, the lifeless elk

With stargazer eyes, antlers clutching

The moon & breaking, breaking,

Gone. In my imagination I am

The galaxy cauldron, swirling summer

Like Van Gogh, bleeding fireworks

Into the bodies of gods, a concave

Breath, gone with resurrection.