

suffocate the sky & (2) others others others others

by broo**KE** jean

WHY I LIKE IT: *Poetry Editor HEZEKIAH writes... Can you imagine a job where all you did was simply vet one genius from another? And lamely explain why? What could possibly be sweeter? Just call me Lucky. As hard as it is to take anyone serious, why are we so filled with desperation? At least Brooke Jean's, 'suffocate the sky' is tastefully tragic, delectably denouncing and constructively destructive. She is mighty mind you: "probing ancient thoughts / not so prehistoric," "lying larynx lyrics locked and loaded," "there's no chaperone when isleep" and "heart on a string in hope of a bite" "waxing and waning the desire of light." For me, I do just fine with a host of broken dreams and empty-pocket jeans; I just don't believe septuagenarian should be paying environ-mental fees. Yes, I realize it was our mess, but nor am I so far from going back to having someone change my nappy. (Spacing & format poet's own.)*

suffocate the sky

prosperity and unprecedented times!
if only the present would stay, if just for a moment
just enough time before we
suffocate the sky
skip in the sea with plastic rocks
curse the wind for pushing our
plans and plummet to the landfill graveyard.

it signals by dead leaves we
play and prance in the rotting of life
they built that park in staten island
the pilgrims would be proud of all we
accomplished despite the challenges –
human, inhuman, unamerican.

but it's all the same everywhere
as it is and always will be
smoke even smothers the amazon
selfish consumption for which we
never pay a more difficult price: our
individual fates are
quite inconsequential.

chaperoned acid trip

a chaperoned acid trip
the eastern-european instructor brought a bottle of pepsi to every class
an awkward giggle and a calming presence
probing ancient thoughts
not so prehistoric
constructingde-constructingre-constructing reality
one by one blink touch taste smell sound *syllable*

in that room
a raised hand is always right
a thought is proof of existence
the table is not a table it is a collection of wood and other materials that we arrange and
call a table and
don't we do this every day

Miss, Mrs., Mr., Dr., Atheist, Christian, Muslim, Queer, Expert, Terrorist
i've wondered what's in a name since seventh grade
there was a time before symbology
before weaponized words
lying larynx lyrics locked and loaded

why do we name hurricanes and illnesses
does it make it more real and
will we ever escape this grasping at identity?
meaningless names etched into stone across the world for who to see?
there's no chaperone when i sleep
there's no names in my dreams
there's no more

see you next week

a switch

i feel it is a constant fray
a temperamental lightswitch
without warning i shift
longing for more or less or a balance
i cannot strike
but it will find me and i will know

the infinite furlough is but
fleeting though i suspend mine –

heart on a string in hope of a bite
a premonition that is right
my eyes dart toward the clockwork hands
persistent and undefined

the liability is not yours nor mine
but outside our control the hesitant finger
will flip and release while
we sit in the dark
waxing and waning the desire of light.

THE POET SPEAKS: *These poems were written in the dismal year of 2020 amidst the outbreak of a pandemic and, thus, were inspired by the absurdity in which I found myself. I am generally inspired by existentialism and absurdism in all my creative writing. 'suffocate the sky' was inspired by a morbid photo of the ocean littered with trash that my Creative Writing professor presented to us as a prompt. I wanted to invoke the energy and voice of 'Ozymandias' by Percy Bysshe Shelley while also bringing a touch of modernism with political lingo and a different poetic structure. And, if you couldn't tell, I really like alliteration. 'chaperoned acid trip' focused on the absurdity of both labels and definition, related to my studies in philosophy. 'a switch' was a play on my purgatory in love and life as well as an experimentation with rhythm. I love reading and writing poetry that is seemingly 'easy' to read but could mean something different to each reader. I appreciate poetry for many of the same reasons as philosophy: it leaves you with more questions than answers.*

AUTHOR'S BIO: I'm Brooke Jean -- a Chicago-based amateur poet, writer, and artist whose work has been published by Fleas on the Dog, iO Literary Journal, and Voice of Eve. As a recent college graduate with an English degree, I find myself grasping... for a job? Mostly. For meaning? Always. My current hopes are to become an English teacher or anything at least slightly more fulfilling than waiting tables or pouring drinks. Until then, I'll be scraping my brain for anything that's left in it.

