

Plastic—I

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By Cathy ShaNg

WHY I LIKE IT: *Poetry Editor HEZEKIAH writes... Cathy Shang is bedazzling. No sense not blurting her first two lines in this blurb, times a-wastin' with my words:*

"Bombs are just plastic and gasoline, / and you and I are just carbon and bad timing." Whoa Cathy! (Even an economy of word-spacing which tends to make my aged, dimming eyes slow to even more ever-unsteady contemplations.) While I prefer some distance in all things, Shang's unbreakable text tends to invite an effort to dissect, maunder and muse. But don't try this at home unless you are this good. "Suddenly I regret not what i was in the past, / but what I will never now be" "I've learn nothing, but that maybe, just / maybe[] "forever" was reserved for memories and not people." "...I won't leave you undered by storms," I just put fresh batteries in my ASMR meter and Shang has drawn all their charge—I'm spent too. (Spacing is poet's own.) HS

Plastic and Gasoline

Bombs are just plastic and gasoline,
and you and I are just carbon and bad timing.

Them, Them, Us.

What am I,

But the sacrificial other?

What are you?

A hero or their demanded sacrifice?

What are we doing,

letting ourselves be defined?

Feline

My mother has always roared like the tigress she is
And I have only ever learned to walk silently at night,
meek and tamed in the wake of her roar

Regret

Suddenly I regret not what i was in the past,
but what I will never now be
in the future.

Irony

A little boy asked me why I wrote things down.

“Why do you quote everything down?”

I don't know, it's quite obsessive of me.

Maybe because I want to remember

every time someone made me laugh so hard I cried.

“Why do you write so much?”

That's a good question, I'm not sure.

Maybe because it's easier to write than to talk.

“Why are your poems sad? Are you ok?” That's

a bit funny, isn't it?

I guess the cliché is all ‘poetry is sad’

Though I think it's based partially in truth. I

suppose if I grew up perfectly happy,

I wouldn't be writing at all.

It's Useless Anyways

Oh, but what could I of done beside scream my grief into the night?

I've learn nothing, but that maybe, just maybe "forever"
was reserved for memories and not people.

“Free”

Property of ignorance

Property of hate.

Anxious Girl

There are callouses

on the tips of my every finger.

Sometimes,

hands aren't calloused from burdens of rough work.

Sometimes,

hands callous from the burdens of the heart.

Gently, Soundless

When I go, I hope I go quietly.

Like a wisp of smoke I
vanish into the night.
I'll sing with the ghosts, and fading with the light.

Like seashells on the shore
I am pulled back into the sea.
I'll lie beneath the waves in my restful sleep.

When I go, I hope I go quietly.

Like water slipping through our fingers,
the hurt I wouldn't leave,
I'll be forgotten, as if I was but a dream.

Only skin-deep wounds, too shallow to scar
I won't leave you sundered by storms,
only wondering
if the winds may have shifted.

When I go, I hope I go quietly
I can not bear to see you weep.

Givers

I could never say I was a light that burned on evermore
I could never stay for quite so long
I could not say that I was a seed meant to pass through fire
And I could not say I would last.
And I could only guess that I was a match
For I could not help but strike myself upon this world.

THE POET SPEAKS... *Growing up an introverted child with few friends, I was constantly brimming with untold stories and things I was too afraid to say out loud. I eventually turned to poetry because I was deeply afraid that if I do not tell my own stories, who will? The urgency that I always felt seemed to be like a phantom wind, pushing me forwards to record what I thought to be important before the moment is gone and lost to the long roads of memory lane.*

From the age of 12, I became attracted to the Japanese Vocaloid genre of music. It was beautiful in language and was focused around the sorrowful parts of the human experience. This crucially shaped my style of writing and what I chose to write about, as I became less afraid to discuss horribly vulnerable topics and the trauma I've experienced in my life. I want to go on telling the stories of my life and the most raw bits of being alive.

AUTHOR BIO: Cathy Shang is a sophomore studying in Shanghai. She enjoys creative writing, drawing, filmmaking, and is very active in parliamentary debate.