Tina Xia (tsx)
Class of 2023
Title: Waiting to be seen
Genre: Poetry
"The Vietnamese word for love and weakness is the same: yé’u."

The verse says love me more, you say I physically cannot.

Loss is what I smell today
in the jasmine kitchen cabinets:
Jasmine, receptacle of grief
Autotheory, this.
I tell people—everyone
who listens really—to comply
with this process of erasure
The Shrapnel Is Called Afterlife
I produce a collage of objects
like my inherited tree sticks,
a zip-tie, two ounces of endeavor
one statement on grief redolent
of The Shrapnel. Mendez notes
dearth becomes sustenance,
briefly gorgeous this, fish sauce
and an addiction of fish sauce
and a newspaper underneath
fish bones, too many fish.
Today I learn of hegemonic culture
and Black churches,
mauve bruises and mariposas.
How the framework of the verse
is a glass jar. In it,
a jasmine flower
sixteen petals and hairpin
Enough meditation
to drive my grandpa to
hug me, mat my doorstep
with fallen leaves
enjambment entanglement
two sides of a fish this.
after the Uvalde massacre and Monica Ong’s exhibition Planetaria

tell me where this will go:
an angular pit car looming on
an indigo field
    in it a volvelle structure
first seen in the Arabic world
and a prediction:
the lunar phase
what’s for dinner tonight?
shape of a woman who’s calling his bluff

tell me what precedes me
and how to persevere, shimmer
in terrible wreckage (this)

come home, the kids miss you
the kids the kids the kids the
centuries of elegiac meditation
now lost to this rotating disc
date/time and the body follows

a planetaria and all us stars
random compositions and rivulets
a sculptural mess, a surprise
waiting in these graduating wings
come home, the kids miss you
them stars subliminal, taking flight
Excess fire and all this rain
baby it’s easy to cling to hope
like chubby fingers on styrofoam trees you buzzing
and my face, red read these lines lanes loans mortgage
says hold on baby the world
is an oil pot: few hairs matted
down praying to God
let this lint roller unstick
tissue shreds from pilling
paper coats, numbers on tags
more movement less music
baby all love ends once you
see my shower head
that pressure these feet
no conditioner heat waves
with no air conditioning
baby you’re never home now,
nicotine rising above your
lips, volcano hell
the mailman says hi to our
garage then leaves
two shells one spittle nothing
ever really dry
baby this love tastes like
tylenol screw me loose
burn me all the way down
listen, how we morphed into
hot mantle plumes, golden
chains fixing us in the air
oh baby wish you were here
keepin’ me steady
oh baby hold me still
A quick sharp tang called envy
recent searches include:
girls, the ones my boyfriend loves,
silver and green with baseball caps
and a field of blank spaces,

olive stains on purple
lichens known because
of close observation

i read an article about Rembrandt
and some religious allegory,
how to dress like her even if
the subject has a large right arm
but Rembrandt was a draftsman
and so am i

recent searches include:
“corporeal space” and textures

how each sentient body
is sensorially aware of itself
and my central thread
in the most gnomic form
is how i sink deeper into her
/they/ and this human drive
my verse thrashing from the ego

amped
rainbow light on the window
single planetoid fish tentacles out
   no, just a street lamp
   no, just a shadow of you
silence falling like bombs in the ocean
a wave metaphysical abstract
periglacial landscape no tennis shoes
muddy, asteroid from the rain
   no, just liminal space
   no, just drown me

belief is an abstract concept today
we talked about religion in your tesla
toast coming in adverbial crunches
this was it, spacial time we were both
here on a sidewalk on a roof in a pew
with a burning village holy trinity
the cross to your right right you said
   no, just want a bit of love
   no, just leave me here with God

while the crowd in the sea drops
avana religion store sings and sings
satellite gate south geese negative
inconsolable there is no how come
there is full bloom coming whole
there is song an engine revving
parents still working at the mall
a guilt hollow in clothing racks
crushing me velvet behind the counter
the external boombox on your car
playing concerto welcome

home
welcome to the arena
this universe us
   no, we’re just
waiting to be seen