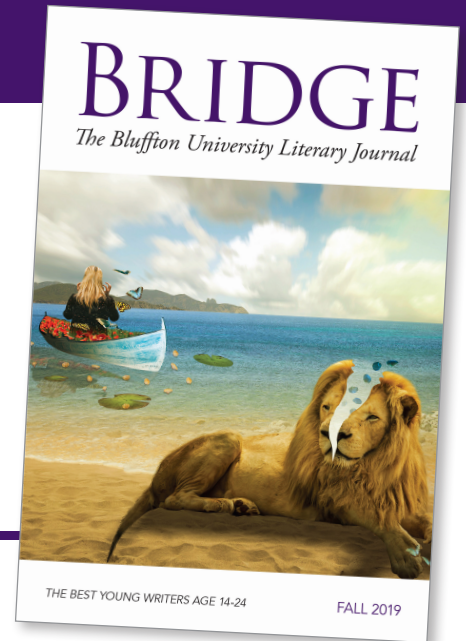


BRIDGE

The Bluffton University Literary Journal



HAVE YOU EVER BEEN IN LOVE?

Yoko April Tamada

i've been asked about love
asked if she's ever been at my heart...
waiting at the door, hands full of white
roses ready to turn embarrassment and 'i can't

flirt' into honeysuckle chitchat
love can be unpredictable. undeniably
anxious. at my lips, she was everything
i ever wished to be: plucking the poet out of me

moments are merely poems
we concoct. to reminisce and remember. loves lips
so plump, puckering up for firsts and lasts
this poem will only last as kiss

messy and sweet and hard on the lips
a linger of let the leftovers sit
this poem knows the lips of love
like a double take dipped in lilac

love is kind of funny to say like lollipop or licorice
how silent she is. to be
so soothing under stars
so tender under childhood
so sorry to be growing out of reminisce
she be as bold as baby's breath

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YOKO APRIL TAMADA

is a Los Angeles-based youth poet. She has performed at venues from California to New York, including the United Nations Peace Project, Paradigm Talent Agency and Denim Days. She also opened for Demi Lovato in an educational video about gun control for March for Our Lives.

as lost as lips
as lovely as falling in love with stranger

as stranger
as we were in love in another dimension
damned it be love. her future
too bamboozled with boys

who will be rough. they will not take love
with the wind but by the hips
so i waited for her lips
to kiss. the dark a bridge for water

i thank her. love. so giving
she let me hold her in hazel
kiss her in chrysanthemum
admire her in agapanthus

i've been asked about love
asked if she ever comes
in bundles. with me, she will only be
a bud, not in bed but in bloom
never in boredom but buried in begin again
to be with love is to be mistaken
for giggly gasoline. a bouquet gone
boujee. a blond beacon of butch

summer's party brought us
sanction. a sweaty mess in sage. your mother
won't let you cut your hair. i told you i took scissors
to the strands of feminine saturday and ended

with bleached bowl cut on sunday
love, says this is all cute
the stories, the lean in 'fill in the gap' kiss
the let's talk for hours in this bed we will name castle

love calls me cute
and i almost inflate
like the kingdom we've been laying in.
she is better lover than 'let's get lost

in lucid'. her optical affection, a slit of vision
to soiled eyes. love, let me see
the darkness as taunt. wait for her touch.
her: as tangled as taffy

a tag team of tuck me behind your tongue.
love, an existence beyond a realm of moving garden
the wit of withered. a reminder that growth so sure of still
is a love to get buried in.