

# The Mercury

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## Basil

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Class of 2017

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# Basil

## **Author Bio**

Victoria Blaisdell is a senior Economics major and Writing minor from Mechanicsburg, PA. She has worked on The Mercury as part of the Production Staff all four years here at Gettysburg, and is excited to have two poems published in this year's edition. She is still unsure as to her post-grad plans, but a few things you can be sure of: she will be drinking plenty of coffee, reading lots of poetry, and traveling every chance she gets.

# Basil

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I wanted to kill it, dreamt up  
various fates for your basil plant,  
resting in its purple-potted throne,  
smugly gazing out each day  
upon a bank of smooth stones  
and happy bicyclists and the distant  
church spire, bells heralding another hour  
in which the basil plant had again  
evaded death.

I watched it grow, leaves opening  
like the greedy palms of children—  
translucent, cupping sunlight.  
You tenderly trimmed and pruned  
back the dead bits. I prayed  
for a drought, for your memory  
to stutter, for the soil to dry up  
and crack, like your lips in wintertime.

When you made caprese salad,  
I savored every bite, relished  
in our placement atop the food chain.

Later, its scent came to me  
as I slumbered beneath the windowsill:  
all herb, pure ingredient, unfinished dish,  
taunting me, boasting of its favor.

And when a crack in the glass  
sent chills down its branches,  
I consoled you  
as your tears watered the soil  
for the last time. It was then  
that I knew that my love for  
you would never invite sunlight,  
evoke watering, bud into  
small blossoms and bloom  
in the air around us.

That spring,  
you planted basil in your garden,  
alongside the cilantro,  
the parsley, and the lavender,

*The Mercury*

which I keep, now, in a small pouch  
beneath my pillow, to calm me  
on nights I cannot sleep.