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Basil

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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

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,

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