

Wild Mushroom

Oh, mushroom,
your spherical surface
shines in the morning sunlight.
Your stem is a moldy green color
that is dark and lonely
in the shade.
You make the forest
calm and satisfied
with your watchful eye.
Your friends sit happily beside you
as if you are a king.
The trees stand behind you
like soldiers protecting you
from the enemies
of the forest.

—Jackie Branch

Little Leaf

A little leaf
glistens with dew
in the morning light.
It has a rounded shape
with a point at the top.
Water droplets slide
down the leaf
in the sun,
and then slowly
evaporate.

—Roy Journagan

Water in the Forest

As I walk through the forest,
rain water from the trees
cries down on me.
I touch a tree's wet bark,
and it feels cool and bumpy.
I hear the squelch of mud
beneath my boots.
The wind starts blowing,
and the wet leaves
fly away.

—Charlie Record

What's in My Journal

Juicy gossip,
interesting feedback,
too much ice cream,
a collection of bookmarks,
a slew of things I can never say out loud,
a wall of stickers,
thousands of books,
dust from all of the places I've been,
CARS,
pie crumbs left over from The Family Christmas,
old Southern recipes,
millions of relatives I've never heard of,
Snow, snow, snow!
Screaming tantrums about how unfair life is,
turtles,
crinkled silver Extra's Polar Ice gum wrappers,
bears on snowboards,
grains of rough brown sand and frigid sea spray,
wrinkled fingers that hold onto a slick rope,
a crisp pale blue morning sky,
a banged-up wooden desk,

and me—

as I sit at the desk in a scratched swivel chair,
words pouring out of my smiley face pencil,
jazz flowing like liquid in the background.

Me—

holding my own in this tiny corner of the world,
writing with a passion
and a reminder of how lucky I am
to grasp this journal
with enough pages to contain all of my wild and crazy dreams.

— Lilly Mae Awamleh

Human Motion

My post-bocce ball sneakers
trail the assorted flat stones,
which lead me around the compact
path of the Japanese maze.
I twist and turn
until I've accomplished
the intricate task of tracing

the danced-on route. I'm in the middle
of the maze, the stage
to where my grandmother sits,
given up, on the old wooden bench.
I recede, and the rocks brush
the bottom of my purple sneakers
as I tread backwards.

I wonder:
 Who has danced
 on these stones before me?
The world stands still
around my revolving figure;
I am the only
human motion.

I retreat from the circular clearing
and cross the desolate bridge.
I pause
in the midst of the walkway, centered,
facing the wrought iron railing—decorated
with spirals, and curving outwards over the smooth,
man-made waterfall—tinged with green, over time.

The balustrade falls short of the full bushes
set on the perimeter of the pond,
and I slip by the emerald hue.
My heather-shade shoes
test
the pale slabs of tan stones, making sure
they won't move under my shifting weight.

These stones don't bear the mass
of a twelve year-old girl every day.
These rocks hold the load
of the disturbance
in the angelic park;
I am the only
human motion.

The now-stable stones
support my weight as I descend onto the edge.
I squat down and lower fully to my knees,

and I can feel the rough rock through
my black leggings: the mini crevices
making imprints
on my tanned skin.

Attentively,
I immerse my yellow-and-white, daisy-painted
nails, into the clear, smooth, rushing water.
I peer through the shallow, glass-like water
at the the even and flat beige rock,
and draw my fingertips
across its flush facade.
I am the only
human motion.

My palm falls faithfully
to the rock, encompassed
in the refreshing, translucent water.
My palm glides to the slightly slimy
cliff, and only my pointer finger penetrates
the man-made waterfall, as it creates an opening,
a window, in the forever-flowing tears.

My bony, singular finger disturbs the pattern
that has been flowing for years, in one small touch.
The water avoids my finger, and the gap continues
to grow wider all the way down to the still pond.
I remove my finger, and the water
plummets,
filling in the hole I made; I am the only
human motion.

The gaping tunnel closes,
and the limpid liquid
plunges
into the basin
to spread ripples across the expanse
of the surface, making sure the pond knows
it came back.

I am

the only

human motion.

—Beatrix Lou Recoing-Tallen