



## POEMS

---

*by Gerald Rice*

#41  
this poem  
would not take  
life.

its stroke fell  
short of  
genius.

it opened  
up to gasp  
its

first  
breath but sipped  
at air

and  
changed its mind.  
i tried

---

Note: Mr. Rice is a senior at Oakland University

my hand,  
over and again,  
massaging

each  
line, scratching and  
rewording, ink-bleeding

as  
I sutured it  
with my

pen,  
but it bled-out  
on the

table.

## A DAY AFTER

They have written on my brain with  
Words not my own.  
Their etchings  
Shrilled down my spine  
Made sharp red streaks  
Through my vision  
These memories are terrible;  
Ghosts of strangers  
Who call me by name  
And smile with pinched faces  
I have never met  
These authors who have walked my feet  
Past oceans, and onto foreign soils  
I have never reached.  
I have held precious jewels  
Yet untouched by man  
But this map they have built inside me  
Traces life I have not yet lived  
With a thousand different scripts  
I felt them, penning away,  
Page after page  
In the folds of my brain,  
Taking me out of context,  
I wouldn't have minded if  
They hadn't overwritten me.  
They didn't look for blank  
Spaces, instead, using scraps  
Of me I'd saved for  
Myself.

I felt them up there,  
Like a 'funeral in my brain'  
They were happy mourners  
Signing over names in a guest book  
Unbothered with staying between lines  
And scribbling wholly inappropriate things.  
I would have shouted, but I feared  
The words they would've sent out  
I would send you a message if they weren't  
Already done with me  
I can only sift through the primitive bits  
And fingerpaint with ash of what I was, left behind  
Hoping there is something forgotten here  
They didn't bother with  
I have been remade and  
They are with you next.

GREY

In the grave of absence  
Clasp your hands upon

The One you love  
If only a memory,

In the trivial years spent,  
Honeying and making love,

Let not the thought be wasted  
But pressed for every drop

To oil the stale clutch  
Of Age from your heart

Take this ghost  
By the wrist and dance

It through hard air  
And down, down farther,

Past Deep, under Below  
Spill over stones enveloping

Hook-backed Mirrors, deposited  
Like clam-pearls

Wring them with a dry kiss,  
Hug onto the knees of brittle years,

Each one petal-winged and slipping free  
To rusted sky,

Feathering you down,  
Settling, settling into Final Earth- Yawn,

And show spectators  
How to

Pantomime  
Sleep