

in the morning
dew arrives on all our yards the same
wet grass weaving down our blocks
roses reaching to belong in two yards at once.

Absence 2 by Sun Woo Baik



SAMMY

[Nonsense nonsense! You should be happy. You get to be an older sister soon.]

FIONA

(appalled)

He's bringing his son?

(weakly)

What, you're like a two-for-one PR deal?

SAMMY continues gardening. FIONA clutches the garden spade, then hurls it at the ground. The tool clatters against the driveway. FIONA locks eyes with her mother—the first time this conversation where they've made significant eye contact—before running inside the house.

Tastes Good

Victor Yin

I learned to cook in lockdown
My first grocery run by myself
done in hurried silence
oil, pepper, butter, soy sauce
Socially distant self checkout
Forgot to grab hand sanitizer, but it was out anyways
Full pantries from sparse shelves
Tastes of home away from home
No longer relatable recipe preambles
Meal prep in plastic containers but who
had prepared for a pandemic?



Modern Reality

Parham Elmi

We live in a world:
Evermore so connected,
But we're so alone.

Absence 1 by Sun Woo Baik

You always had a smile
for me.

You'll never wave me over the threshold of my own guest house again.
I'll never find you standing there,
colourful skirt,
warm smile,
loving eyes.

You linger, just out of sight. I turn, yet never seem to catch sight of you.
How do I welcome Sorrow as a guest? It tears at the curtains and brings
cobwebs to every corner we swept. It tramples over my portrait of you as though
to banish you forever.

Still, I catch moments. Glimpses.

Pieces of your voice, saying:

*"Be grateful for whatever comes
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond."*

If anyone was sent as a guide,
it was you.



Absence 5
by Sun Woo Baik

Winter

Jade Cameron

You paint two sad lemons
sad human
the hospital was as you felt
 calm
 sticky socks
kept a piece of glass
open old cuts
at home you feel nothing
 the empty
 daily sedation
 blister pack
afraid to write
afraid what might be said
 or worse
 nothing
time has been bought
and sold and left you
 losing
the winter kills the plants
one by one
 some



Absence 6 by Sun Woo Baik

the days are nothing left
 solitary
 masked
they call you every day
 check in
you say the same things
they say deep breaths
 keep doing
today, a mildness
evening threatens
you still have hidden glass
and emptiness
 but groceries too
 at least.

Inherently

Clarence Ndabahwerize

Only now inherently yours,
But not at the beginning,
You forget that,
Sweep it under the carpet,
And saunter off whistling.
Our homes, our lands, your treaties.
You walked in,
Told us about you,
Your God,
Your cultures,
Your lands,
Your kings and queens,
Princes and princesses.
Then you decided to stay,
Because you could.
Would we ever have said no?
What if we would have let you?
Provided you listened to us.
But nevertheless it became yours,
Not ours,
And you forgot,
Sometimes you fought,
Other times you took,
Some days you stared,
Other days you laughed,
Then there were the days you scoffed.
Still apparently yours,
And not inherently ours,



Absence 3 by Sun Woo Baik