

Speak Poem Series

By Elise Emmert

Earlier

tonight
we're at Rachel's
but not
for long
because now
we're leaving
to some party
Rachel
found out about
and got us invited to
and I feel
excited
but nervous
will I
fit in
with the high schoolers
I guess
I don't want
to go
because it makes me feel
weird
uncomfortable
and childish
but I don't know how to say it
because this is supposed to be
cool

Before

the car
rolls up the drive
and the music
pounds in my ears
and my stomach
and my bones
and the people
are a dark
writhing

mass
with arms held high
holding red cups
brimming with a liquid
I have yet
to taste
they look
so perfect
like models from a magazine
that my mother
won't let me
look at
Rachel
looks happy
with older friends
kids
I don't know
and can't
talk to
so
I stay in the shadows
and take
a beer
which tastes gross
but I don't
want to be
weird
so I drink it
and then
another
and
another
and suddenly
my stomach
is churning
and I have
to get
away

to the woods
past the party
under the leaves
past hiding lovers
until
I hear
a voice

During

I don't know
this boy
the senior
who's talking
to me
and
the part of my brain
that still works
wonders
why
he's talking to me
because he looks
like a model
too
like the other kids
and I
don't
but then
he pulls me in
and somehow
it feels
so right
to lean against his chest
and hear him call me
beautiful
and then
the hand
on my back
slides down
and my face
looks up
and we
kiss

and I can
taste
and hear
and feel
forever
until
I'm on the ground
and I don't know
how I got there
and I'm trying
to get
away
but he's
too heavy
and I
can't breathe
because he's still
kissing me
and I don't want it
don't want it
don't want it
but I can't
say it
and suddenly
his hands are on
my chest
and my shorts
aren't buttoned
anymore
and I want to be
anywhere
but here
and then
the weight
is gone
and he's standing
and walking
away
taking part of me
of my childhood
with him

After

I don't know
how long
I lie there
but when I get up
everything
hurts
my head
my stomach
my mouth
my everything
and I'm walking
to the party
to find
help
when I see
a phone
and call
the police
and my mouth
still doesn't work
but they're coming anyways
and everyone
is angry
with me
Rachel
is angry
with me
and someone
hits me
across
my face
which is
the last thing
I needed
but I
run
away
from the pain
to my house
and try
to forget

but why
is my pain
my fault

Later

no one
has talked
to me
since the party
except
my parents
who don't know
what happened
I am
a pariah
and I don't know
how to forget
that night
the night
that covered my world
in black
the deepest black
you could ever see
and I can't
talk about it
because
no one
will believe me
and I have no friends
and I'm dreading
the start
of school
because
he
will be
there
and there's nothing
I can do
about it
I think
I want
to die

Recovery

the school year

is over

the kids

are all

leaving

and a part

of me

is leaving

as well

in art

my tree

has grown

from dead

to living

and blossoming

and speaking

to the people

who look

and listen

and I guess

I have grown

too

and I've learned

that life

like the trees

may need

some pruning

but I

can grow back

and be more beautiful

and more confident

and stronger

and tougher

and braver

than before