

INSTEAD HE SEES

BY CLARE LIND

He eases his weary body down onto a slab
of schist, looks out across the valley.
After the day's work, Charlie Young
has climbed the rise behind his camp.

From a scrap of oilskin in his pocket
he retrieves the jade ring, that his mother
pressed into his palm as he left.

It is smooth in his hand. He lifts it to his eye.

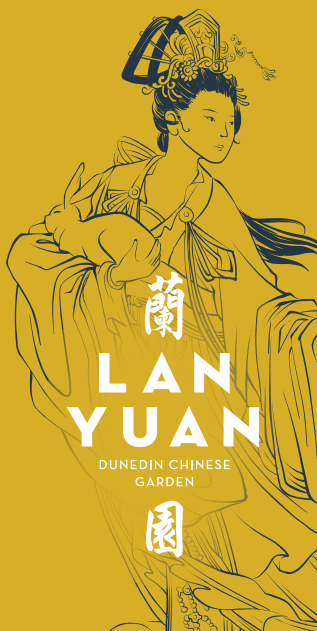
He is no longer looking at the last light on the river,
the hawk in the air, prowling above the tors.

He is deaf to the distant ewe calling her lambs,
the sigh of the dropping wind in the tussock.

Instead, he sees the hill behind his village,
green and gold rice paddies drained for harvest.
A water buffalo grunts to her calf. He hears sounds
from boats on the river, voices he understands.

He has no moon cakes, but decides
tonight he will return with a lantern, and watch:
for the one who watches him as well as his village,
for the rising of the lady in the moon, and her rabbit.

1st PLACE ADULT CATEGORY



WHEN SWAMPY IS BLUE

BY IAN CRAVEN

Metview said sun
clear skies
but the mist fell on us
across the whole day
we walked in and out of it.

Later a Spring sun
belted through
in the fading afternoon
the glow and heat unexpected.

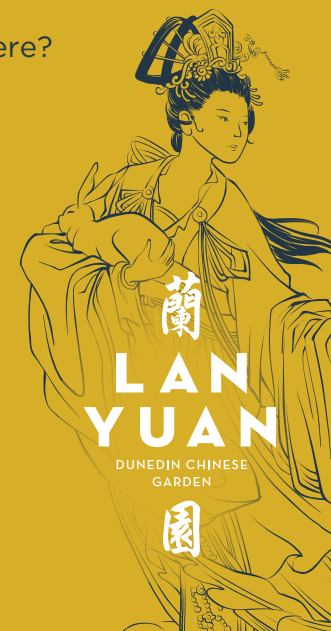
Oohh the welcome warmth
on a full face
with the blue hills of Swampy
held high to the West.

And suspended in the thin air
a moon, astonishingly bright,
holding the question
always that question...did they really get there?

And just as we noticed the fairy lights
on our veranda you called.

A crackling internet line from Honduras
stories of sleeping in a small boat at sea
of fishing with dynamite
and the first murmurings
of steps towards
your home coming.

2nd PLACE ADULT CATEGORY



GLOW

BY JENNA KNARSTON

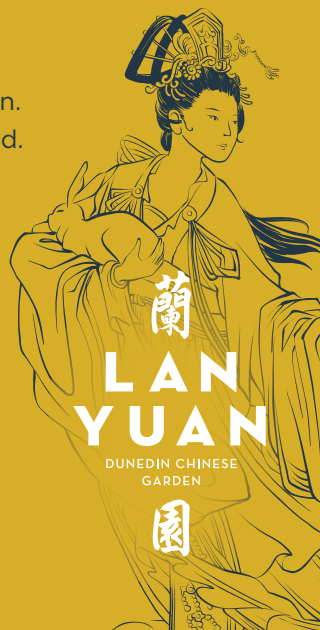
Imagine being so beautiful, that the ocean holds up a mirror.
People gaze through binoculars, just to see you clearer.
Your beauty graces us as the sun falls, resting for the next day.
You take her place but we all know that you'll eventually fade away.

We watch you from afar, your charm outshines us all.
You're with us every season, from Winter through to Fall.
You light a path from the night sky, and suddenly there's nothing to fear.
We walk through this forest, no longer scared of lions, tigers, or bears.

Sparkling bright, alongside you, are the scintillating stars.
We use them to guide us, we always know where we are.
You rise from one direction and set from another.
The stars accompany you, almost as if you're their mother.

For as long as the sun shall set, you shall rise, rise above us all.
Twinkling stars wink down from above whilst we wait for them to fall.
"Wish upon a shooting star," we say as they spiral.
If we were to take a video, it surely would go viral.

Almost as quickly as you appear, you start to drop again.
People try to make you stay but you shan't be contained.
As you return home, we hear your whispers fly free;
"Time to rise and shine. The world awaits thee."



2nd PLACE TEEN CATEGORY

SOMERSAULTS

BY OSHADHA PERERA

lying on the concrete that shades from grey to black, and black to grey,
the ten-inch-thick block of glass that is supposed to be a wall and a window combined,
i think of the fields, the ones heavy with wheat,
the ones that turned the whole village yellow and yellow and yellow,
the fields that sang with the wind and danced in the world dance cup finals,
on harvest nights, bathing in the moonlight, cool and calm,
taking in the shine, waiting half a second, and giving it out in double exponents,
to the hills that curved in and out, in the shape of your spine to the finest vertebrae,
to the river that weaved around the trees, whispering the secrets of life,
the river that smiled in blue, talked in white, flew in crystal clear molecules,
even on the day dad bought a tractor, the red one with a green stripe across the door,
when all the people gathered around to see it, to touch its shining paint,
to see what the city brought them, how accelerator equals movement,
when i hung on to the black frame, the wind tickling my cheeks, my ears, my eyes,
feeling how every bump on the gravel road, the mud road, the field was like a x=y graph,
how packets of acrylics paraglided on to the village, from parachutes of clouds,
to dance from blue to green to yellow to white to hypnotism,
how different extra-thick brushes jumped into the green and went over the grass,
the thin ones played hide and seek until the trees hugged the field, and the hills smiled at the river,
how our village was brighter than the sun, until the day i got on the airplane, the one-way one,
and now, through the 100km/h cars, over the smaller-than-matchbox buildings,
i see the fields, the hills, the trees, the river, just like they used to be,
singing, laughing, beaming, talking with me, my heart, with everything,
and i feel my mind in a magnetic trance, my cheeks in an upward arch,
smiling, smiling and smiling, for the first time in thirty years.



1st PLACE TEEN CATEGORY