From me to you.

Marilyn Jia

1st Place Poetry 8th Grade

Yesterday I left a tea bag outside your room,
behind your closed door with the water gone lukewarm.
And as its speckled weight laid across my fingers
you greeted me like an empty house
with four tear-stained walls.
It's been like this lately, the days getting shorter and you always looking past me into the blank sky.

Did you know that Jupiter has 79 moons orbiting its surface?
There must be at least 79 people who want to see you wake up early, who would give
half of themselves to make you happy.
But Jupiter is enveloped in endless clouds. It stares at the deep orange desert or the milky
swirling storm or the walls of its room. For no fault of its own, it sees
nothing.

I would give you a bowl of fried rice. I would give you a heavy blanket. I would give you half of me.

(Helplessness, settle into the backs of my hands, the curve
of my neck, the space behind my eyes my mind my chest)

And you might be my mother, my son, my neighbor's son, my student, my aunt's friend from high school.
Either way, someone will always be reaching for you,
so please stay afloat for just a little while longer.

Because I don't want to remember it like this—
The way your lights are on at midnight, blinds closed at two in the afternoon.
The way you lie in the passenger seat and I stand useless on the sidewalk; the brush of light
humming on your eyelashes, white marble countertops.
One whisper of a breath. Holding my hands together.
The way I've sliced you an orange,
and you tell me it's gone bitter. Maybe it has or maybe it hasn't,
but either way you keep throwing it aside like it's something
you can't stomach anymore