

First Prize – Grades 9 & 10 Jenkins Prize

Myanmar: After the War

Singed rubble ripples
slowly
like burning sunset waves
slipping silently.
Swollen eyes fearful,
blind as a newborn,
shaded from the callous outside,
hidden through dust
and sour abandonment.

I didn't notice the music was playing
until it wasn't.

Green haze and foggy traditions
stand tall
slowly slip.
Burnt brick and a hungry emerald
swallowed into crumbled towns and empty caskets
without a hindering breath.

I didn't see the power of light
until darkness.

Dance red as the drapes,
and creamy as the desert,
smooth as the hills,
deep as the cracks in the ancient stone heads-
forlorn and left, unbelonging.

I didn't realize how much I was missing
until it was gone.

Slipping slowly
each day another year.
Where did it all go,
how did I miss it?
Clutching on to a useless rewind,
struggling not to forget to remember.

I didn't miss the low hum of another
until silence.

by Grace, Petersburg, VA