

2025 Junior Poetry Winner

***Mother Earth***

by Susie Wang

My body is nature  
wild and untamed,  
each pain a tree,  
each scar a root,  
anchoring me to the earth.  
Mother says we come from the earth,  
we will return to the earth.  
I say I have the whole world within me.  
My spine is a river,  
winding its way  
through the landscape of my body.  
It bends and twists,  
a crooked path  
that no one can follow.  
It carves my body,  
narrowed in its own beauty.  
The growth hormones,  
a storm of needles,  
pierce the soil of my skin,  
leaving behind craters  
that bloom with flowers of different colours.  
They say it's rain for my roots,  
but my body trembles,  
a sapling caught in a tempest,  
reaching for the sun.

The brace,  
a thicket of thorns,  
wraps around my ribs,  
a fortress of plastic and Velcro.  
It digs into my bark,  
leaving marks that tell the story  
of a forest under siege,  
but even thorns  
can teach resilience.  
My eyesight,  
a fog rolling in,  
blurs the edges of the world,  
turning trees into shadows,  
shadows into ghosts.  
Glasses become my lanterns,  
but they can't chase away  
the headaches that gather  
like storm clouds in my mind.  
My teeth,  
a rocky outcrop,  
ache with the pressure of braces,  
metal wires pulling them  
into perfect alignment.  
The orthodontist says  
it will be worth it,  
but all I feel is the grind,  
the slow erosion of patience.  
And yet,  
amidst the pain,  
there is life.

My body is a forest,  
not of perfection,  
but of survival.  
Each tree, each river, each ache,  
Breathes its story  
tells my story –  
my story.  
I am bent,  
but not broken.  
I am scarred,  
but not defeated.  
I am born from nature.  
and I am learning  
to love my wildness within.

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