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Drought

H.L. Smith

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H.L. Smith*Reflection*

Last year, I had the opportunity to take a group of students from a middle-school GSA to a poetry workshop hosted by SAY Poetry DSM at a local high school. It was an unreal experience. The space fostered such vulnerability and open-mindedness that allowed me, as well as my students, to access and accept our creativity in a way that we had not anticipated. After being given a simple prompt, we were all given time to see where our creativity took us, and this poem is the product of that time. Not only was I given space to reflect on how the past year had impacted my mental health, but I also felt more than supported to share that insight with my students. The works they created in this space also absolutely blew me away, and this small group that came into community with one another really made something magical happen. We came together and saw one another as humans.

Drought

I know they say
“You can’t pour from an empty cup.”
But, trust me when I say
“I am thirsty.”
Parched.
Gasping after work weeks.
Spending 9-5 in the sunlight’s relentless beams.
No clouds for a moment of shade.

But...
I know I want to give.

If only tears could nourish seeds
Because I know I want water to pour
Freely and effortlessly from me like
The tears I have spilt throughout this year.

I want to be the sustenance those around me need.
That brings their already brilliant, sewn seeds
To vibrant flowers.
I want to be a part of their path towards flourishing,
When all I can do is wilt.

I know that's who they need me to be.
But...
I also know that isn't who I am right now.

I know I show up with...
A smile.
A positive attitude.
And dressed up clothes
Like I have my life together.
But, it's...
A smile that drops when my mask comes back on.
An attitude that shuts down at 3:03 PM.
And clothes I lay out the night before
So I can get
Just two more minutes of sleep in the morning.

I know they say
"You can't pour from an empty cup,"
And they mean well and good.

As long as it doesn't break your contract hours.

Author Bio

H.L. Smith is a queer writer who is currently a 6th grade Language Arts teacher. She has been teaching for five years, as well as advising her school's Gay/Straight Alliance. H.L. Smith is also well known for her passion for horror movies, exploring local businesses, and her two cats, Toast and Franklin. This will be her first official publication.