

Madison Durand

Age: 18, Grade: 12

School Name: Calvary Christian Academy, Ft Lauderdale, FL

Educator: Tara Fox

Category: Poetry

Goodbye, Cecil

He stood there smiling,
with the head of Cecil
in one hand
and a crossbow
in the other.

Cecil lay there dying,
with the earth of Africa
in one paw
and the shoelace of his murderer
in the other.

The planet has enough lions.
I can have one too.
That's what the man thinks.
As he cleans his patients' teeth,
he imagines they are pearls
belonging to a mighty beast.
But the deepest cavity he's ever seen
is yet to come.
And the people will wonder
how he could notice the decay
in everyone else
but himself.

He leaves work early and
plans his trip to Zimbabwe.
He mulls over his scheme
and gives his friend a call
and the friend says he needs
a new head on his wall.

He eats dinner with his family and
tells his wife the meat is undercooked.
But he tears it apart with his teeth anyway
and his children do the same.

And at night he puts them to bed
and stares at the stuffed lion
nuzzled near his daughter's head
and he promises to bring her
an even bigger one,
a real one,

when he returns.
And she giggles and says
That's what you always say, daddy.

The dentist travels 14,084 kilometers
with heavy weaponry.
One clattering in his bag,
the other throbbing in his chest.

On the journey there,
they put their papers in order.
Because that's all it takes
to disrupt the order
of the entire animal kingdom.

When the plane lands,
the people are angry because
they're tired of being treated like animals.
And the animals are angry because
they're tired of being treated like animals.

They pay a local
to give them a ride
and the local complies,
wishing he'd denied,
since deep in his heart he feels
like he's driving their getaway car
and he feels a sudden urge
to getaway far
away from the murderers
and he prays for Cecil.

The wind prays for Cecil
as it sighs in its sleep.
And the land prays for Cecil:
What sorrow this will reap.
Even the prey prays for Cecil.
Though she knows that his death
will allow her to thrive,
she longs for a world
where all can survive.

The dentist and his friend
lurk through the fields
and the tall grass trembles
because it knows murderers
slink through its belly
like lice in the mane
of a majestic beast.

He sees the lion
outstretched on a rock.
Strings of saliva dangle across the
cave of his mouth and fall
onto his glimmering fangs.
The dentist taps his friend's shoulder
and raises a finger to his lips.

Cecil turns his mighty head and stares
through the grass at the two little humans,
and the green eyes of the beast
blink and then narrow,
and that's when the coward
releases his arrow.
He causes:

A roar that detonates
the tall trees
and sends a mushroom cloud of birds
Soaring into the orange sky
like thick black veins
crawling from the horizon.

They gamble for pieces of the king
while he bleeds at their feet.
The dentist wants the head,
but so does the friend,
and all the Earth grieves
for what she can't comprehend.

Goodbye, Cecil.