

Until We Can Breathe

Kayoon Song, 16, Hannover

It looks like nothing much
Just another morning forced into shape.

Coffee too strong, too much
Burning its way down
Before the day has even begun

Necks bent forward
Like they forgot the sky existed.
Shoulders folded inward,
as if trying to take up less space in the world.

Only systems repeating themselves.
Emails arriving like tired birds
that never land, only a circle.

Deadlines stacked neatly
On top of more deadlines,
until time itself feels like paperwork.

People move with their eyes down,
Locked into glowing screens in their hands
Thumbs scrolling through nothing that ever
really ends.

Something you pass through
Without noticing it is there.

Hands repeat the same motions
Keys, screens, pages, numbers.

The body learns efficiency
And forgets softness.

Even rest feels like
A task left incomplete.

Bitter, automatic,
Like breathing in a place
that forgot it had taste

Nothing repairs itself here.
Nothing turns into anything else

Only the same day Folded, unfolded,
Folded again.
Again

But maybe,
Just for a moment
Someone stops without meaning to.
Lifts their head As of something pulled gently at the edge of thought.

Today, maybe
We can look up for a moment,
Feel the air move across our skin lightly, And breathe As if it is something we are
allowed to do slowly.