

POETRY AWARD WINNER

Brontosaurus

Alayna Abbott

A plastic dinosaur, maybe a gift once
passed between tiny fists and toy chests.
Now, its body fits perfectly in my palm,
neck extending between my fingers.

Deep green, smoothed-over, cross-hatched grooves,
etched wrinkles meet sleek yellow underbelly,
broken-tipped tail reveals hollow insides
rattling with tiny rocks and gritty sand.

Raised-ridge spine traces up to orange eyes,
observing different angles with uneven black irises,
staring down a rounded snout, past dimpled nostrils
to blunt teeth, leaf-stained from pretend games.

The bumping clack of re-enacted battles
reveal untouched white under chipped paint,
but nothing can unwrap the scent
of waxy crayons and wooden blocks.

And on spring afternoons, in lush grass,
its flat feet clumsily thump the soft ground,
taller than houses and pine trees from the lowest angle,
as marching ants witness history reimagined.

**BEATRICE K. BALKCUM RENAISSANCE LITERARY AWARD WINNER
POETRY AWARD WINNER**

Accented

Alayna Abbott

I've buried it over the years,
deep down in the *soil*—
but there it goes, telling on me,
rounding out the word—soul,
rolling off my tongue in a single syllable.
Iron, compressed into its basic elements,
too many vowels just like *ornery*.
Thursday, something water can't cure,
but it sure is so close to weekend freedom.
Bracketed *window* loses its end,
last letter unlatched, forever flung wide.
Orange, sweet flesh peeled apart,
outstretched *ah*, an open mouth.
I'm sorry, stuttered habitually,
like prayers I don't make
folded between butchered '*scuse me's*,
ripped from the *soil*, roots and all,
apologies for nothin', and for everything.

No Return Address

Alayna Abbott

Here's all your stuff.
I packed it up for you,
every last bit of it.

If anything's missing,
check the landfill.

P.S. Happy Birthday