

Conspectus Borealis

Volume 6 | Issue 1

Article 18

3-31-2021

When Life Gives You Lemonade, Hold Onto It

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Recommended Citation

Pleitez, Gabriella S. (2021) "When Life Gives You Lemonade, Hold Onto It," *Conspectus Borealis*: Vol. 6 : Iss. 1 , Article 18.

Available at: https://commons.nmu.edu/conspectus_borealis/vol6/iss1/18

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The stickiness of lemonade on skin always bothered Cherry, and now the feeling was unbearable, knotted in the threads of one of her worst memories. The lingering pieces of that day had become entwined in lemon-soaked strings and messily tucked away in the back of her mind. Her friends were patient with her initial denial of the details, but after a few months, they did their best to encourage Cherry to untangle the painful events that transpired.

She could recall on that summer afternoon the discomfort of hair clinging to her sweat-drenched forehead and how her nose kept twitching from the rising stench of hot asphalt as they walked down Main Street together. The sugary drink was his idea, after spotting the little kids planted behind a cheap plastic table right on the corner of 42nd. He handed them two one-dollar coins, gleaming gold in the sunlight, and laughed at the twinkling gazes they offered back. Their eyes were glued to him with the same awe that Cherry felt every time she looked into his warm brown eyes.

He stubbornly refused her help in carrying the lemonades, in the same harmless dorky attitude that he used when he winked at her and said, “Got us some drinks as sweet as your name.”

Cherry still remembers the absolute certainty she held that he would drop at least one of the cups before reaching the beach across the street. Cherry still remembers being suffocated by the undeniable dread of being right.

Still felt silenced by the screeching of rubber on asphalt. Still felt lemonade coating the unbearably sticky fingers of his limp hand.

