

No,
You're not going to die.
I'm not going out there to see a problem that isn't there.
Your eyes are playing tricks on you, jesters with the light.
There's no dying, there's no clearcutting, there's no burning.
There's not another degree to the atmosphere's
 life-set thermostat.
There's not thirst drying out your throat, waking you in the
middle of the night to beg the stars for their tears.
There's no ice melting like the perfect cubes
 in your lemonade glass.
There's no landslides, there's no sinkholes, the ground isn't
 cracking apart to scream.
There's no wildfires licking up the forests to feed their ever
hungry red-orange hues.
You're just lying to yourself.
There's nothing there.

I don't know why you're so persistent that something's wrong.
Nothing has been better, we've never been better,
isn't that all that matters?
You're seeing ghosts of horror stories that were never told,
made up in your crooked imagination.
You're delusional. You're lost. There's nothing there.
The earth has always been bare.

— Alys Traylor
Chapel Hill, NC

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Alys Traylor was a finalist for CHS 2025-2026 Poet Laureate and now serves as the Celebrator of Original Works and Co-Social Causes Lead for CHS's Poet Justice League, has participated in Poetry Out Loud, and was the 2nd place poetry winner for the Pauli Murray Student Contest. Traylor self-published her first poetry collection, *Speech Therapy, Eating Disorders, & Dyslexic Speculation* in September of 2025.

Poetry in Plain Sight is proud to feature the talented young poets of North Carolina during the month of August.

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Poetry in Plain Sight™ series
in partnership with Winston-Salem Writers, North Carolina Writers' Network, and Press 53

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