

Forever Thirteen

Claire Arneson

Here I swing,
laughing and playing.
You get to leave,
but here, I am staying.

Forever thirteen,
because of an accusation.
My body goes slack,
losing sensations.

My breath catches
as I start to go higher.
My body floats,
and my eyes grow tired.

You gather around,
laughing and yelling.
But I am still moving—
I don't smell the burning.

You hoist me up,
the rope 'round my throat.
I cough and sputter
as I inhale smoke.

I drop into the fire,
burning and mean.
My family buries me.
I am forever thirteen.

Claire Arneson is a junior at the University of North Dakota. She is studying English and communications and hopes to work in the publishing industry in the future. She loves reading all of the books she can, and cheers the loudest at the hockey game.