

I write this not from bitterness,  
but from aching roots of gratitude,  
Thank you.  
To the boy in torn Crocs  
planting eucalyptus on a landfill,  
Thank you.

Today, I buried my daughter  
beneath a sky with COPD.  
Today, I watched the sun blink  
through smog,  
like it was ashamed to witness this.

Her breath was borrowed time.  
Every inhale—a negotiation with air.  
Every exhale—a prayer.  
Yet, she danced.

Today, I tried not to recall the fading note her breath became.

I see you, young dreamers,  
planting trees in places only ashes dared to linger.  
You are becoming the breath she never had.  
And for that,  
I thank you with every tear I still shed.

Today I say, Don't wait until your lungs speak in the broken syntax of hers.  
The soil still chokes on plastic,  
The rivers carry our laziness,  
The air still bruises those who try to breathe.  
Somewhere, another child is holding her chest,  
trying to inhale without trembling.

Don't let another garden grow only in a grave.

Let her final breath  
be the beginning  
of yours.

So, I ask you

Shall breathless smog author our days ahead?

or will you rewrite it in green ink and wildflowers?