



*Curls, Autumn Garrison, charcoal and pastel*

## Blue Rachel Lemley

The **color** when you awake dazed and confused, in a strange place. When clothing no longer fits and your bed's too small, and you know that you ignore the shimmering sear for the dull, faded sparkle of the pavement. The tint of the ice when you glide across, skates slicing harshly at the frozen surface.

The **color** of that backpack you use, only needing a few books inside it, yet loving the feel of responsibility. That favorite sweater you wear, even though the sleeves hang past your fingertips and the material leaves patterns on your arms.

The **color** when the bag becomes crowded, and how you feel when the sweater does the same. When you look in the mirror, but don't see yourself, only a creature with stars in your eyes and short streams in your hair.

The **color** of faint regrets and sad, broken promises, like sharp china on the floor, imprinted in grey snow like scars, gradually fading as if a chilling wind. When your words choke on themselves, and you're shackled by a routine.

The **color** of a dying fire. When you look in the mirror and only see dark, painted smiles under the eyes, and a thin, dry frown on your lips. But each day the silences fall with heavier footsteps than the day before.

The **color** of light, coming for you just as expected. When it only takes parts of you, rearing its graceful essences at your entirety as if it has examined the future of pain and thought this to be beautiful. Leaving you to sleep on ashes, dreaming in their dead flames alone.

The **color** that reminds you of what it was like to live without worry, regret, stress. The **color** of the cake icing from the birthday that you were sure you wouldn't make. When you throw out that old sweater and backpack. When you're able to breathe for the first time in years. When the doors stay unlocked. When that old song plays on the radio and you allow yourself to grin. Because after all, blue is just a **color**. ♦