

**BHAC 2019 Sussex Poetry Competition**  
**Student Competition – First prize – Grace Tower**

**Hylas' vanishing**

They rose up like bubbles breathed by the moon,  
and began treading water,  
although did not seem to see me  
as our boat breached the mist  
and cut free their tangled lilies.

Four fingers touched Hylas' arm, the lines of her breasts  
shuddered, the yellow flower in her hair like a conch  
was a listening device. Rapt by her blue irises,  
he went under. She pulled him, motionless,  
until the soles of his feet disappeared.

Then I saw what he had seen;  
the purple light on the lilies,  
the swept cream of her eyes,  
her alabaster limbs, the marigold  
in bloom. Water became the cloth  
of my garments for she sung so unerringly  
that it curdled my thoughts and I sunk  
to where I could know hers.

I woke alone and bare  
on the wood of the rocking vessel.  
There was no sign of Hylas,  
except his blue robe suspended.  
And Melissanthi over there,  
faced down like a sleeve.