

**THE DIVER**  
**JACINTA ORILLO**

As you descend into the depths of the  
ocean, you may fear the darkness  
beneath you. You're not alone. I'm down  
here...

**THE CYCLES OF LIFE**  
**APRIL BARAGWANATH**

Stars bright, a winters night.  
The air is cold but love is warm.  
Hearts delight, everything is alright.  
Beware the coming storm.

**WINTER SLAPS AUTUMN IN THE EYE**  
**(A TANKA)**  
**IVOR STEVEN**

Time shortens in stride  
Autumn leaves pepper the ground  
Winter slaps the sky  
Midday sun closes her eyes  
Naked trees calmly survive

**MEMORY SMELL**  
**SERA JONAS JAKOB**

That aftershave  
Plunges me back into nostalgic revulsion  
On edge  
Muscles tensing  
Want to be away  
I flee  
From remembering  
From him

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# 2023 WINTER SOLSTICE CHALLENGE



a story in 22 words

**WINTER SOLSTICE**  
**GUENTER SAHR**

This winter solstice sounds like fun,  
more time to drink goonies after dark on  
a bench in a cold, cold city park.

**STONEHENGE**  
**TABITHA THOMPSON**

To walk amongst the magic  
That is the towering stones,  
Breathe in the cool, wintry air  
Feel their calmness in your bones.

**THE BIRTHDAY PRESENT**  
**JULIE RYSDALE**

June 22 1963, my birthday. Losing  
Monopoly, I sulk. Sixty years later I win!!  
Steve and I play, and he lets me.

**BEING GOOD**  
**MICHAEL CAINS**

She just knew he would hit her again, but  
she didn't know why. So she sat very  
quietly.  
Her tail still wagged.

**MESSAGE FROM ABOVE**  
**KIM RANCE**

I'm lost because I've been left behind by  
you. You say, 'It's not your time yet. Let  
me watch you from above.'

**AND DEATH SHALL HAVE NO**  
**DOMINION**  
**GEOFFREY GASKILL**

'I know *the* secret,' she told me with her  
final breath. 'Death is not the end. And  
my phoenix love is burning.'

**WINTER'S BATTLE CRY**  
**GAIL GRIFFIN**

Isolation. Loneliness imposed. Using the  
light in my own being, I venture out to  
create connections that celebrate  
feelings of community. Belonging.

**SUSHI SOY SAUCE**  
**MICHELLE FITZGERALD**

100 tiny plastic fish tumble from the  
butter compartment of an empty  
refrigerator.

Post-it note reminders line her walls.  
Dementia lives here.

**MY STORY**  
**REH CHAUD**

I have no emotions or desires. I live life  
motionless. People around me pity me. I  
was loved once, unconditionally but  
now ...

**CRYSTALLINE**  
**GISELLE SIM**

Always to exist here within and around,  
But they are not meant to be found,  
As they need to prepare below  
underground.

**A PALE EVENING ROSE**  
**SANDRA ANN JOBLING**

A pale ghost, I become light when  
shadows stretch into darkness. Drink  
the perfume. I'm an intoxicating, primrose  
delight when darkness arrives.

**EYES ON THE HORIZON**  
**KERSTIN LINDROS**

After sitting and waiting his turn, he's  
joining the line-up. Watching. Hoping to  
catch that wave, his first in front of Belle.

**BESPOKE**  
**MARION JACOB**

Words are strong  
they build up  
they tear down  
they embrace  
they push away  
they enable  
they destroy  
we repent  
rethink  
restore