



Star City

The sun-soaked Blue Ridge Mountains
encircle us like a mother's arms,
warm and tender.

The perennial streams and the Roanoke River
flow through the city
like human veins,
the water splashing onto muddy banks
where burgundy flowers grow.

The sturdy tulip poplar
and budding skeletal redbud trees
are the backbones of our city.

The artists are the legs
carrying us forward,
framing the future
with paint, ink, wood, and plaster.

The tall grassy fields
where the white rabbits frolic
are the feet that keep us steady.

The train tracks are the muscles
that connect us to the yawning world beyond,
the passengers lugging messages of hope
to distant cities.



We must nurture this city
fill it with the breath of new beginnings,
leave it to rest under a car-chasing moon,
then feed it spoonfuls of kindness
to satisfy its sweet tooth.

Within the protective rib cage of this city
we are safe to let our hearts grow
as large as they can,
so our fingertips can reach the cusp
of an Indigo sky.

And although we may go far,
a beacon of light will always guide us home again:
the star bright and pulsing
alive.



2 of 2

2024 Roanoke Youth Poet Laureate
ELANI SPENCER

Presented at the April 13, 2024 Daisy Art Parade
Elmwood Park, Roanoke, Virginia