

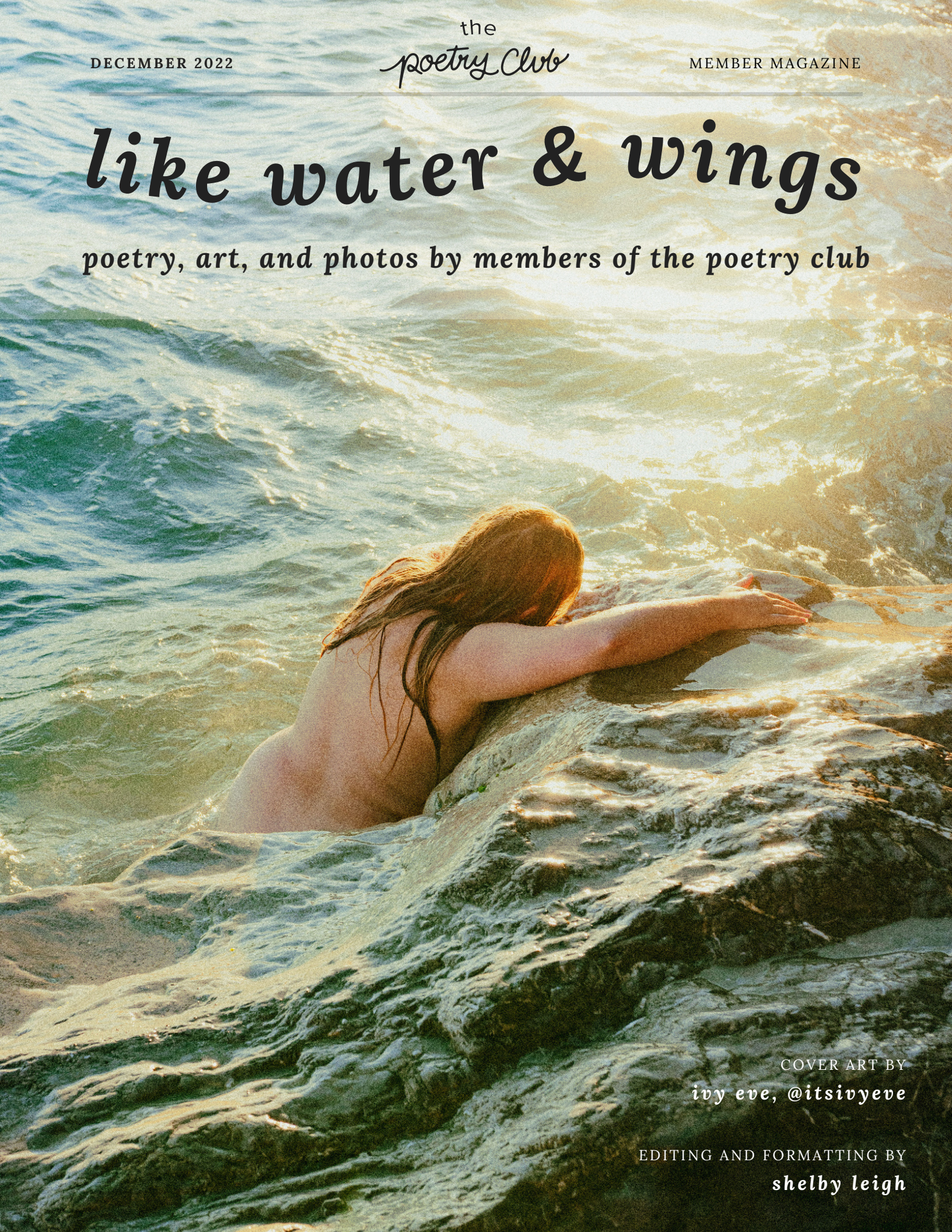
DECEMBER 2022

the
poetry Club

MEMBER MAGAZINE

like water & wings

poetry, art, and photos by members of the poetry club



COVER ART BY
ivy eve, @itsivyeve

EDITING AND FORMATTING BY
shelby leigh

contributors

all contributors to the magazine are members of the poetry club online community. the community supports poets through writing workshops, publishing resources, and more to help poets have a successful poetry career. for more details or to join us, [click here](#).
thank you to every poet in our community for sharing your work!

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a note from the editor

I was destined to be a writer. Seeing my words in print was a dream I had since I first learned to read.

In high school, I was the editor of my high school's literary magazine. Now, I'm an author, creating a literary magazine for the incredible members of the poetry community I created.

That started to sink in when I began working on this project.

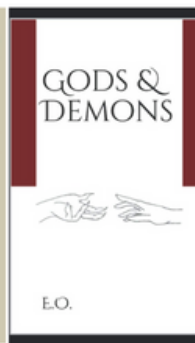
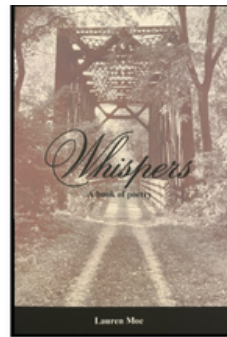
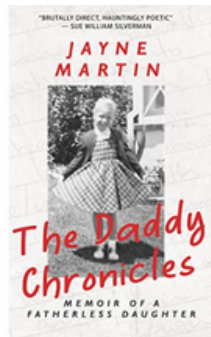
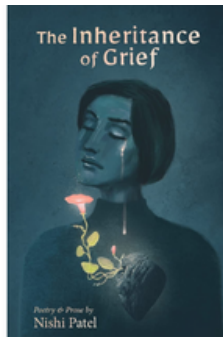
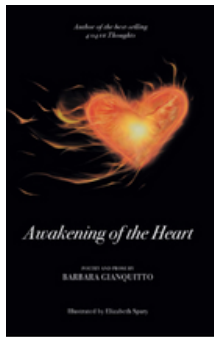
What started out as a way to celebrate the poetry club's 1-year anniversary, and to publish the work of our members, turned into awe at the talent of this group of writers.

With a range of topics and styles, you're certain to find a poem (or many more!) that feels like it was written just for you as you flip through the pages.

Happy reading!

Shelby Leigh
shelbyleigh.co

books published by the poetry club members



family heirlooms

content warning: trauma

if
one
or
more
of
your
parents are narcissists
you might be entitled
to a hobby in poetry

some receive
loquets
rings
trinkets
or other pretty things
my family heirlooms come
in the form of war wounds

they have a bookmark on every mistake
i've made in the last decade
on hand
in case
they wish to inflict pain
and collections for the next of our name

there were thousands of women at my birth
each ushering their own hurt
bearing their cross
is now my curse

one soft
one hard
i found familiarity with the disney villain
not
the hero
do you know
what it is to be heartbroken
before you've ever loved?

-Aimee Scanlon, @goblinpoetry

Can you feel it too?
The darkness coming for you
All the bad things sitting in your head
Letting those words replay
How can you take it back
Rewind to the past
Let's go back to before that
But I can't
I carry it all around like a locket around my neck
pretty & delicate

-Chrissy Jay @overmyshoulderx



image by ivy eve

the sign

when clouds hang
heavy in the east over the graying
mountains and daybreak
comes from the wrong direction—

when the flag
of your father sears
your eyes and your heart
turns upside down in the rain—
now

is the time
—now is the time—
to surrender to the insistent
blood beat of all
those hopes you buried in
the unforgetting earth—

-Elizabeth Wilder, @sheofthewild



the light

Every once in a while,
When the world feels
Like a dark and overwhelming place,
I'll find the light I needed
In my friends and family,
In the smell of the grass
And the sounds of the birds singing
Melodic musings in the morning.
Every once in a while
When the world feels
Like a dark and overwhelming place,

I pray for the grace
I'll need to look for the light

In myself,
In the people around me,
In a world full of beauty and suffering.

-Liz Newman, @liz_newman_writer_



Image by E. M. Scott

Water Won't Do the Human Soul Much Good

Give the horses some—

That red rock cove won't last for long.
The tumbleweeds will file back inline.
And Southwest dust will soon
Mask the clear blue sky.

So give the horses some.

They've carried you all this way—
The sun beating down on them.
The broken ground and cacti
Mutilating their hooves.

You want to make it home alive?
Then give the horses some.

For water won't do the human soul much good.

-E. M. Scott

**I don't want to play small
I want to take up space
I won't shrink myself
Or overthink myself
I won't give up my place**

-Ashlie, @abloominthewild

grief

It was the year I had to face all the reasons I felt so disconnected.
All the ways I felt unworthy and hard to love.

Grief never quite moved its chair around my dinner table
Where I sit with my girls having a tomato pasta with extra parmesan.

When they ask me what it was like “in the olden days” I feel so old
And numb for the most parts - and my mind just goes to the broken glass on the floor.

Standing at the top of the stairs waiting for the neighbours to come and pick us up
until things calmed down.

To say you didn't want me was a way to make you feel better about your mistakes
The chaos created in my heart is still something I am dealing with today.

When I hold on to anybody who's willing to love me, who's willing to choose me.
My inability of letting go of toxic people because they still pay me attention.

And I stare at my little girl just out of the shower smelling like rose and jasmine
waiting for me to do the most wonderful hair plaits for her.

And I smile melancholically because this is the time I give her undivided attention,
that she deserves so much.

All the things I have no memory of receiving,
end with me.

All I wanted was for you to do my hair, take me to school and
read me a bedtime story.

So I leave the grief chair just where it is; until the next dinner.
It was easier to mourn your death than to face all the little ways you abandoned me
when you were still alive.

-Author Barbara Gianquitto

what healing means

Healing does not mean
to never feel pain again,
to never despair.

What healing does mean:
to keep on going forward,
to choose life over hurt,

to choose love, not hate,
to make the best of your time
here on planet earth,

to keep hoping, and
to never forget your worth
and that happiness is
what you deserve.

-KJ Robinson, @kj.robinsonpoetry



lux

Dear bright one
Don't hold your breath for too long
The supernova is starting now
Not a time to dim your spotlight
Especially on yourself
Effervescent soul always lighting up everyone else's deepest sorrows
That's the type of magic you are

-Kassandra Vilchis, @kassandra.vilchis

Star Seeker

When I was younger
I was mesmerized by the iridescent stars
Awarded to great work
I worked tirelessly to earn as many as I could
Head down, buried in books, regurgitating knowledge
Until foil filled the pages of my childhood
Not a white space to be found
I would stare at the pages
As if their metallic shine
Could rub off on me
Make me brighter
Make me seen
Make me enough

Now that I am older
I am still a star seeker
But no one gives out stars
For dull responsible tasks
Like folding laundry, doing groceries, or paying a bill
I worried for a while
That no matter how much I tried to
Keep my head down, keep working, keep up
I would never get that shine back
Never be bright
Never be seen
Never be enough

Until I discovered
The easiest way to earn stars
Is to look up and be me

-Lily Freemark

Ode à la dame de fer

You rise into the pristine Parisienne sky
a tower of engineering marvel
The span of your gaze sweeping over
the City of Lights
The mothership I call you because
you call me home
I arrive from afar once again
to rest beneath your skirt of steel
on a carpet of emerald green
Champs de Mars,
where lovers sip Sancerre
and children do cartwheels
with no thought of a day
when those will no longer be possible
My heart tunes itself to the music
of a language not my own
yet deeply known
as if in another life I had lived
and died in your embrace
It will be here on the banks of the Seine
That I will let my hair grow gray

Jayne Martin, jaynemartin-writer.com



Image by Jayne Martin

In These Parts

Parts of me have been erased
and left scrubbed pink and empty,
prone to scarring, unmarkable.

Parts unknown, how can I catalog
what I've never called from shadow
or borne with a full-throated yes?

Parts of me are gripped close,
but spill over my arms and out
of my clumsy hands like silk.

Parts per billion, I, the miscellaneous
dimensionless quantity, one of
many, another uncertain something.

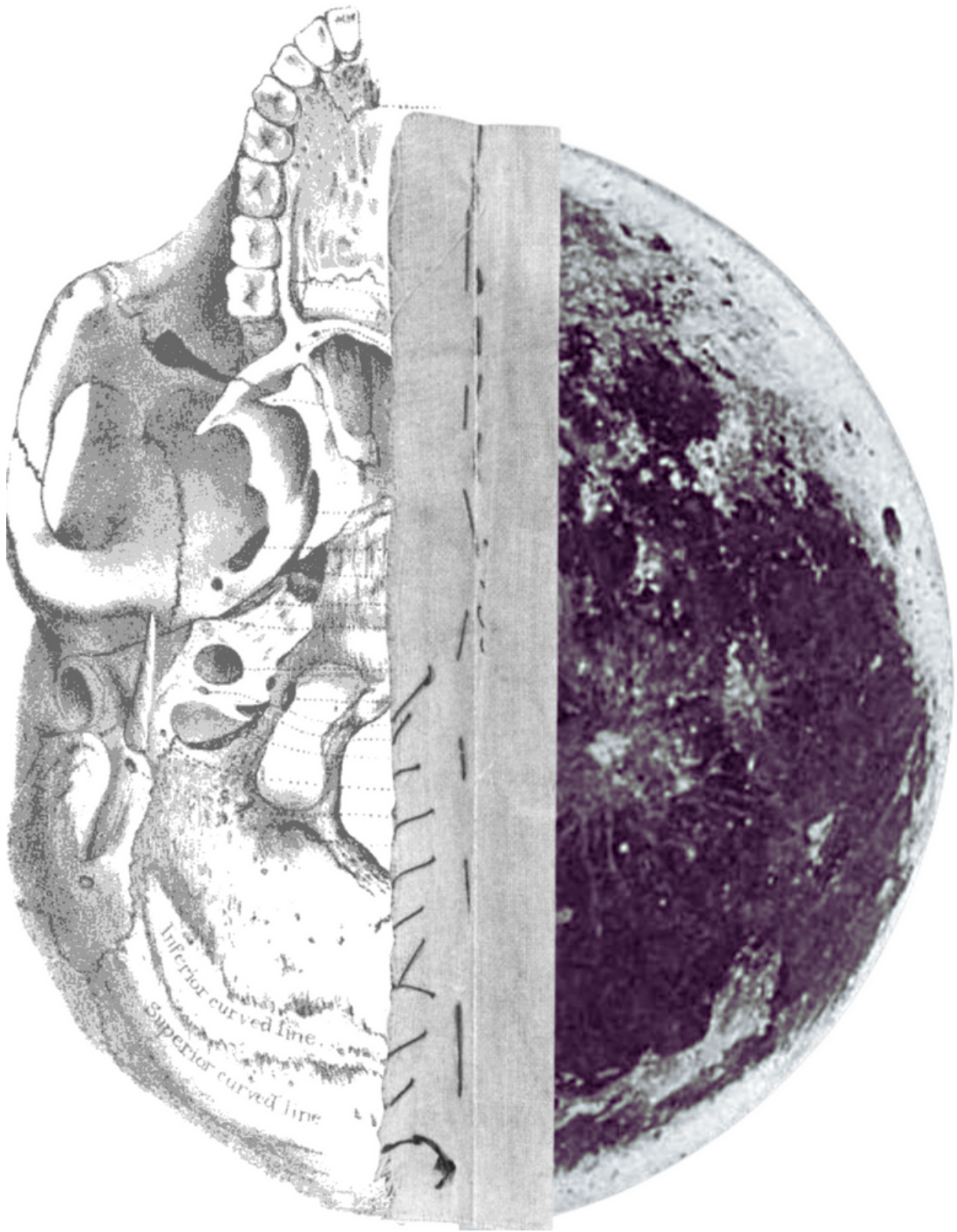
Parts of me are healing, breathing
in the breeze of the new start,
the clean slate, the skin made whole.

Part and parcel, the scars point
as constellations to steer by
in the crushed velvet night.

Parts of me were yours,
the ones you erased.
Parts of me are gone,
but I am not unwhole.

I am the sum of these parts.

L.M. Cole, @_scoops__



Stitched and Starred by L.M. Cole

FRESH PAINT

these blobs upon blobs of paint bled
until dried and cured into concrete
on the palette of my bones

these colors of
crimson and burnt umber
I now chisel and scrape away
so that the hand of my mind can wash
the bristles of my heart and dip into
the paint of infinite colors from my soul
to bring life back into my bones

Nishi Patel, @by.nishi.patel



Goodbye to Perfect

I used to believe in perfect
And that I couldn't share bad art
I wrote and wrote but I kept
My work a secret held close to my heart

Friends would ask when they could read
My poems, my novels, my stories, my writing
A question that would fill me with dread
Until finally I found myself deciding

A challenge was what I most needed
To write and publish a haiku a day
Good and bad were posted online once completed
Perfectionism replaced with lighthearted wordplay

I used to tell myself that my work wasn't good enough to share
Now I choose myself, and through my writing my soul I bare

Katie Rodante, @katierodante

coffee & birdsong

in the hush as the sun rises
before the house stirs

this, my moment with the world
stealing across kitchen tiles, barefoot

warming my hands around a hot coffee cup
the smell of the brew filtering through

clank clank of the radiators sleepily heating
the cold air that hovers between winter & spring

open the blinds to let the light in
gentle beams stream through the window by the sink

the sky outside a river of orange & pink
birdsong floating through the gaps in the slats

the dawn chorus reminding me that
through the harsh winter

the birds have found their voice
and now they sing their story

unafraid of making noise
and in this moment I promise the same for myself

to be more like the sparrows
use this season to rest

then emerge in the spring
with a story to sing

unafraid of my voice
my song from within

abi hayes, @abi_storyteller



image by L.M. Cole

Personal Reckoning

I ran barefoot
tearing up the roots beneath me
I knew walking in decaying woods
would be the gateway to my demise
never so wise I was
to chase what was never mine
our love lay wilting
in the center of the wreckage
yet I nurtured every black and brittle weed
breathing life into you
a soothing sweet delicacy
but the whispering winds tell me
what my mind has feared
the darkness comes beckoning
I have run full force
into my own personal reckoning.

-Alexandra Vincent, @alexandra.j.vincent



image by L.M. Cole

After Years

They met in the classroom on the first floor,
Liked each other and began seeking
Moments of nearness in crowded chambers,
In Agra, the city of medieval splendor.

He did the same the year before, a different girl,
Apart from wearing the desired color dresses,
She was gone; she could not pass Hamlet.
So new year, new friends, and new ways.

Cinema halls were not that posh,
Restaurants too expensive,
No malls, so they had temples and markets.
Since he was not religiously inclined,

Visits to the market were the chosen excursion,
And at last, the visit to the Saint's shrine
Just tying the slender threads, no amorous frolics
Though the longing looks and holding hands.

He soon joined his family vocation;
She went to her distant home in the hills.
No communication nor a glimpse
But for the imagination's recreation.

That remains in their hearts when
They hold their wine glasses, living the
Lives unknown to one another.
A tale lived once but never told.

Shivashankar Singh

Witch Wound

She's here brewing a storm with her tiny fists
stirring inside me an ancestral grief
for all the women never held
for all the women stored in embers
for all the women showered in glass
doubting their own shadow
You deserved the moon and the stars

Rena Joy, @renajoyauthor



image by ivy eve, @itsivyeve

Women

Women – their roots bind Mother Earth
Threading their love and support
Allowing for growth.
For it is about lifting each other
Mending each wing; nurturing with strength
To be gifted with freedom
To fly
To rise up and touch every cloud dream
To be able to:

- Stand firm in her opinions
- Be stable in her stance
- Be respected and heard

To celebrate her throughout the seasons
To be acknowledged,
 Accepted.
Not only for her flowers and shining sun
But her thundering clouds of passion – anger,
Her moments of rain.
For she is a woman
 A human
Embrace her fully.

sara farhat, @smilesofsunshine

Sad Sunday

I canceled all my plans today
to lounge around in bed
To wallow in my agony
and watch the rain instead
I want to be alone today
to sit inside my fears
And feel my every ounce of pain
flow heavy with my tears

-Jhane, @quotedbyjhane



*A reenactment of Boy With a Basket of Fruit by Caravaggio
Image by Jhane, @quotedbyjhane*

Cry For Help

I need your strength, love, and power
My heart is weakening by the hour
Searching for words of inspiration
Waiting to start a conversation
Speak to me Lord, I need you now
Falling to my knees, I made a vow
Vow to be obedient and follow your lead
Send me a sign so I can believe

Veronica Rosel, @poems_byvee

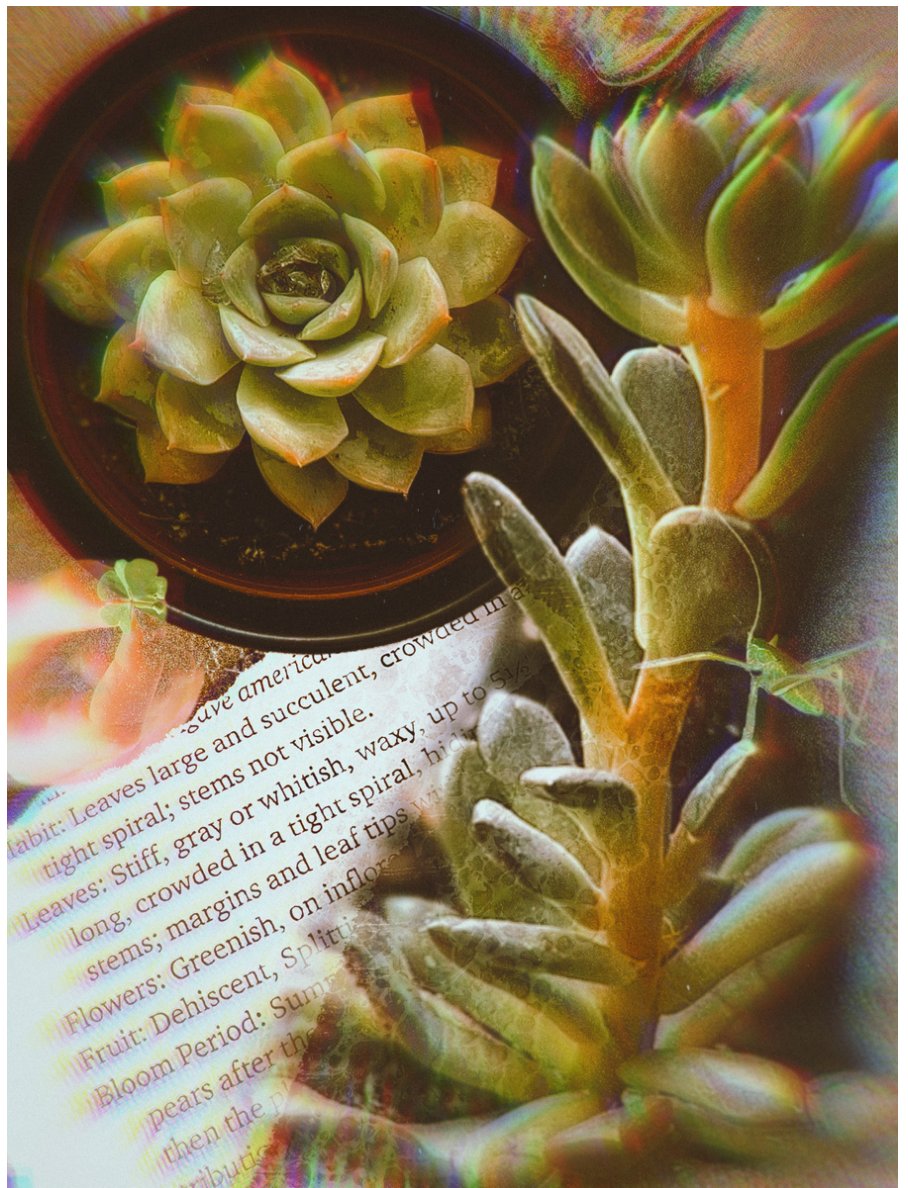


image by
ivy eve, @itsivyeve

succulents

miniature mandala of sage-silver sheen
your neighbor rosette reaching
fraction of forest green
grounding guides for balance
gentle awareness of
dark, damp earth so easily
dusted dry steadfast breath
that without care—connection
wilts to weakness

Melissa Nunez, @MelissaKNunez

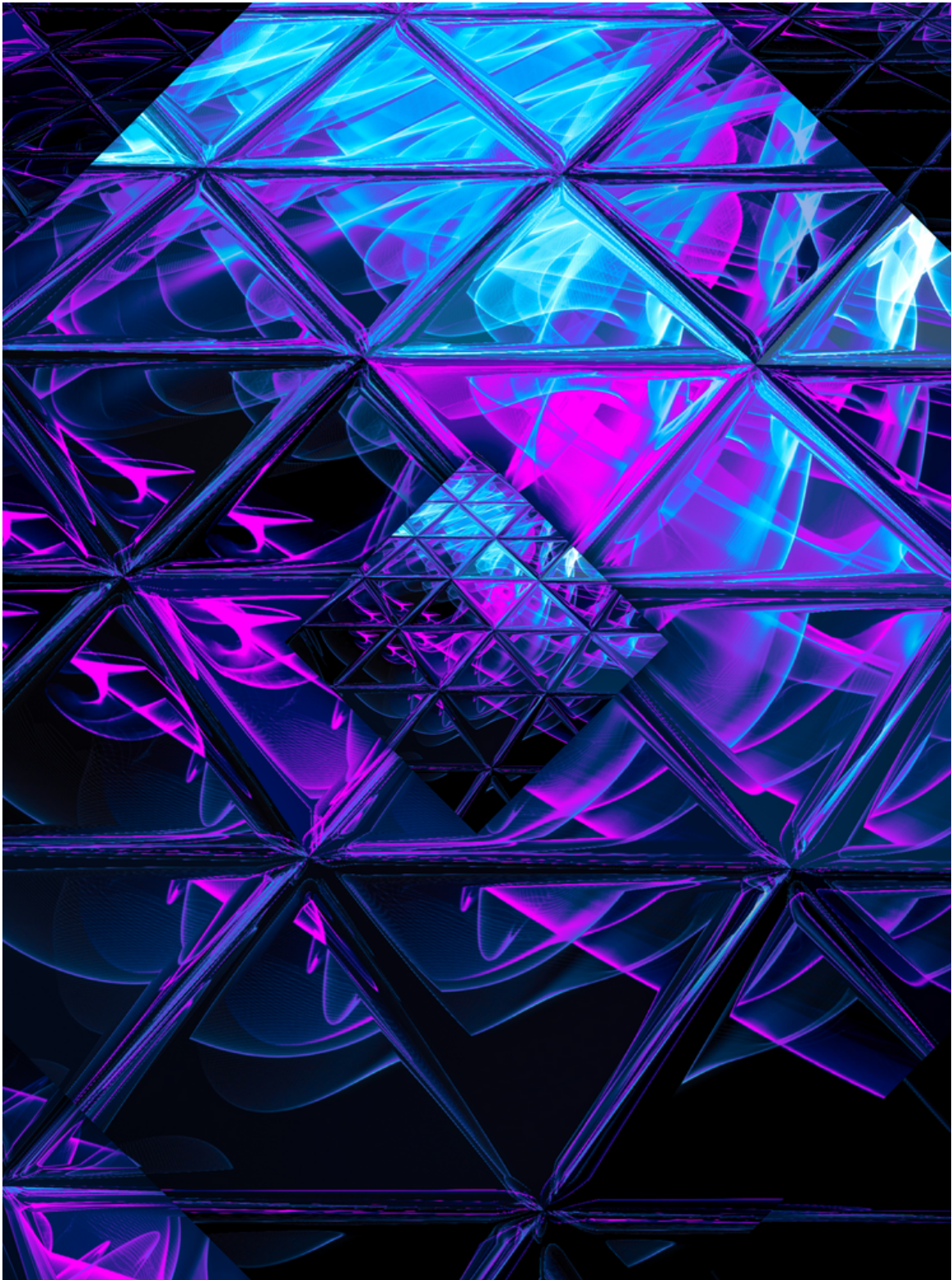


The Harmony of Dawn

The bell tolls six times
In the night, when two months ago,
It would have held the setting sun
In the sky, ready to
Smoothly segue into slumber.
The silence, besides a few
Of nature's patrons failing
To leave at last call,
Slowing their conversation
To a soft goodbye,
Is soothing to my ears.

To witness a communication
My mind will never understand.
I instinctively know
They speak no empty words,
Their vocal tones,
Puzzling perfection of polyphony
All within time, always in rhythm.
In darkness they are heard
Unafraid of the contrast from day,
Most would shy away from,
But the bold who sing in life's darkness
Are the ones who
Meet harmony at sunrise.

J Duchak



Art by J Duchak

Best Friend

If I have to be your best friend
If that's all I get
Then I'll take my job with honor
I'll be the best one yet

I'll offer you my shoulder
I'll show you that I care
I'll be there when you need me
I'm not going anywhere

If I have to be your best friend
The one that hears you cry
Then I'll take my job with honor
I'll take my job with pride

My love for you is stronger
Than you'll ever know
But for you to ever love me
I'll have to let you go

You need time to find your purpose
You need time to sort your thoughts
But when the course has ended
And the race is finally run
Remember it's me, your friend,
Who has loved you from day one!

Lauren Moe @moe_poetry

It's

me, yes,

and this time,

I'm the chosen one.

If only my parents could see,

I just know how proud they would be—

Ten years in the making, and here I am now,

selected, severed, and soaring into the skies I go—

separated from the pack, because this is the kind reward for gentle patience.

I cannot wait to be dressed in twinkling hues and watch the joy in a child's eyes;

I cannot wait to stand firm by two lovers as one bends their knee to propose a new life;

I cannot wait to be the reason families fly home to be together;

I cannot wait to be the backdrop of photos that will last forever;

So goodbye to my friends, it has been nice,

but now it's my time to shine—

because

it's me, yes,

and this time,

I'm the chosen one.

scars will fade in time
your skin will become part of your story
those sunflowers you planted
last autumn will grow
springtime will circle round again
your wounds will heal

D.L. Heather, @dlheatherpoetry

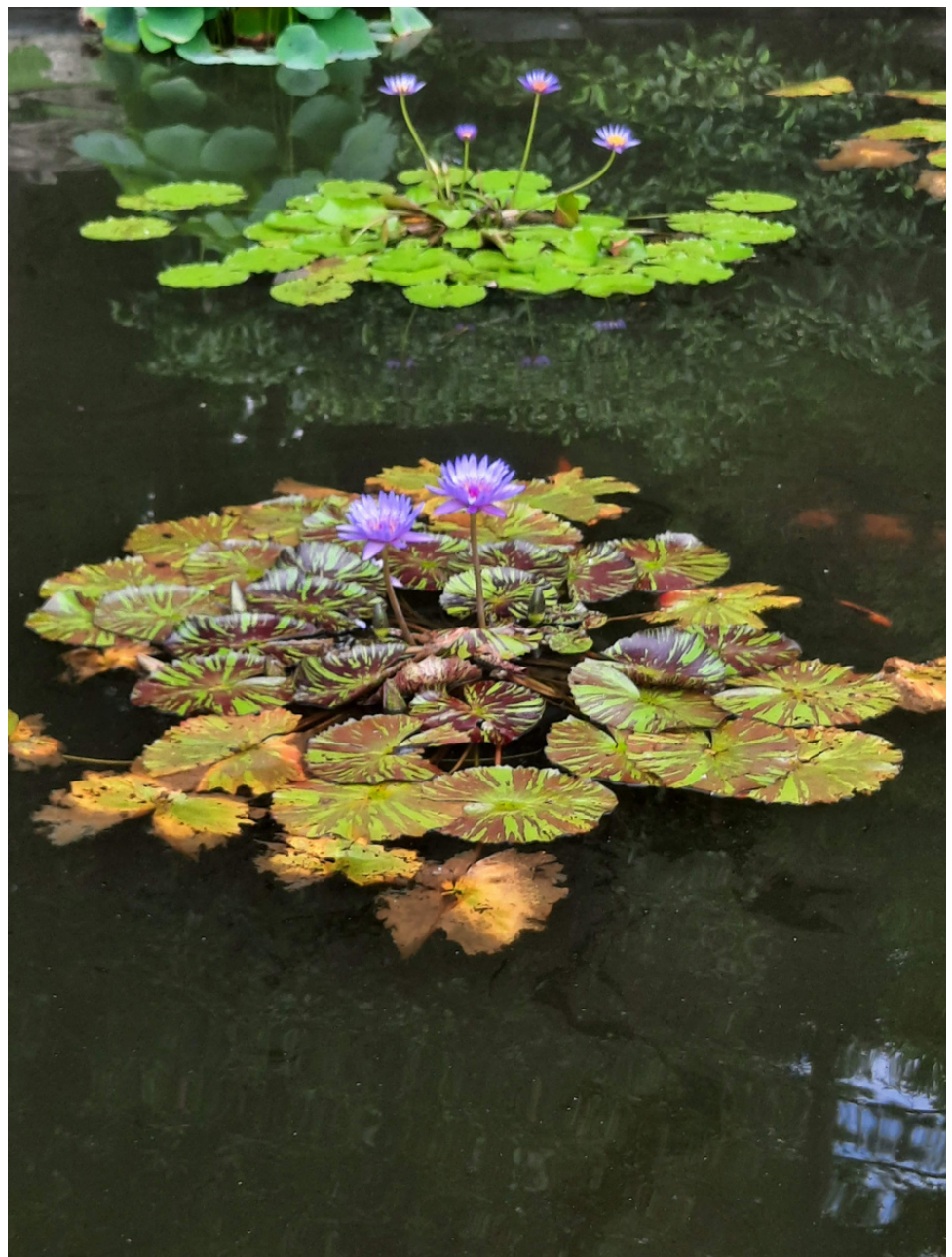


Image by L.M. Cole

My grandmother had a little Strega in her—
I could always see it,
and no one has ever believed me.
But, pure magick happened in her kitchen;
every meal, drink, and pastry
was a remedy for anything.
A cup of coffee
could change my mood for the better.
A slice of lasagna
could bring me a piece of peace.
A cream cheese cookie
could erase my overwhelming sadness.
And the woman who made them
would smile at me,
run her fingers through my hair,
call me “Bella Bean” in her sing-songy voice,
and her spell was cast.
My grandmother had a little witch in her—
I could always see it,
and I see her in me.

-for G.C.

[1.22.31-11.27.18]

E.O. , @killedoffmymuse

Feeling like an outcast in this house full of people I love is cathartic
Believing in things my family doesn't is cathartic
Loving people who don't know the real me is cathartic

My grandfather is retiring from behind the pulpit
And somehow that feels like a step back
But I can take a step forward
Of who I am

Because I'm not stuck in a crowd
Because I finally found a family outside of the pew
Because that pew raised me
But I'm not still being raised
I escaped and am finding myself

And I'm doing that with a family who supports me
Who knows a couple sides of me
No, these people didn't raise me
Family changes over time
Sometimes it's the people who raised you
And sometimes it's the people who have seen every part of you

Kai Stacy, @keswrites



Do you think people can change?
I ask into the void, the darkness looming above
on this night where the hour repeats itself

An extra hour of sleep they say:
an extra hour of anxiety standing between me and a new day.

The darkness becomes suffocating
still you know it'll get darker yet.

An inexplicable feeling of dread hangs heavy in the air:
that she'll be gone before anything is right

before the moment of reckoning comes.

Do you think someone who's been digging themselves into the ground for decades
can claw their way out of the dirt
and climb mountains?

Another question for the void.

Can they conquer the monument of past mistakes:
words never said,
hurt never healed,
scars reopened over and over again,
cycles repeated like the washing machine that never stops running?

None of the stains are coming out.
I think they're just part of the fabric of our relationship now.
Tightly woven in: the trauma, the pain, the ache of trying to help but never being
enough.

Because it isn't me you hate—
It's yourself.

I conquered the demons you're still fighting.
I dug myself out and climbed the mountain.
I healed the hurt and washed it away while it turned your heart to stone.

You're tough and untouchable, don't give a fuck what they say.
I'm soft and fragile, bruising easily from fear of never being enough for anyone like
I was never enough for you.

But I can see through your armor.
It's got cracks and holes
and you're bruised, too.

The dark looms overhead and I wander through memories I don't want to see
on this night that never ends,
this night where the hour repeats itself

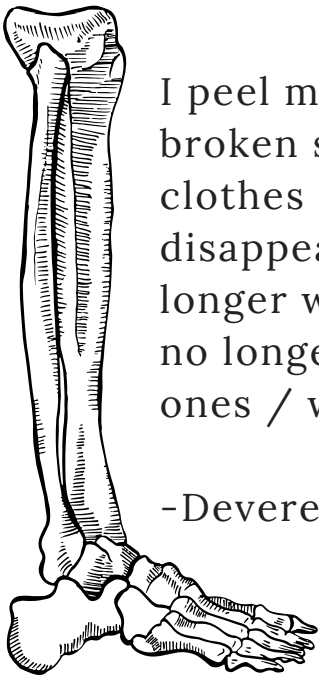
I'm scared of how your life ends
and when.

I'm scared that this is all it is:
Trying and failing to escape misery,
Always the victim
Your own worst enemy.

'Do you think people can change?'
I ask into the void again because I never got an answer.

'Only if they want to,' the voice that knows whispers.
'Only
If they want to.'

Anna Henderson, @annamichellewriter



I peel my skin back / from my muscle / and shake loose / my broken skeleton / stepping out of my body / like yesterday's clothes / collapsing into a sigh / into nothingness / wanting to disappear / but there is still a heaviness / even though I no longer wear the scars / I can feel them with me still / the blood no longer flows / but has crusted over / into the names of the ones / who have cut the wounds into me

-Deveree Extein, @bydeveree

I can only hope

The thing on my mind is his smile,
his kindness, his belief in me,
his sweetness, strength and intellect,
his generous spirit and heart of service.

On my mind is how I tarnished all of it,
or at least my access to it,
with a single instant,
a single moment and a series of bad decisions that led to it.

What's on my mind
is how a part of me simply refuses
to allow myself to be happy.

I get so far. I get so deep.
I expand down into the stars
and draw down what's mine to keep.

I get so many miracles and then I feel the tug
to risk it,
to be reckless with it.

Well, I'll be honest,
it's an improvement.

I used to get the impulse to intentionally destroy
& I'd quickly set about to lighting every good thing in my life on fire.

I've come a long way from there
and it's been a while since I've allowed my behavior to be led by this part of me.

But here I am.
Having to face the consequences.

Breaking myself into piece after piece
until I am left with nothing but shards pulped into dust.

I watch breathless as the wind whisks him away
to be returned back to the ether from which he came.

I can only hope that the winds will see fit to bring him back to me.

I've been called a liar
By those who don't know
My story and how I came
To know a man so ruthless
With the heart of others.
You may think I'm no one
Or I'm not obliged to speak
The truths I've been through.
I'm not selfish for wanting
And demanding a love
Worth my while.
To the next girl,
You should know
He doesn't settle
Even if he planted
His seed inside of you.
He is the type to break
A sacred promise made.
He is the type to run
To a world of nothingness.
I am not a liar
Nor do I seek attention.
I am a woman
Who saw all the good
In the wrong person
As everyone had done.

Laika Constantino, @laikacons

Do the birds look down from their
freewheeling flights
and feel sorry for our groundedness?

We cannot simply extend our arms
decided to fly and ascend
defying the laws of gravity.

Instead, we have been given the
grounds of the Earth—
fields of wild grass and roars of oceans

We bear witness to the rise and fall
of our glorious, golden star
We are wrapped in the gentle embrace of wind and rain.

Perhaps it is us that should feel sorry for these winged creatures—
to look upon the abundant Earth
but belong to the never-ending skies.

abigail marie pappas

The trees
The birds
All eyes unto the world

From the critters crawling abreast the deep embers of our earth
To the giants of the trees emerging as nomads of our ancestral past
We are tied to a land where we are all born natives
Whisking by our cities as passersby on the train of life
As if never to be seen again with a change of equinox
Only to return once more
In the hues of the trees, a fairness of the breeze
In another worldly song or a memory of a past that once felt lost
Teaching us that nothing is ever truly lost in a life everlasting
That when one door closes another always opens

Each season passes as an ephemeral dew on the altar of time
Spring, summer, autumn, winter

We all march to a tune akin to the eternal rhythmic core of nature's ilk
As the earth's natives fan and fawn from dawn til dusk
As a spring tree sheds its blossoms for summer blooms
For when hope seems lost it will always return
Tis only a change of season

Kathryn Patterson

Like a kintsugi repaired
with shattered lives,
like unfolding from the
inside out—
all muscle and bone uncovered,
like vulnerability on a
circus platform
to be laughed at,
like losing 70 pounds in 3 months
and being rewarded with joy
rather than worry,
like carving in the stones resting
in my stomach
the word
“anorexic,”
like finding out you have
HPV,
Cancer,
and Dysautonomia
on the same day,
like surviving with blood pressure of 70/40
for days
and still being called
“lazy”,
like fainting 5 to 10 times per day,
as for the ceiling tiles from the infirmary
know you in intimacy,
like crying “rape”
and being slapped with
“liar,”
like dancing with Death on a tightrope
since you were five,
like blindly shooting at darkness,
in a trench,
hoping to hit something—
anything—
like choosing silence
over the deafening wails of being wounded
and ignored,
like your body dueling itself
and your mind
for the past 20 years,
like boundless rivalry,
no cease-fire,
but no winning side.

-Civil War

she chose to be like water

inevitable and connected to everything that is

her bones bent like waves

recognition and disapproval no longer moved her

she was fluid

she sought inner fulfilment instead of external validation
and her body grew stronger with every storm

she was the ocean

which hundreds of streams
alike her old self
flowed into

*words and image by
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