

# STUCK IN THE LIBRARY

POETRY SPRING 2020

CELEBRATING OUR 40TH EDITION



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# LAST BLACK BREATH

*Quameisha Moreno*

Today I didn't feel black  
As if no one could see my color  
I walked with my head up a little higher  
Not just another black girl  
This magic will be from the fact that I am a woman

I stood in a line and not one white person tried to stand in front of me.  
They usually assume that I am not in it.

When I was at the fruit stand,  
No one asked me if I worked there.  
I'm sure they all think that we look alike.

At the show,  
I was the only woman of color  
And no one tried to touch my hair  
Or asked me how do I get work being black.

For dinner I ate at a fancy restaurant that didn't ask me to pay first.  
The waiter sat me at the booth in the window  
Instead of downstairs or in the back by the bathroom

On my way home I sat in the front of the bus.  
The turnstiles were broken so I rode the train for free.  
There are always homeless people  
But today no one followed me

In my hood,  
I wonder if the man on the floor is dead, hurt, sick, or sleeping?  
How do the drug dealers stay on the corner when the precinct is two blocks away?

When 1 black person runs it's a sign to the rest of us to "get out."  
Like the "Warriors" I made it home,  
But this time Luther says, "Put your hands up" and "turn around."  
We're already outside.  
I was this close,  
Less than two feet away from being home.  
"Turn around or we'll make you turn around,"  
Hands up.  
Slow Turn.  
Guns down.  
The rogue government-backed gang run up with their pieces/peace out  
My offense is that I am black.  
No matter how white they say I act.  
I am black,  
And today could never be a good day.  
I am black and this thought could be my last.  
This breath,

Could be my last.

# THE HOT SEAT

*Gianna Arena*

I'm Sure you thought  
That by leaving an angel,  
Somehow, Someway your back,  
Covered in grime, would sprout wings,  
Spinal curvature making it nearly  
Impossible to carry any other  
Burden than your very own,  
Feeding off the flesh of the innocent,  
Guilty conscious puts you out into the open  
Into the hot seat where your lies  
Are almost as transparent as  
The wings that must've forgotten you  
Wanted to fly as far from visibility as inhumanly possible.  
The same wings that invoke the attention  
That only places her further into the light,  
Interrogation too intense to avoid without seeming suspicious,  
Too direct to hide beneath the cracks,  
For even cracks light seeps into.

# THE OCEAN MOURNS

*Adina Hoppenstein*

The rocks on the shore look sad today  
The water hits them and I crack  
Each wave brings a magnificent blue  
Only for the ocean to call them back

The salty flow seems to know  
The world is surely in mourning  
News of your death has reached all depths  
*She died peacefully this morning*

# SOMETIMES

*Basya Fukesman*

Sometimes you feel this big something  
Sitting on your chest,  
And sometimes it feels  
As if this big something  
Is crushing the life out of you,  
Like an olive press.  
And sometimes  
You just wish this big something  
Could just go away,  
But without a name  
The big something  
Remains there,  
Untouchable and untouched,  
Till it almost becomes unbearable.  
And then,  
You sometimes take up your phone  
And start to type  
And type  
And type  
And type,  
Until that big something  
Starts to get a name,  
Starts to reveal a shape  
And you suddenly realize  
That you've known all along  
What the big something was.  
What the big something is doing,  
Sitting on your chest,  
Making it hard to take in breaths,  
And you start to think,  
Maybe this big something  
Can be defeated,  
Or maybe it just wants a name.  
Maybe it just wants you to look,  
Maybe it just wants you to understand,  
Why it is sitting there  
On your chest.

Maybe it knows,  
You need to greet it,  
Give it a purpose,  
Know it,  
And once you know  
What this big something is,  
Maybe,  
Just maybe,  
It will become  
A friend  
That lets you know  
When you have taken on too much,  
Fought too hard.  
And it is time  
For you to rest  
And let  
The big something  
Go.

# SOMETHING NOTHING

*A.F.*

Deep inside of me  
in a place closer to home  
yet so far away,  
lies a vast expanse of nothingness.  
But it is in this nothingness  
that I have dwelled  
for more than half of my existence;  
befriending the black void  
that encompasses my every  
crack and crevice.  
A place more exotic  
than the jungles of this world,  
even with all its emptiness.

I am of nothingness  
and the nothingness is of me.



# SHOSHONE LAKE

*Sky Firestone*

it was whirling before us  
eddies of kahlua and colgate paste  
skirting the sink  
some fractured mapping on the railing told us  
the color of wisdom, the murmur of fate

i felt hot and silken, impala-bared  
two toned skin to Osiris' eye  
a cadillac girl privy to the genius we shared  
heard the wanton whisper from those old magpies

did i tell you, love?  
did i tell you?  
when our reflection deepened and dimmed  
grew fuzzy with mold on the window sill, uneaten and old  
did i make the distinction  
between  
the mush of placating promises  
and the selfish ways i rescind them?

# RIPENED OLIVES

*Nolan Patrick Frontera*

“Your eyes...they’re lovely.”

“They’re brown.”

“I like brown.”

“You like what everyone else has?”

“They look like ripened olives.”

“You like simple things.”

“Is simple not more?”

“Isn’t less more?”

“What do you see?”

“You...I see you.”

# ROOTS

*Mallory Jade*

I have my roots deep in the ground  
Like a tree that has been transferred to a different field  
Took to the ground and grew

But my field  
Where I'm from  
The tips of my roots remain there

They call to me  
My earth reaches out to me  
And any reminder of it  
Stings

My fruits will be foreign  
They will be beautiful  
Exotic

People will harvest them and wonder  
Where their tree was from  
Where her roots really lie

Back in a place she cannot go  
For the field there is no more  
There is only dry land  
And death

And yet  
My roots reach out  
Craving their home  
A place that doesn't exist anymore

It's been over harvested  
It's been burned  
It's been tarred with blood  
It is gone.

My roots will remain,  
They will keep growing  
They will remember.

# PROSAIC MOMENTS

*Bethany Friedmann*

Could it be  
that life's greatest poetry  
is not written over eons by candlelight,  
but in fleeting whispers in the dead of night?  
This prosaic timepiece we call life  
is not most beautiful in the long-run,  
but in the morning run  
to class.

# NAME

*Hifza H*

I change my name  
Once again  
In hopes,  
That with my name  
I will change.  
Jannat becomes Jennie  
Mohammad becomes Mo  
Can I be the tame me?  
Can I live a new reality?  
You can be tame all you want.  
Tame is what I'll never be.  
I will stay the peculiar me.  
Standing out, yet blending in.  
Being what I'm meant to be.  
Never again.  
I say never again.  
Never again, I'll change my name.  
Asiya, Aaliyah, Imani, Robeena  
Mohammad, Malik, Jamal, Khalil.  
Black, brown, Arab, Pakistani  
Indigenous, Latino, Persian, Afghani  
Respect our names,  
for they hold  
stories, legends,  
we have never told.

# LIES

*Sebastien Dejean*

I fell for your lies  
swallowed your kisses as truth serum  
a way of erasing being numb  
but that's all I am now  
that is all I can be  
with the bit of decency that's left in me.

broken mirrors  
broken words  
manipulation at its perfection  
relying on your blissful precision  
you swayed me off my feet  
all seemed perfect and sweet

love has ways of knocking you down  
cataclysms rushing you to the ground  
deception burns, especially from a lover  
blindsided at the thought of being a savior  
you've destroyed over a decade's shining armor  
just to try to patch it over and over again  
you never win.

# FOREVER

*Lung Fu*

The wispy world  
twirled in a warm embrace,  
Drifting along  
a pale starry river.

The gentle grass  
brushed his skin.  
And leaves rustled  
in the wind,  
A memory  
from long ago,  
Heard by one  
but not him.

He lay still,  
and the spring air cooled,  
Yet the world kept spinning,

Forever.

# A LATE NIGHT HOUR

*Birdie-Geraldine Foster*

It's 3 AM on a Tuesday morning  
And I can't sleep.  
My thoughts are a mess and my mind is spinning,  
I'm in too deep.  
Attached to the past while yearning the future  
I've dug myself a hole.  
An endless cycle, a forever loop, another infinite fight  
Between heart and soul.

It's 4 AM on this Tuesday morning  
I need to put this to rest.  
My heart has been shattered; my soul is worn.  
I have nothing more to confess.  
This infinite battle may be coming to an end  
But know the casualties of war.  
The battles were fought on too many fronts  
And I couldn't take it anymore.



# DITMAS

*Makonnen Grant*

Archangels creak down, faeries drift in and satyrs  
pour round the portico  
to build a nest on the eve of your porch.

Torches fixed to the chests of middling columns  
of our new home, where solemn fog  
brought volume to your dress,  
bedding to a twilit sky and parcels to our vows.

Partial to the now, if the universe permits,  
no document is needed when even the stars  
have gathered to watch  
the promise  
between two comets,  
spiraling—in unison,  
through the follies  
of the ever-night.

# HOW NOW

*Chelsea Garcia*

We are from sticks and mud  
From dirt and powder  
Pieces of the earth  
And with one blow  
Our lines and every  
curved formed  
All the random  
And imperfect  
Perfection  
From sticks  
and mud  
We are  
Yet  
We kick  
And we yell  
Damaging others  
Throwing rocks at sisters  
And brothers who from the  
Very same branch came to be

# A PULSING RED

*Fatema Islam*

I think,  
Once so very long ago,  
When I was still a child  
With little understanding of the world  
I held my heart in the palms of my hands.  
Cupped between my fingers.  
A curious thing,  
Bloody, pulsing red,  
Beating in time with my pulse

I dreamt that night  
That I was dreaming  
And I woke up from a slumber  
I do not remember.  
I woke up with a scream  
Torn from my lips.  
My heart lay in my hands  
What a curious thing,  
I don't remember  
How this pulsing red ended up  
In these childish hands.

Once so very long ago,  
I held my heart in the palm of my hands  
And with a childish curiosity I stared  
At this bloody, pulsing red  
I held it with the carelessness of a child  
I held it still and put it somewhere I don't remember:  
I'm not sure I want to  
Living so long with the remnants left behind  
of a full heart

Once so very long ago,  
I had a heart  
And then I didn't  
Not as full  
Not as sweet as the one I had as a child  
I slept that night and  
Dreamt a dream I didn't remember  
Then woke up numb after a night  
Where the last of my screams left my mouth  
I dreamt a dream I didn't remember and woke up again  
With no feeling

# CRAZY

*Shannon Addonizio*

“Crazy: mad, especially as manifested in wild or aggressive behavior.”  
—Oxford English Dictionary

Crazy is the word they will use  
When they can no longer control you.  
Don't stick your dick in crazy  
Umm, maybe you should be quieter, you're acting crazy  
Perhaps if you weren't so crazy, your boyfriend would like you more

I will burn crazy into my skin,  
Tattoo it on my tongue,  
And brand my mirror with it.  
I will learn to see nothing else.

I will run down the streets screaming  
Crazy at the top of my lungs  
Snatch it from your hands  
Before you can throw it.  
I will reclaim it  
So you cannot use it.

You will not define my crazy.  
You will not paint my rainbow into  
Black and white.  
My crazy will walk on your back  
In stiletto high heels,  
Making sure you feel each step.  
You will know what my crazy can be.

# CONSUMPTION OF YOU

*Anosha Arshad*

I wanna be able to leave you.  
To consume you.  
To put my chains aside.

I had a vision.  
Our bones broken.  
But souls rejoiced.

If my gaze can fall on you,  
it must mean,  
I possess you.

I do not know what I want.  
But I know,  
I want you.

Let me take you.  
So I can have you.

Let me take you though.  
Entirely.

## LOUDER THAN BOMBS PT . 2

*Oriya Abed*

attack! (after) attack! (after) attack!  
my heart is thumping louder than bombs;  
i can't breathe.  
i'm not dying—i'm not, i logically know i'm not.  
oh, how i wish i were, though.  
disorganized and faint,  
intrusive thoughts couldn't care less.  
(you're unwanted)  
(you're a failure)  
(you'd be better off dead)  
an invisible struggle to the beholder,  
but a screaming pain within me.  
out of the blue, yet constantly recurring.

## FIFTEEN

*Lucy Curran*

I don't love them but it's better than nothing  
So I spend my nights in lonely company  
My friend sticks his hand on a burning ember and we laugh  
After all, self-destruction is just so romantic  
Now they're passing helium, mouth to mouth  
Kissing girls kissing boys  
They kiss  
And I don't mind that we move in circles  
Or that I sit alone as they form their separate pairs  
Because that's fifteen for you  
And half of being fifteen is watching them have fun  
And convincing yourself that you are too

It's drama for drama's sake  
And music so loud I can feel the reverb in my bones  
But at its core, wasn't it beautiful  
To watch the sunsets through the trees?  
With our connect the dot mosquito bite legs  
Skin decorated with ballpoint pen doodles  
So that even in the fallout,  
The half connections we made just to feel something  
Were strong enough to convince us there's a forever

When we grow up we'll find it for real  
And laugh in regret at the rainbow hair  
All the funeral attire we swore our lives to  
But for the summer—  
For fifteen,  
These superficial ties will do

## POESONGRAPHY

*Dova Cordova*

Self-destruct  
Ticking time bomb  
A delicate flower  
Lost in a thorn bush  
Prickly like the sun  
Too hot to handle  
Rays that beam from above  
Angel kisses  
Woman of steel  
That has nothing to feel  
Talking about taking control of the wheel  
To avoid the blow of a gun to the head  
Because she can't move forward  
from the woman of steel  
that feels everything  
Enough to reveal what's hiding  
Underneath the mane she's grown to cover her face from  
the pain  
If you wear your heart on your sleeve  
They'll take it  
Drip blood from it  
What a mess for someone like me  
Who feels too much  
But it's never enough



# HOME

*Rae Mizrachi*

Holy roller hold me closer  
death is at my doorstep and my time has come.  
We all arrive to die  
diving into dry life wet  
chapped on the other side of the ride.

The dirt feels good? Doesn't it?  
Resting place and convex conversation  
protrude like conversions where the father says amen  
and I am clean again  
the dirt it makes me clean again

The silence of the unknown  
I know the sound of absence  
I have seen the life fall out of the eyes  
of my forefathers  
and of their scullery maids  
who trickle down the scythe  
and illuminate the air with the smell of a morning in June

October

The second hand  
smallsword  
punctures my ribs  
and my lips  
eternally sews them shut masterfully  
I take the task of tasting blood  
carefully  
It will be spilled: a prophecy  
It will be spilled: my legacy  
Ozymandias has no home  
he makes company with the grains of sand which used to be stones  
coursing through my hands over my head  
because if we aren't digging ourselves out  
we are burying ourselves alive  
I died trying to die.

Rings around rosy cheeks blushing  
making a roadmap of broken capillaries  
the potholes are there  
the potholes are here  
the potholes disappear

I feel the pull down though running is denial  
I'm chaste by life  
and the good graces of being

I flirted with the lover who steals my ceiling  
and ties my nooses  
and kisses his knuckles before and after punching me in the face  
don't you taste the end the fate the impending wait of the weight?

I know you holy roller high holler hallelujah from the choir  
who worship at the altar of dying candles in a daze  
in a building made of compounded bodies from millennia ago

I find a home in death.  
I find a home in the dark hue.  
I find a fear in living,  
so I'll carve my home in you.

# CHANCES

*Kayla Ariana*

I know what it's like to breathe again,  
To finally see the rose petals  
Crush underneath my feet.  
To sleep and dream,  
Hoping to never wake up without  
you beside me.  
To speak without being drunk  
Is my new high because I'm addicted  
To your love.  
As pretty as the cherry blossom's bloom  
The moment is always gone too soon.  
Is it selfish of me to love on borrowed time?  
But just know you're never a waste of mine.

# THINGS WE LOST TO THE FIRE

Melissa Morales

I never knew what the word 'fear' meant  
Until I tasted it in my mouth.  
Lips frozen in a distorted grimace,  
Tears filling my eyes because—  
*All I could see was red.*  
The flames flickering on the roof,  
and the screams of sirens.  
*On and off. On and off. On and off.*  
Like the erratic sounds of a heartbeat.  
Like the broken chords of a horror movie.  
Like the unsteady snapping of cameras capturing the moment.  
*This* moment, this epitome of tragedy  
but we didn't yet know whose undoing it would be.  
So, we all waited.  
Held our breaths, hearts lodged in our throats  
as the summer's night sky filled with smoke and dread.

And that's when my mother came.  
Before she could even speak,  
Tears filled her eyes  
And I swear in that moment  
I became five years old again.  
Holding on to my mother and father  
because I was about to fall. I was about to  
drop down and sink into the ground because  
*this was not happening.*  
*This was not happening.*  
*This was not happening.*  
Because being numb never felt so hot before.  
Because I didn't think I would hear 'family'  
and 'tragedy' in the same sentence.  
Because I didn't ever think I would hear the words,  
"Your apartment was lost in a fire" until now.

So what is a home without a *home*?  
Grief became my best friend for months to come.  
So did nightmares.

I never knew what the word 'fear' meant  
Until I tasted it in my mouth.  
I never knew what the word 'fire' meant  
until I saw its obliteration.  
But really,  
I never knew what the word 'resilience' meant  
until finding the things we lost through  
the promise of today and the hope for tomorrow.

# FAMILY FRUIT

*Ashley Bomar*

Mama! Mama!

“Yes, what do you want? Don’t you see I’m busy?

I am the only one getting chores done.

Your brothers refuse to help and

I don’t know where your father is.”

Mama, the river!

Mama, you have to come and see!

“What is it, boy? Why so urgent?

Can’t you just tell me?”

Mama, come! You have to see for yourself!

“If you make me stop for nonsense I’ll be very upset!”

Mama, please just come!

See Mama! Look there! You see him, don’t you?

Mama! Stop! I can’t see with your hands over my eyes!

Mama! Why are you screaming?

Mama, it’s Papa!

He’s climbing to get some fruit for us to eat with dinner tonight.

Mama...Why are you crying? That won’t help. He’s stuck and needs our help to get down.

Mama? Where’s Papa? He hasn’t come home.

Everyone has been whispering

Something about

strange fruit

But stop when I come around.

“Amazing Grace! How sweet the sound.”

Is this what grace sounds like?

They swing from side to side.

I hear the screaming, the laughs.

The crying, the triumph.

The bark of trees joins in song as I take my seat in the pews.

My ancestors groan.

How can I stay silent? Shall I too not die?

# A RECRUDESCENCE

*Mic Braun*

Bring your forsaken to this two year  
ceremony for the dead & abandoned & crushed  
hopes of another anniversary  
turn out the lights and poise yourself to jump out  
from behind the curtains into the arms of  
yet another believer  
who will fall by the wayside  
who will hear the deafening rumble of yet another  
impending  
anniversary of the dead  
the haunting, the humble  
beginnings of a party planner  
who ruins every event.

## COLORS OF MEMORY

*Violet Austen*

Orange afternoon and the room is full of you:  
Your hands, your smile, your eyes.  
Kitchen songs over the sink,  
Dancing when we think the world isn't looking.

White-gold morning and the air still smells of you,  
The memory of your hair pressed into the pillow;  
I hold my breath and watch the stillness.  
The dust motes swirl in quiet sunbeams.  
Indigo evening and the moonlight brings you back,  
Starshine in your hair.  
Take my hand like my breath.  
Bring me with you next time.

## WATCHMAN EZEKIEL AGE 33

*Travis Burge*

Pastor man says, "Woe to the watchman that day."  
Pastor man says, "Woe to the watchman that day,  
When there is a sword but he can't say."

For when the time has come and the world is naught,  
He will pay for his delinquency.

Pastor says, "Woe to the watchman that day,  
When there is a sword but he can't say."

Oh, for when the city is under siege,  
He better blow his trumpet so loud  
It troubles the seas.

Pastor says, "Woe to the watchman that day,  
When there is a sword but he can't say."

Son of man, speak to the children of thy people.  
Say, "Onto them, this word I bring."  
If he heeds not the sound,  
Do not blame the watchman.

Pastor says, "Woe to the watchman that day,  
When there is a sword but he can't say."



# UNSPOKEN

*Loretta Chin*

Haikus cut like swords  
Truncated thoughts unexpressed  
Words gasping for breath

# BLUE MARBLE

*Mary Lou Ciabattoni*

I will rise,  
Rise above the lights  
Of the city,  
Looking at the cold lid  
Of water in the oceans.  
I will pour out,  
Pour out my most  
Visceral and bloody  
Illusions.  
I will wreck the wall  
Of sounds  
Between me and them.  
I will search  
Sewers of wasted  
Daydreaming  
To find a sign of you.  
A sigh, a sob, a whisper.  
Everything  
To convince me still  
That you are there.  
I will land,  
My feet on asphalt;  
My heart on hot,  
Black coal;  
My skin, the color  
Of muddy terracotta,  
Bruised  
By the sharp,  
Cutting tongue  
Of a feeling  
I no longer belong to.

I will go far and beyond  
For you, my love.  
I will ride pastel-colored  
Clouds.  
I will follow  
The flow of my veins,  
For they will lead  
To the promised land.  
I will dive into blue marble  
To find you sitting there,  
Awaiting.

## STICKY AS INTERLUDE #33

*Toni Coleman*

from the silence, i'm alive  
it's okie—maybe dreams will die?

today i stayed home & fell into myself  
housefly bait  
my shirt was the blanket  
stretched out, a sea of drooling-dates  
picnic-me, the beguiling statue of food  
turning potatoes past shamed  
what am i gonna do with future?  
when love's competition & i'm snoozing-losing  
i don't get you; i don't see you  
wannabe you but i don't like mountaineering  
soul's inferno; we're purgatorio—so slow  
want help but can't focus  
the push—the climb  
i'm not a hero, what have i sacrificed?  
droughtful feeling divine  
but aren't you an angel  
under your supreme black cloak  
my slayyyer of wanderlust  
idk, fuck me  
a thoughtless-paradise  
impetus makes brain think daisy  
unearth the concrete in my bloodstream  
please, somehow move me—do tingz  
swallow the itch  
& make your stomach into an engine  
named philip—life can fill him up  
tinker bell's advice: go full metal effort  
my right-leg's dead  
but i won't stop—GO!!!

# BLOOM

*Helen Dang*

Thrown into this Earth  
As a seed  
Blown by the wind  
Into the dark dirt

Waiting for the rain  
To fall on me  
The sun  
To shine on me

Some neighbors grew  
Leaves  
Some blossoming into  
Beautiful  
Multifaceted  
Colorful  
Flowers  
Others like me  
Nothing  
Waiting  
For a leaf to grow

Stuck  
In my roots  
I can't move

Knowing growing takes time  
I shall bloom too  
Into a beautiful flower

# THE REMEMBRANCE

*Wiola Wojo*

On my knees emotionally I feel the aching of my love field,  
explored and condemned  
yet never understood by the soul squeezing reality of unrequited compassion  
I stare into the gates of the eyes of the body I was assigned,  
my time to evolve through the vehicle that's withholding my infinity  
The shattered heart longs for deep repair yet the hole is burned deeper than its grave that  
will take my physicality apart  
Missing the piece that made me, filling it with self-love is most challenging when the  
world destroys the unconventional  
Must remember to defeat the burdens of the societal eye  
the nonexistent rules carved into the minds of the mass, let them never break the cord of  
self  
Rip me from the chains

## SEASONAL DEPRESSION

*Hripsime Tumanyan*

Seasonal Depression  
Are you there, not yet?  
Don't bother to come, my friend,  
Fall is colder, with your breath.

# ANAHATA YEARNING SELF

*Kimberly Thomas*

From the glint in your eyes  
And how you stare into mine  
Your gaze, it's hard to move under

Just the smoothness of your voice  
Soothes me and induces  
A deep, lasting slumber

You're an intellectual  
And your visions are delectable  
You're witty and smart

One of a kind, jack of many hearts  
And it seems that you have caught me  
As I slip deep under

Your looks are otherworldly  
Strong hands around a book,  
Same hands you catch me with,  
When I've lost my footing

Now are we two worlds apart?  
Say so, but who's fault?  
I express and you digress

This is our new routine  
We fight to suppress  
If this is the apex, where will we go next?

This was supposed to be about you  
All the things I like and am attracted to  
But now I ask myself "What have I gotten into?"

Should I, would I, could I deal with this?  
How much do you even want to be in this?  
See now I ponder, as you continue to treat me like I don't exist

Embedded in my mind  
Your contradictions, on top of your lies  
Your hurtful words you say with pride

Why do I have to feel like this? I am...  
Waiting for good things to come after this  
But sometimes I feel like a masochist

My mind, body, and soul  
Refuses to let you go  
But it could be me, scared of being alone

# HEAVEN

*Ariane L. Stein*

Descending through the sky  
After falling from a cloud  
Aim a silver arrow at my spine  
If you want to keep me from kissing the ground.  
I'll land against a white wall  
Where poppies will begin to bloom  
With the blood that is smeared everywhere  
Except on the hands you probably call your own.



# TONIGHT

*Flavia Shyti*

Tonight, the night is a battlefield

Tonight, the dawn floods the air with fearsome, shining warriors  
Sporting Red, Orange, Yellow,  
Green, Blue uniforms

They choke on the smog of the city  
And cough out raindrops filled with acid  
So rancid, the iron buildings roar  
And turn to rust.

Tonight, the brutal glaring headlights of a vehicle  
Collide with the heavenly glow  
Of a deer's shining eyes  
And all goes dark.

Tonight, the young boy falls asleep,  
shivering in the dark,  
Under blankets made of cardboard  
And  
A pillow of cement

Tonight, the child looks at the dark, cramped  
Hole of an anthill they say is an  
Apartment building  
And says  
"Home."

Tonight, the epitome of nature's ingenuity  
Scorches the Earth  
It first learned to walk on

And the stars' brilliant shine that fascinated it so  
Are turned out by the very hand that pointed them out  
All those years ago

# MISS HAVISHAM WAITS

*Lisa Sheridan*

The chantilly lace is jaundiced,  
The splintered silk lacerates her body  
Her heart, swathed in barbed wire,  
Has nothing left to exude.  
She hemorrhaged crimson tears  
Filling the moat  
beneath melancholic moonlit towers.

Castle walls play her crumbling requiem.  
Worms burrow the cake's layers,  
Champagne glasses provide spiders sanctuary.  
Now, like the spider she watches in the corners  
Waiting for prey  
Someone must pay.

It will be forever twenty till nine,  
Forever a maid  
Satis will never satisfy.  
In the primeval forest,  
The faded letter delivered her sentence,  
His words were her executioner.  
He won't be coming back.

# SUPPLE

*Polina Shenker*

The Bees keep swarming in delight  
My supple skin over in silks of deep yellow  
The Buzz slowly overcomes any sort of outside sound  
Sensations of the Combs, wax, spit from the bees  
Nectar infused to bring in more  
Multiple Queens functioning together for more workers  
For I am the honey man, my honey is delicious

# TUNING FORKS

*Sydney Shore*

On this evening I walked along  
The sidewalk and looked up—  
I saw the flushed-cheek sky  
Above the receding sun, and a window.  
How timid I felt to leave a party  
unnoticed  
And alone, sharing not even a word  
With anyone. The oneness  
Of bunched up atoms, dancing  
To create a body with breath,  
Fire and blood.  
Deep-seated lust.  
I want God.  
An exit from other bodies entwined,  
colliding infrequently appearing  
And leaving  
Like particles of light—gone  
But brought back  
Once remembered or noticed  
Ever present and absent  
In the strobe-lights of a distant window.  
Like a microbial bug drifting further away from a nebula  
I want God.  
Are they God?

# PURGATORY

*Kayla Jessica Serrano*

I exist on a plane between spite and right  
Pettiness would be so easy  
Indignation and insubordination  
Seem like such simple solutions  
But I'm far too complex for that  
Haunted by morality  
I slip by passive aggressive  
And fall into unwilling forgiveness  
In the battle against forming a grudge  
I've laid myself out as a doormat

# A SONNET ABOUT MY CATS, WRITTEN AFTER READING ONE OF TORQUATO TASSO'S SONNETS ABOUT HIS CATS

*Owen Rodda*

Relying on the stars is out-of-date  
When voyaging upon the ocean foam.  
Like Tasso, I'm inspired at any rate:  
I have two feline lanterns in my home.  
My Little Dipper has become quite wide.  
He curls up often on the floor to sleep.  
My Greater Bear surveys the world outside,  
Reviewing tactics for a daring leap.  
Bright Ursa Major strives to reach her goal:  
She longs to catch a bird across the way.  
At least I don't keep goldfish in a bowl  
To tempt her like the cat of Thomas Gray.  
While Ursa Major sizes up the nest,  
My Little Dipper eats and takes a rest.

**1:54 A.M.**

*Gina Riveccio*

The sky—  
It bleeds for you  
For my loss of you

The rain falls in screams,  
Echoes of what once was  
As we walked under the street lamps

The slick pavement reflects the lavender sky  
Amidst broken traffic lights  
And buildings of glass and steel

I take solace in the torrents,  
In the muted colors and murky puddles  
If only for their ability to distract

# DAYBREAK AT NINE

*Jon Rakh*

12 AM – A knock on my door.  
1 AM – It was the devil.  
2 AM – He asked for my soul.  
3 AM – I gave it to him.  
4 AM – Another knock.  
5 AM – It was God.  
6 AM – He said that it's daybreak at nine.  
7 AM – My soul cried to me.  
8 AM – God visited again.  
9 AM – The sky is still dark.  
10 AM – I think I'm dead now; I can feel it.  
11 AM – I can't see anymore.  
12 PM – The devil said he can't give it back.  
1 PM – Please help.  
2 PM – I went to Hell and back, but I still haven't found myself.  
3 PM – God came back.  
4 PM – He said that he promises this time.  
5 PM – My soul is nowhere.  
6 PM – There's something in the kitchen sink.  
7 PM – It's bright and bloody.  
8 PM – God gave me a new soul.  
9 PM – Pain still roams, but the light is blinding.  
10 PM – There is a knock on my door.  
11 PM – I'm not answering.  
12 AM – Another knock.  
1 AM – It was the devil again.  
2 AM – He asked for my new soul.  
3 AM – I said no.  
4 AM – He yelled.  
5 AM – He says I'm nothing without him.  
6 AM – He says he'll kill me and my family.  
7 AM – He says he'll never talk to me ever again.  
8 AM – He says he loves me.  
9 AM – Daybreak. I didn't believe him.



# THE CAVE

*Joshua Ross*

Poems are traumas.  
An expression of—  
A childhood fraught in roaring wild things that  
crystallize and grow up like ridged stalagmites  
within a deep song cave. This is where we hide.  
Where the wind whistles  
through bedrock cracks to echo towards the horizon  
in sounds and shapes,

winding down into individual stanzas  
and syntax with a heaving pile of sooty, anxious  
intent: a student before his test, a suit  
between interviews, a child before a divorce,  
but somehow more serious, and  
less so all the same.

Where streams dissect slick pathways,  
rivers running through the middle of these  
words, carrying spectacted onlookers to  
a murky bottom with jagged rocks  
catching the fraying edges of their shirts  
and pants, holding fast for them to  
stumble to their feet and climb out without us.

These are words that spill  
stubbornly at first from my mouth,  
and only afterward  
fall like a warm July downpour.

# TO MY DAUGHTER

*Epifania Rita Gallina*

Sometimes

When the roads are not as clear and the path is just a bit bumpy

I turn to you and understand why

we rely on children to mend our hearts

To pick up the pieces we threw somewhere far

Because I know that no matter where I end up in life, nothing will ever match up to the lungs breathing the air created by the love you feel for your child.

You, daughter, are the greatest accomplishment and the greatest choice of my life.

You are more than a name

More than a last name

More than the patriarchy will ever make you feel

Because to actually define you is to do a disservice to you.

Because even when you're older and I'm just a few steps behind you

Beside you is where I'll really always be.

Cheering you on

Because you're the best of me.

# THAT'S HOME

*Teresa Metella*

grandma's words

spill off her tongue like seeds  
blossoming into metaphors  
i only half-understand  
seated on beds woven by hand  
each stitch tells a story  
much more profound than this one

in the rush of rain

i run upstairs, lenga in both hands  
a futile attempt at keeping dry  
when we both know i just  
want to be wet  
locking eyes across the terrace  
enveloped in this storm  
and then his embrace  
a silent lover, we danced and danced  
when the rain died, we did too  
stepping back into safety

jumping off a moving bus

seemed like a good idea  
i'd seen it in the movies  
it's romantic  
fun  
exhilarating  
oddly secure?  
assuming someone would catch me  
i have no lover, no friend, no faith  
my aunt told the driver to slow it down  
so i could have my moment

walked through shelves of sarees

they mirror the colors  
of every woman in Guntur  
one with lighter skin: didn't have rupees for college  
another with speckled skin: married off to a laborer  
one fiery red: wants to go to America  
one folded neatly: birthed three kids at age 19  
none are perfect, all are beautiful

listening to grandmother  
she tells tales so grand  
so fantastical  
i wonder if she lived in them  
as well  
if she conceived this world  
full of kings  
and made herself  
a queen

a noisy village  
but what is noisy, really?  
is it: busy  
hurried  
impatient  
loud  
i think it's more  
rich  
bursting  
full of culture,  
exploding off of  
our backs being burned by the sweltering heat  
for those  
brave enough to play with fire  
to catch flame  
in the palms of calloused hands

# THINKING ABOUT THE SUN

*Eliel Mizrahi*

I may have been a soldier, but not in the army you might think. I've fought wars, heard the roars of love, and felt above all.

I lift my head, but I can only be jealous of the rain touching you.  
Love is a funny thing, you feel like a king, you want, at times, to put a ring, and sometimes sing; even when it's raining.

Today, I may not be the sunshine in your hair.  
Tomorrow, I may not be the sunset before you go to sleep.

In the end, I realize you were the sun which I won, once upon a time.

# FIVE SENSES OF PAIN

*Chaya Nachum*

I've known the sound of rusty blades,  
Of crackling burning tongues of flame,  
But neither of the two compare  
To the mere mention of your name.  
I have looked evil in the eye,  
Seen those who have fallen from grace;  
I know that same pity and fear  
Every time I see your face.  
I've known the rusty scent of blood,  
The stench of my own burning skin.  
Betrayal reeks of something more  
And enters whatever room you're in.  
I've known the metal tang of blood,  
The earthy, ashy taste of smoke;  
I've tasted both upon my lips  
Remembering the last time we spoke.  
I've felt the fire sear my flesh,  
Felt the dagger striking bone  
But the way you and I are now  
Is the worst pain I've ever known.

# THE LAST NIGHT

*Nayhla Nazon*

As the outside mood is gloomy and the sky is fully gray,  
within myself I felt like an indestructible kite in the sky,  
no longer afraid of getting struck with lightning.

Tucked in the embrace of your warm and comforting  
arms, the strong irresistible feeling of love pulls me in  
tighter.

Listening to the rain crash against our umbrella fortress  
under the midnight storm and onto the thousands of  
leaves and dozens of trees, your breathing, oh so slow and  
soothing, and your heartbeat all at once sounds like the  
world's most irreplaceable rhythmic symphony.

It was then that I realized I was in too deep.

## "OLD AND NEW"

*Leysan Nigmatova*

Old you. New dress.  
Old room. New paint.  
Old city. New buildings.  
Old phone. New pictures.  
Old you. New hairstyle.  
Old friends. New adventure.  
Old shoes. New roads.  
Old you. New goals.



# LAVENDER AND LADYBUGS

*Anastasia Mourzakhanova*

Lavender.  
Such a calming  
color  
scent  
tea.  
All lavender has to offer  
makes me feel safe.

When I'm scared  
or lonely  
or in need of comfort  
that those i love cannot provide.  
Lavender

Ladybugs used to be my omen.  
When i was crying,  
being beaten, ridiculed,  
Ladybugs came to me  
to dry my tears.

But Ladybugs don't come anymore.  
They can't seem to find  
their way to me anymore.  
So I chose lavender  
as my strength.

Lavender was the scent  
she couldn't stand.  
The flowers I was forbidden to buy,  
the tea I drank  
out of spite.

I grew to love Lavender  
because she taught me  
to love myself.  
I'm allowed to love the things  
my abuser couldn't stand.

I am not her.  
I will never be her.  
And whether I find solace  
in Lavender or Ladybugs,  
she can never take it away.  
Not ever again.

# MIDNIGHT IN THE APSE

*Kali Norris*

Honeysuckle can grow  
anywhere there's sun.  
This devotion is holy.  
I love like votives, like  
August shrines and hawthorn altars.  
My hands are heavy enough.  
I can wind as tight as anyone.  
Stretched this thin, even time corrodes.  
Heavenly chorus immutable,  
a cacophony of ravens.  
Pull the blood from my veins.  
Later, they'll unbless the ground  
as though gods never walked here.

# RITUAL

*Jonathan Nunez*

warm winds bring new life  
pink petals dance with the dead  
flowers on a tomb

# DEAR FUTURE LOVER.

*Miles Mercer*

I can't wait to walk around Times Square with you at 3 am,  
Watching the night's stragglers leave bars with people they just met.

Driving home from the dentist,  
With you in the back seat,  
High off your ass from the laughing gas.

To wake at dawn in your arms,  
When you weren't there when my lights went out.

To play with each other's hair whilst under a heavy blanket in the winter noon;  
Entranced,  
Mapping out every follicle.

Here's to eating our weight in food,  
And binge watching tv shows.

I'm looking forward to doing the simple tedious things with you,  
Like getting groceries,  
Waiting on line at the TSA,  
And listening to the MTA announcement that our train will be going express,  
Skipping our stop.

I'm looking forward to having someone who can challenge me to a duel with  
plastic forks when we're in our boxers.

Someone who will stop me when I become my most destructive self;  
Who will help me clean the bloody,  
Fist imprinted,  
Bricks on the side of my house.

I know there will be fights,  
Difficult conversations,  
And intense feelings of fear and anxiety.  
But that's how you know it's real.  
When you still feel it's worth going through just for those moments.

Those stomach plummeting,  
Weight of a golden brick on your chest,  
Butterfly fluttering feelings that prove to you,  
That although you never thought you'd feel again after the last,  
He finally looks at you from across the room.

And the rest of your life finally unravels right in front of you.

# IMPROV NOTES

*Julia Andresakis*

Sept. 6

Anxious and unsure.

Had trouble finding the classroom.

Clearly the youngest.

Sept. 13

Not too bad so far.

Talked to girl with the same name.

Started email chain.

Sept. 20

Loud guy cracked a joke.

I knew it from Key & Peele.

He took the credit.

Sept. 27

Chatted with Loud Guy.

Said they “kicked him out” of Maine.

Shellfish allergy.

Oct. 4

Put on a great scene.

Classmates quoted it through break.

Can’t recall it now.

Oct. 11

Teacher got engaged.

Class canceled for two full weeks.

Feel myself shrinking.

Nov. 1

Surprised everyone.  
Went first for scene with LG.  
Upstaged him big time.

Nov. 8

Last one before show.  
Retreated into myself.  
Felt weird, embarrassed.

Nov. 9

Almost didn't go.  
Glad I stayed for group photo.  
Still shaking from nerves.

Nov. 10

Sad, empty Sunday.  
Sat at home and watched Cars 2.  
Not sure what comes next.

Dec. 22

Ran into LG!  
Said I was the funniest.  
Can you believe that?

Dec. 23

Signed up for new class.  
Jump-roping fitness this time.  
Think I can do it.

# LA CHICA DEL 1 TRAIN

*Enrique Peña-Oropeza*

En la tarde sosegada del invierno,  
sonriendo y hechizando dicho andén,  
cabizbaja, ensimismada en sus cuadernos:

La chica del 1 train.

Mueve sus caderas, disimula,  
aquellas melodías que escuchó desde niña,  
cuando en su tierra,  
que vio solo en sueños,  
gesticulaba  
sazón borinqueña.

And though she no longer belongs to the heights,  
—she will no longer hear bachata out loud on the street—  
it is alright.

She'll still listen to Ozuna every night before sleep.

No hay nada que hacer.

El barrio will always be part of her.

Su cabello, her glasses,  
that NUMTOT spirit que se siente tan bien,  
tal vez ande camino a clase.

La chica del 1 train.

Y cuando use su compás,  
resuelva ecuaciones,  
y ahí mismo pida más,  
—as if math wasn't hell for all of us—,

seguirá tarareando sus canciones,  
o pensando en el “memoir”

que no pudo terminar,  
because life always gave her  
something new to write.

What does she like?

What else could I say?

If I walked to her and made a poem about trigonometry,  
or simply wrote on the platform “you más I es igual al  
infinity”...

I might push her away.

But she's a delight.

Just see her smile.

Her love for the world will make you believe,  
la esperanza que hay.

Por dicha sonrisa, you'll want to live.

And our eyes—or the MTA—will never see  
tal belleza once again,

y aunque quede siempre en mí  
saber por qué la conocí.

Please, don't forget me,

Chica del 1 train.

# CITY PITY

*Chaya Ovits*

*There is no beauty in the city, they say. A shame.*  
I want to say to them:  
Do you see no intrinsic beauty in a cityscape?  
Nothing inherently lovely about the urban world?  
Not in cracks of green but in the dance of traffic,  
The art of skyscrapers,  
The citysong rush and chatter and hush and clatter?  
It's true that trees are few and far between but oh,  
Look at the world we have carved out for ourselves;  
Look at the ways we have devised to live together.  
Nature is not the only one who can create.  
Stop and see the shining chaos in its glory,  
Feel the rumbling of this mass of humanity—  
Neither huddled nor yearning but already breathing free—  
And don't tell me  
A city with over a thousand art galleries  
Lacks beauty because it has fewer plants.



## 44th STREET

*Megan Landaluce*

Style of inflammation  
with your twenty count.  
You stare at the glare  
and then the starless sky.  
You wipe the salt off  
on your skinned knee  
and remember when  
you used to be  
original sunshine.

# SMOKE

*Biana Kravchenko*

To open the widow  
to let the smoke through  
to avoid the sound of the smoke alarm  
to see through the fog  
in which I am

Though the scent of something burnt  
still  
    somehow  
        lingers

days after  
when fog blankets all we see  
and no longer in the kitchen  
no longer through the midst of cigarettes

The sense of the physical, the real  
Has seeped through  
And all that is  
or could have been

has made its way out

# NADIA

*Isley Jean-Pierre*

“Often I am permitted to return to...” (Robert Duncan)

The 24th of October

Where in my dreams you are covered in rosemary

Seven times, I’ve had those dreams

I let my soul merge with nature

To bring to you winds of comfort

And to fill your heart with wonders

Sometimes, I dream of snow and home

Sometimes, I want to sing like birds

And fly endlessly across the sky to show you my love

To kiss your slender neck

As the silver mist buries us forever

Each rainfall incites the paradise

That is in your heart

Those unworn rubies at your feet

Cannot compare to your beauty

As I look to the glorious sky

And see your face in the sun

That will keep me warm for the years to come

# SILENCE IS SAFETY, SILENCE IS POISON

*Allina Khan*

for all the men that think feminism is a joke  
for all the men that let a woman's words go up in smoke

for all the women who hate on their own  
you hold up patriarchy and then bitch and moan

for all the women that think equality exists,  
you weren't there when Malala Yousafzai was trynna get this fixed

men at this job make me wanna quit  
no one should have to live like this

expected to be quiet or show some wit  
wait it out, walk outside, ignore this shit

walk outside, get stared at like a piece of cake  
nighttime, don't worry, just grab your mace

cross the street when I see a man's face  
cross your fingers and try not to weep when you see the jury's face

no empathy, "Boys Will Be Boys," end of the case  
"Grab Her By the Pussy," don't be a wussy

"No Means Yes,"  
you turn every future caress into a painful mess

this is a reality  
when you face the calamity

you'll realize that you've damned me.

# LOVE POEM

*Kim Lloyd*

Love

Love is a funny emotion.

I love God.

I love Ms. M.

She is my cat.

I love good food.

I love going to college

I love going to church.

I love that I got closer to God.

This is when love gets funny, trying to show  
love to people is just hard. Sometimes you can  
love people and must let them go. That's the  
worst kind of love, that means love has died.

When love dies, the people you love do not understand or  
really do not care anymore. That love dies. But you care that love dies.

The hope you had with the people is gone. The dream you had with the people is gone.  
When you see the people you love again, it is a funny feeling. All the hope and dreams of  
love come back. You must remember that love has died, and it was not coming back.

That's why I say love is a funny emotion.

# A DIFFERENT INDIFFERENT

*Ilya Leonid*

I'm tired  
Of reading  
Of hearing  
Of writing  
Of feelings  
Of love

I'm tired  
Of seeing  
Of singing  
Of dreaming  
Of nothing  
But what?

Repeated, refracted  
All over the place  
Perpetual cycles  
Of clichés in this space

They're not mine  
They're yours  
And I don't want them  
Too close

# CURLY HAIR

*Emilia Jerez*

i envied the blonde beauty  
for her wild curls  
i envied the blue-eyed girl  
for her brains  
until i realized that envy was admiration  
love  
fascination

even when she became my best friend  
and found incredible similarities  
her mysteries still drew me in  
envy was easily replaced  
by comparison.

she is as perfect as can be  
or as imperfect as i'd wish

she is the mystery  
i keep on reading  
the simple pleasures  
i keep on eating

the one i can never be  
and so gladly  
accept next to me

she is my feminine angel  
my own treasure on this earth

and mostly  
i know this  
because she is not mine  
and no one else

she is free  
as her hair is

and that is what i admire most

# I MET A MAN ON THE TRAIN TODAY

*Samantha Marcus*

I met a man on the train today  
As I boarded, he was already in a seat  
And when our eyes met, he smiled my way.

I sat next to him as the train rolled away,  
He said hello and I tried to find the words to greet  
The man I met on the train today.

My eyes were glued to the floor, unsure of what to say,  
He spoke of himself and his hometown, Mesquite  
And when our eyes finally met, he smiled my way.

He took out a deck of cards and asked if I wanted to play  
I agreed, he dealt, and I actually beat  
The man I met on the train today.

He accused me of cheating, as he tucked a flyaway  
Hair behind my ear; my heart skipping a beat  
And when our eyes met, he smiled my way.

The train pulled into the station, to my dismay  
I had to say goodbye to a man so sweet  
The man I met on the train today.  
And when our eyes met for the last time, I smiled his way.



# I RECOMMEND RAIN

*Anna Matskin*

I recommend that you take a walk in  
The rain that falls all alone on  
The empty street  
Fresh, sprightly spring rain on  
Abandoned streets  
None to bother you and your  
Thoughts that drop as the  
Rainfall from Heaven  
I recommend that you don't ruin the  
Moments with this rain by angry  
Thoughts  
It rains consistently, yet doesn't pour  
The rain sound, pitter patter, the smell  
Of the rain speaks to you and  
Rain's relief that it has someone  
To talk to. You smile as you  
Are learning the language of rain  
Teaching the rain your soul's  
Language. You praise God together  
Through this pitter patter walk  
Down the happening streets.

What a recommendation!

# DEHYDRATED

*Chris Liang*

I wish  
I could make  
You stop  
Crying  
But  
Truth is  
It's about  
time  
You felt  
Pain  
And I'm  
Dehydrated  
From thinking  
About you.

# THE EIGHT LETTER WORD FOR SOLITUDE

*Caziah Mayers*

I entered the depths; Stones towered above me;

I cowered beneath that vast ocean, sinking in blindness;

There he laid,

Bare

And alone;

\*

I entered a well;

He navigated the

Depths; I knew not

What was down there;

I apologize

For not

Knowing;

I descended

Down the

Well;

I found a body;

Their skin darkened by

Mud and shadow;

Their bruised silhouette danced in the dark;

\*

I remember a night;

When I gazed

Into the void,

Untainted.

# IMMIGRANT CHILD

*Jennifer Martino*

We had dreams that were easily mis-guided  
Symbolizations that were misunderstood  
Education became power, we had to fight for  
However the devotion to family became a crime  
that was held behind bars of hate  
Mom? I want to go home!

# THE WILD

*Hannah McKee*

Into the forest I weep  
My tears quenching the trees  
They comfort me in my solitude

Awaken child  
From the grave and touch the earth  
She comes out willingly

Her soul rich to be fertilized  
In the cars and skyscrapers  
She has no voice

We hurt her, but she always loves us  
Like a flower blooming after a long winter  
She will awaken again  
She will overrun the earth once again

# UTINAM (IF ONLY)

*Elle M.*

*Aut quam sidera multa, cum tacet nox,  
furtivos hominum vident amores*  
(or as many as the stars, when night is still,  
gazing down on secret human desires)  
- Catullus 7

It seemed suspended  
In eternity:  
Our futures  
Intertwined.  
Slowly,  
You stitched yourself  
Into my night skies  
Until suddenly  
All I could see  
In the stars  
Was You and I.  
Mapping out  
Leo, Virgo,  
The space in between,  
Finding the bridge and  
Watching it all blend  
Into one  
Superconstellation.

My night skies have only  
“If onlys”  
To fill them.  
Pinprick possibilities  
Long dead  
Before they reach  
My eyes.  
I thought you  
Were the brightest,  
Possibility made  
Real,  
Alive.

I followed the map  
Named you  
True North  
And prayed  
You would lead me to  
Salvation.  
In the day,  
I used your words  
To keep the  
Glaring sun at bay.  
At night,  
Your name  
Whispered into  
Sand  
Lit by starlight.  
So focused was I,  
Woman in the desert,  
On the sand dunes ahead  
I did not realize  
The light above was  
Fading; Instead  
I searched for respite  
In a mirage  
And lost you  
In the sea of time  
Slipping from my  
Fingertips  
Until my night skies  
Dimmed once more  
And you faded into  
Obscurity  
Another “if only”  
To be found  
Only in my dreams.

# SHADOW LOVER

*Xarena Pagan*

Looking at you, I feel the sun's heat for the first time,  
Always dwelling in the shadows, never feeling warmth,  
Accustomed to being overlooked and deemed a background noise.  
The sight of me never invoking any emotion, only indifference,  
But when you look at me, I feel as if I am dancing.  
You smile at me and I feel giddy, my feet moving faster,  
My dance quickens, spinning and twirling, moving as fast as I can.  
Just to hear your beautiful giggle, the only sound you'll allow,  
Looking at you and seeing your smile,  
My dark heart lightens a shade.

As I do one final twirl, I lock eyes with you,  
And with a smile on your face you walk away,  
As they all do.  
But this smile lingers, and I know you will be back  
And I know I will await your return,  
As any good shadow lover would do,  
Waiting to feel your rays return.  
Even if only for a moment once more  
And I silently hope for the longest second.  
My scarred and less dark heart will allow  
That one day you will return and take me with you,  
As more than I am now,  
More than just a friend,  
No longer a shadow lover.

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