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Cover design: José Angel Araguz
Interior design: José Angel Araguz with assists by Ally Peters & Karlecia Berganza
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Introduction

Dear reader,

I welcome you to this anthology of poetry from the English 375 poetry workshop course conducted in fall of 2020. During a time of stress, online courses, pandemic and social unrest, I am proud to present poetry that feels alive and speaks up despite these pressures. The conversations had during the semester ranged from identity and socio-political issues to matters of craft, all with an eye toward exploring the intersection of where we live as writers and what our relationship is to the world both on and off the page.

This anthology’s title, tending to the roots, comes from a poem by Kara Murphy. In this poem, a speaker tells of gifting a variety of house plants to someone else who neglects them. Across the poem’s narrative of gifted plants, a metaphor is developed of what it means to care for someone who is emotionally absent. It is a situation symbolizing the caring for plants. I feel like this relationship of care is something that speaks to the world of poetry. We craft the worlds we’re able on the page and share them with the world, either in workshop or in publications such as this one. Yet we are never sure of who will find these things we care for. All we can do is care for them as best we can.

This spirit underlies not just our semester together but also our lives as poets. Together, we have shared the things we care for, and engaged in conversations that have held space for one another.

Connection is the ultimate goal, really. I welcome you to connect with these poems and poets and celebrate the complexities therein. May you be able to tend to your own roots through their guidance.

José Angel Araguz, Ph.D.
Winter Love

Snow is falling to the ground,
As soft of coldest powder puffs,
The windows are carefully trimmed by ice...

Winter is a velvet wonderland.
An underrated mystery,
That captures the world in crystal armor.

I wonder how people can hate this winter,
I always seen it as beautiful.
As a child in the city, I always see it as magical…

The gilded winds flowing through one’s face,
The snow flakes descending slowly to the ground.
How can things get better than this?

But many don’t see it as a sense of beauty,
They complain about being cold and that they can’t wait for summer
( the overrated heat),
But they refuse to see the truth...

The limitless potential of the snow.
As it streaks down the streets and sidewalk,
I continue to admire the sight out my window.

The fluffy substance that can be made into snowmen or snowballs,
The holiday cheer ringing in,
The chill in the air that feels like a warm welcome.
The endless potential of a bright future,
Snow that makes the world into a blank canvas,
I will never let go of my love for winter.
Freebird

1.
Flying low,
Free as a bird
Limiting my own goals.
Everyone is saying that it’s impossible.
Not knowing what to do...
Wanting to pursue something
Big,
Willing to do whatever it takes to do it.
When the world tells them to stay close to the ground,
But you tell yourself to go further...

2.
Flying in a medium height,
Free as a bird
Reaching in my goals.
Proving them wrong,
Not even knowing if I will
Succeed…
Wondering if it’s possible?
When the world is your horizon,
You want to be a part of it…

3.
Flying high,
Free as bird
Succeeding in my goals.
Making a difference.
Living an accomplished and happy life,
Free…
Finally accomplished.
Seeing the world,
Being a freebird who is ready to explore.
Amanda Buchan

The Double

*after Howard Moss*

Sweet fragrance of lavender powder
Scarlet stains and stressed pages
Glassy eyes trimmed of coal

Am I still beautiful?

Streams of silk kissing skin
Crystal droplets, and deep valleys
Caramel cream sliding through lips
Chocolate strings trickling down fingers

Was I your favorite girl?

Mirrors shattered like a new puzzle board
Stillness sticking like the worn-out keys of a piano
Faint whistling and light creaking

When will you return?

Heavy breathing and forceful tapping
Doors slamming and blows of thunder
Gusting winds and aching whimpers
An unknown face in the night’s reflection

Am I just a broken girl?
Craving your attention
The Moment

in response to Olafur Eliasson, *The weather project*, 2003

Orange embers
A dying fire
A moment one can only imagine

Chatter echoing through the great hall
Cool concrete sleeping on skin
Mist brushing lips
Ocean scent lingering

The two of us embrace
Beneath the blazing bubble
Hearts booming in our chest
Fingers twining together

Stillness seizes the room as you lean closer
Your rosy lips graze my ear
Tingles trickle down my body
Promising whispers enter my thoughts

“Imagine the two of us disappearing into that golden glow”
gabriella rosalia

arnica

1. wilting

i found you as you were leaving,
yet again.
picking up all the pieces of myself that i could
identify within the sea of shattered glass.
trying to remake who i am now without you.
my mother looks at me with heavy eyes
and sorrow
because she no longer recognizes my laugh, or my slight smile
when i wake up.
i cup my hands around my face trying to contort
a smile to emerge from my face.
the mirror is even questioning me,
it begins to crack and break so i shove
all the glass parts i have left
into the reflection.
the love is looking at me now...all that's left of it.
I’m ready to be new.

2. blooming

early morning workouts are supposed to pump serotonin back
into my veins.
sweat drips down my head as i walk back into the kitchen and
lay on my floor,
the cold feels nice, as this is the first time
i smile as it consumes me.
i shower and sit in the warmth letting the air be blurred by steam.
as i button my jeans, and fix those misconstrued pockets, i look
in the mirror and smile.
despite the cracks and edges not lining, i can still see myself.
i detangle my earphones that now resemble an old map
and decide to let this map lead me somewhere new,
a door opened and closed at the same time.

3. blossoms

it’s important to take yourself on coffee dates they told me.
in order to develop a love for yourself.
it used to make me believe that it was
sad attempt in order for me not to feel so pitiful.
i had decided that my purpose in life
was to love- but never for long.
to show someone what they really wanted- needed.
even though it was never me.
until i found you.
our hands flirted with the same coffee unsure if it was mine or yours.
your smile makes me believe i have never seen a smile before.
you made my skin rise,
how the table for one became two.

4. fall

it’s the beauty hidden in the end that entraps people.
when the leaves turn is the only time they are noticed
for what they are.
comments that we are a fairytale only makes me itch
as i know why we try to be so welcoming around others.
the difference between love and leaves is when leaves turn
they create the foundation for meadows.
love confiscates the idea of meadows and leaves you with a clearing.
5. wilting

you don’t like my laugh, but smile at her smirk
so it starts as it ends.

6. dying

i cup my hands around my face trying to contort
a smile to emerge from my face.
the mirror is even questioning me.
picking up all the pieces of myself that i could
identify within the sea of shattered glass.
trying to remake who i am now without you.

my mother looks at me with heavy eyes
and sorrow
because she no longer recognizes my laugh, or my slight smile
when I wake up.
it begins to crack and break so i shove
all the glass parts i have left
into the reflection.
the love is looking at me now...all that’s left of it.
i cup my hands around my face trying to contort
a smile to emerge from my face.
the mirror is even questioning me.
i found you as you were leaving,
yet again,
i’m ready to be new.
Falsum Caritate

A girl approached me and asked
*Has someone gifted you this bracelet*
And pointed at my wrist
Demanding the owner,
I direct her attention to the ticket booth,
*The boy with the brown eyes?*

Oh, the boy with the brown eyes...

The boy with the brown eyes
Started off so nice.
An entrapping gaze he couldn’t keep to himself,
However the hair gel he most certainly could.

My thoughts bounced back and forth
   And back
   And forth
   And back,

As I contemplated the slim possibility
Of curating an introduction

Fate took control after being agitated by
the seconds falling on top of themselves
suddenly I was right behind him.
My hand lightly dropped a greeting on his shoulder

The boy with the brown eyes have eyes that are warmer when
You get closer
accompanying by a charming smile
That acts as an infection, spreading to your body and lines it with chills.

I couldn’t believe you can know a stranger so well
When the only thing that we had exchanged was a glance.

Our talks blended together seamlessly like hands,
days flowed like honey and was sweet like sugar,
After a while I didn’t even mind the bees.

The boy with the brown eyes
Whispers between the lines when he tells me he loves me,
and I couldn’t find out what he was trying to tell me.
Sometimes stereos have static, but the song was too good to shut off.
Until she came and thought she got tangled in the cord, until I saw the plug
laying limp
In her hand.

Don’t let him get too close to you, like he did me

My heart sinks, and then breaks the floor.
She takes my wrist and put its side by side to hers
As we now look like advertisements for heartbreak.
There was my bracelet..
Married to her wrist.
His initials tattooed to us the same, but differently.

The boy with brown eyes
Grew pale as he approached and watched my tears hit the carpet.

I let out in a muffled light sob,
Happy anniversary.
Sophie Chingris

I Need To Learn To Articulate My Words

I can’t even explain it
I think I ricochet between certainty and doubt.

Life is like going to work, coming home, and going back to work again
because when I stand still the planet starts spinning under my feet, like a
yoyo on a string plummeting forward at fullforce, and I think for god’s sake
just work walk run dance move.

I mean, I don’t like standing still.

I can’t even explain it
I have a feeling, and this feeling, it doesn’t feel quite right.

I feel pitiful mania
From some fidgety over analysis
Like a pathetic motif, inspired by
Intrusive thoughts of
This rush of sensations
Feels like my call to inspiration.

I think I ricochet between certainty and doubt.
But This Is My Poetry

I am growing - growing tired.
I am scared for my soul - scared of getting old.
I stand - sturdy - smelling of squares.
I stand - still - see smoke soar and ash accumulate.
Then fall.

That sharp pinch from a flying ember burning your skin - that touch - that’s the kind of poetry I want to write.

But this is my poetry.

He tore poems from my flesh -
He made my lines sloppy, my words weak, my presence grayed on the page, and just looked incomplete - and this soft epilogue is not what I want to write.

But this is my poetry.

I am growing - growing tired.
I am scared for my soul - scared of getting old.
I stand - sturdy - smelling of squares.
I stand - still - see smoke soar and ash accumulate.
Then fall.
Cold Feelings

Tuesday was still summer
my tan legs stuck
to the seat
on the train like velcro,
glowing
against gray cloth.

Striding out of the station,
the sun’s rays
wrapped me up
the true meaning of a warm embrace.
I smiled softly as butterflies
fluttered
in my chest.

Now the air is crisp, chilled,
cuts
through my sweater
and slices my nostrils,
snatching
me from satisfaction.

Wisps of long hair locate
my mouth
and stick between
raw chapped lips,

cra/ck

stepping over

withered

brown leaves that

c

cr

u

m

b

l

e

like I will in bed later.

The sun dries out darkness,

without it, I despair,

{I’d} rather be wrapped up by the sun

than swimming in winter blue blankets.
Treading Water

The last time I got really mad, my head throbbed. I wished I could close my eyes and curl up in the harbor without raising suspicion. I sat in the puddle of blue carpet in front of my mirror to watch my tears flow. I looked away when I got ugly with splotchy wet skin, two pufferfish for eyes and swollen, cracked, sputtering lips. I tried to look back and couldn’t, my rug folded up and engulfed my shuddering body and pulled me under the floor. I felt like I had been flushed down the toilet. Wind and water whooshed around my ears, blocking out thought. I grasped at my scalp and hair to see if it still hurt, pulling hard but never ripping strands out. I squeezed my fists until they were white. I wheezed until it felt like I was being dramatic and could breathe normally if I tried, but I couldn’t, was I drowning? Maybe I should’ve drowned, how bad would it be to sacrifice myself to the nearest current. Icy waves couldn’t treat me worse than my frostbitten thoughts. Despite dreams of drowning, the sun shines again and I’m in a hot tub, wondering why I ever capsized in the first place.
Katie M. Johnson

The Prophet

*Frontispiece of Scivias, Hildegard von Bingen (1151 CE)*

I
A vision of shocking red
shot
down from the amber heavens.
Piercing her mind in golden pain,
she claimed she had the answers.
And they believed her.

A woman?
Spouting nonsense
and God’s will,
but to them she was not
hysterical.
She was not
imagining.
She was not
ill.

1151, and they believed her?

II
Note to Self:
Hysteria is reserved for
the heroines of the 19th century
when their wallpaper comes to life,
Mrs. Pontellier,
when the ocean beckons her,  
Charity Royall,  
when she belongs to no one,  
but to the land.  

Women are not hysterical  
only  
if they have the potential  
to send you to hell.  
Fear:  
helpful or hindrance?  

III  
So between two pillars,  
and in front of a saffron sky, she dictated to Volmar,  
who wrote every word  
with precision, because  
what trouble they could have been in otherwise.  

What trouble we are so often in today,  
when fear falls the wrong way.
Fire for Children

Thick red hot haze
like rose colored glasses
for children.
Enchanted Forest,
now Haunted Forest
for children.

My hometown has
looming pink days,
stifling gray days,
but never Claritin Clear blue days.

Above us all,
our Mountain hides
when she sees him coming.
All knowing, always watching,
but evermore indifferent about us.

So, left to our own devices,
the nectarine stuck sky
sends Mr. Smoke to curl his claws
around my necklace, but pulls too tight
for children.

Red air is

unhealthy, hazardous,

for mothers,
for fathers,
for sisters,
for friends,
for brothers,
for animals,
for acquaintances,

for children.
Ally Leeming

Byssal Threads

On Saturday’s I wake thoughtless.
Emerge from my white linens, crinkled, almost clean,
from the smell of warmth, sleep, daydreams,
and pull them from the bed. I read once that
washing them on Saturday makes them soft,
with each turn in the cycle, rise, cleanse,
they become tougher, more delicate,
So religiously, I wash them,
low heat, extra detergent, the quiet rustle of spinning.
Your hands told me once that navigating the world is
like trying to run on mussels, chased by the tide, and you
come to me, each week, with feet bleeding, shards of shell oozing
from wounds that fail to callous. I used to spend a lot of time,
opening and closing the folds of your mind, fingers prying, desperate,
for a solution- trying to find the bed of mussels and how to rip,
smash, crunch them out and pull the sea away,
in a giant arc of peace, tranquility. But
in your eyes, futile are the efforts of outsiders,
so the ocean always rises, and the mussels always nest.
Now as wait for you on Saturdays,
I wash the linens to dry you in their soft respite, safe, with
arms to hold you close, dust away the sand,
my hands no longer digging, only wrapping your feet,
with Neosporin soaked gauze, in a blanket hideaway
giving you a pause in your breath, steady, sigh of relief,
from the churring swells and tides.
Falcon 9

Enveloped in steam,
the monolithic tower,
a backdrop of a painted
lavender sky, dolloped clouds
holds the little hissing pillar
and the pulsing plumes,

waiting for time,
the wind holds her breath,
giving wings to the steam,
eyes plastered in the sky,
hang upside down, as
the count sinks negative,
a hesitant, momentary pause before,

ignition, lightning singing, trembling upward,
earth snake, lurches up, crumbling wall,
an instantaneous burning streak, a worming Vesuvius
paint chipping, white to brown to black, shackled no more,
burning orange rinds, cider, a matchstick,
moving like the tide, slow, no rest, all at once
splits apart, the head, no longer earthbound, outcast,
shedding skin, serpent of a Future, its body descends,
on reentry, mouth unhinges into fangs, talons, seething,
lands, charred teeth back to the bushes, burned, chipping, almost alive,

the scars of returning home,
striped pains of tomorrow,
a harbinger of progress,
on a platoon of yesterday, where
silence, then everything.
Kelsey Mecha

Mr. Autumn

Did you happen to see the man?
The man with the crooked decaying straw hat.
He was watching the train pass by,
standing amongst the autumn leaves.

The dead tree limbs seemed to embrace his presence,
making room for his workman boots, among their fallen foliage.
The sterile shrubs surrounded him and his auburn sweater,
it was unraveling at the selves; a single strand waved.

I wonder why the man remains? Rooted to the ground,
mimicking the trees that fester in their soil.
Not a spasm of a fuzzy upper lip, nor a twitch of a wrinkled thumb,
all that called attention to him was the swaying of that twine.

What is the man thinking? As the train slithered past,
a fleeting metal reptile penetrating the woods.
It’s vulgar and artificial, transporting undefined features
of unrecognizable people through fogged glass.

Does he wish to go where the train goes?
To beautiful and removed stations,
move with the cold and indifferent breeze,’
whom is penetrating towns and cities.

Does he desire to meet someone on the other side?
Reach out his withered contorted clammy hand,
and embrace a frosted one with long melancholy fingers.
At the end of his solitude and season collide with another.
I hope the man stays a minute longer, priests to watch the trains, as I’m not satisfied with this season. There’s so much I haven’t done, so many people I haven’t met before she emerges and brings with her the squeaking of the radiator and loneliness of the holidays.
In which Kelsey Imagines Ice cream are men who have scorned her

_In response to Christina Olson, “In which Christina imagines that Different types of alcohol are men, and she is seeing them all.”_

Butter Pecan unfollowed me after a week, I saw potential in the endless texts; he saw a thing to be devoured.

Mint Chocolate Chip, I met on a dating app, to tell you how he vanished, it was admittedly and guiltily bumble.

There are a few primary flavors in between, like peanut butter, that were scooped from tinder, but none of them could be emotionally tender.

My ironically favorite, Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough, was compatible and rich, in the most sensual of ways, his wife, I’m afraid, didn’t feel the same about me.

Birthday Cake was the man on campus, a frat star which evoked me a popular card, his constant cheating awarded me a brain freeze.

Oreo, I deceived a friend over, she was too afraid to order him, I was bored, and he wasn’t worth the calories.

Strawberry shortcake had potential; he even lasted a full four months. But I dropped him on the floor when the family disapproved.
Rocky Road was spontaneous and fun. But he was demanding, and I couldn’t keep up with his constant need for attention dripping down my hand.

Mint chip attempted to melt me; he was manipulative and cruel. He transformed me into someone I didn’t recognize in the grocery freezer aisle doors.

Vanilla was a gentleman and irresistable. He put my pleasure ahead of his; he loved me too much, and that scared me, so I grew cold instead.
Kara Murphy

House Plants

a month ago, I gave her Jade,
she said she’d name her Jade.

“how cute,” I thought.  
a plant with a name—  
Until she sang it 
more than mine.

I knew the plants made her smile 
even if she forgot to water them 
once in a while, 
so, I continued to buy them, 
to create a jungle we could hide in.

the day after Jade,  
Cat Grass came, 
because I thought she’d get inspired, 
but then I noticed Jade wasn’t growing, 
of her,  
or me,  
she must have grown tired.

then I bought her a Pothos 
because I knew she’d always wanted one of those, 
but she just looked at it vacantly, like a cup of tea, 
or me.
Yet I still thought a Majesty Palm
and a Monstera too,
might remind her of us as we were,
wild and out of control
but I think it just reminded her
of the night she met you

me, still at home, tending to the roots

today, I visited her, still trying,
with Ivy in my hand.
for her, I would have bought a million more
until I saw beyond the door,
all my plants were dead.
Free Will

Because the sunset will visit again,
I open my eyes another day,
And put my bare feet in the grass
While the birds sing love songs.

I open my eyes another day
Like I’m not afraid of living, afraid of life.
While the birds sing love songs,
I find peace in combing my hair.

Like I’m not afraid of life, of living,
I decide I am happy today—
I find peace in combing my hair.
I catch a shred of hope in the reflection of my mirror.

I decide I am happy today
Because it is my choice.
I grab the shard of hope from the reflection in my mirror
And put it in my pocket.

Because it has always been my choice,
I choose to believe the magic the world has to offer, the magic of the glass
In my pocket.
I don’t think I am afraid of living anymore.

I choose to believe the magic the world has to offer
And put my bare feet in the grass.
I don’t think I am afraid of life anymore,
Because the sunset will visit again.
Ally Peters

Another Home

We wake on fresh sheets
to crisp sunlight and crowing roosters
from the farm next door.

After traveling all night my head pounds,
confused with time.
My body begs to stay asleep.

Baby photos of you watch over
this bedroom, just above the sink.
You name books crowding shelves on the wall
as we lie together
in the twin bed I’ve borrowed.

***

Through tired eyes I see her eager
to ease my mind.
Offering fresh bread and peppermint tea,
you call her grannie; I call her Jane.

My stomach aches but I eat the toast anyway.
It crunches in my American mouth

As you talk in English slang.
Your accent comfortable, recounting
memories and eating off the plate
you painted sky blue.
She’s kept it here for years.
Wide train windows fill my view with fat cattle and flowing fields. I look to learn what’s different here, trying not to blink.

The place of your past, the place of my dreams.

You hold my hand silently as we share Cadbury sweets.

Lush grass watered fresh from the rain this year. Slow sheep roam free, wanting me to watch.

In the art garden, the wind blows me a chill while wearing your Grandpa’s muddy boots. Later, I play his guitar as we sing about Blackbirds in the dead of night.

After fish and chips, you guide me to the pub where we happily sip on Stella Artois.

Here, daffodils bloom in every garden. The place of your past, the place of my dreams. At home there’s never-ending snow.

You belong to them both as I play pretend.
Someone’s Father

*after Howard Moss’ “Tropical Fish”*

Here we observe man
in a stagnant state:

He loves black licorice.
Biting its textured surface as it grazes
the rough skin just below his wrinkled lips.

A velvet chair waits for him each night,
and he sits at 7pm, like clockwork.
That black licorice hangs from his mouth while
taking up a new habit:

Staring at old movies
with the TV on mute.

It illuminates the room
while his mind runs free, wishing for
the past.

His dead sister’s silver lantern sits
on a glass table, watching over him
in place of someone real.
For hours he may fall asleep upright,
no one bringing him to bed.

Every passing day,
nothing else will change
though everything already has.
Maroon lipstick kisses and brown sugar
followed his wife out the door. He still keeps her
lavender oils collecting dust on the dresser.

A clouded mirror hangs in the hall,
dressed in floral wallpaper.
The same place its always been.

Refusing to look at himself
though it shows him a lonely truth:

Weak bones and gray hair,
tired eyes, chapped elbows.
Dirty shelves and half empty closets.
The same spoon of cheerios.

Because if he looks, the mirror shows
all he is not,
and what he has lost.
1. In his eyes, there is always a struggle,
Praying victim to the pressures of nature
The light brown fur on his back resting
Against the bark of a willow tree;
Wrinkled and timeless.
The white speckles that grace his small frame
Melt into his body like snow in the
Middle of fall.

2. Brown, the color of my own eyes
Deep and honest;
Holding only the faintest note of
Resentment towards how I’m meant
To understand my own identity.
This white skin, with faint notes
Of Brown lying underneath in my
DNA; what a privilege it must be
To be neither from here nor there.

3. White and Brown,
The Spanish invading
The lands of my Incan people,
Those same conquistadors
Being a part of me; a product of
Colonization.
White, and Native to the land
That was once free, now stolen
And laid to waste as we take
From nature to survive and redefine
Our existence in this time.
Green Glass Pipe

Your lighter flickers,
The air growing thicker,

Unfiltered smoke wafting in the bedroom.
Humidity round your lips

As you pull away from her kiss.
A pipe so small and green
She makes me want to scream

Since she takes away your attention;
Need I mention your ascension

As you slip away, your eyes bloodshot red;
Fermented in this idea that everything is okay.

Hands so warm, my cold frame
No longer wishes to feel them.

Funny, isn’t it, how time can change everything?
The past, the present, hang onto each other

Asking me: why keep him in your memory?
What does it serve to preserve you?

Ash; let me cup your face one last time;
Let me hold your hand; guide you towards better land.
A place where you can rest and feel
How real I am; that I might exist
Like that pipe between your lips.
tending to the roots
Where There's Wine

after Howard Moss

Wine and cream puffs,
what more could I want?
But you're drinking gin,
what else is new?
Six months in and it's still your go-to.
Your drunken laugh,
emerges your impeccable cheekbones.
My frosty skin flushes to crimson,
then I drop my glass.
Your glimmering blue eyes focus for a second,
But then you continue to laugh and say it's okay.
I sign in relief and watch the rain pour onto the wire.
The words “Do you want to go upstairs?” escape your mouth.
Hesitance arises within me but I still answer “Sure.”
You take my hand as I glimpse at my reflection in the hallway mirror.
Moving forward, will it be different from here?
Or will it always be me putting my foot down?
Our Marriage Might Work

In Response to Matthew Olzmann

Darling, I’ve got some reasons why our marriage might work:
You like that I’m a soft girl, yet more emo than ever
with my everlasting wardrobe of black and pink,
and my library of depressing poetry.
Because I memorize songs, including some of your favorites,
not for you though, for me. But you like that.
Because I prefer cardinals over swans.
Because I drive you to all your business trips,
appreciating your alone time as an entrepreneur.
You’d be absolutely crazy not to love me.
You think it’s cool that I will attempt any recipe,
from homemade twinkies to japchae.
That’s because it is. You’re beyond lucky to have me:
My generosity, my beauty, my independence
You like that I bought you a $300 Switch for Christmas,
the same year you bought me a Tiffany necklace.
You appreciate my different colored eyes and auburn hair,
and that I sometimes value my alone time over being with you.
If our marriage fails, it’s simply because I’m too good for you.
Sarah Warrener

Lucid Grasp

I dreamt something terrible,
Something that pinned my body,
And left me gasping for air,
Struggling to scream for help.

But you didn’t hear me, you never woke,
You continued on with your humid exhale,
Leaving me to feel out every detail of
the moment I was trapped under.

Until I was finally shot back into my body,
Regaining ownership while hot tears
rolled down my scarlet cheeks,
Until Found my sharp and staggered breath.

When I had inched my way over to you,
I wrapped my arm around your chest,
Pressing my face onto your cool back,
Mimicking your breathing as our fingers interlocked.
An Anxious Blur

I only know about them through stories told by my grandmother,  
I can never properly remember what happened,  
A young couple, supposedly in love, in another life,  
The life that they lived that I never knew.

I can never properly remember what happened,  
It’s an anxious blur told to me by a frightened child.  
The life that they lived that I never knew,  
Things were kept away from my line of sight.

It’s an anxious blur told to me by a frightened child,  
Another version of myself but not really.  
Things were kept away from my line of sight,  
But I could still feel the supreme darkness in the air.

“Another version of myself but not really”  
That is how they explain their past together to me.  
But I could still feel the supreme darkness in the air,  
I always wonder if they could too.
I.
When we were fourteen,
without any responsibilities,
Callie and I spent our summers
walking down Shore Road,
swimming in the harbor,
flirting with tourist boys,
and jumping off the Magnolia pier.
Our bare feet would be callused,
burnt, and blistered,
beet-red from the stifling pavement.
The air was always hot,
sweat beads would line
our foreheads,
dripping down,
occasionally sizzling
into our eyes.

II.
I remember one day,
in late August,
we made our way down
to the cove,
dark grey clouds
to the right of us
up in the sky
revealed a storm
approaching.
But it was scorching, and the ocean was calling for us to come and soak our heads, to submerge ourselves in the cool blue water. We didn’t heed our mothers’ warnings, to never swim when it’s stormy. But lightning wasn’t in sight, and kids don’t always listen to their mothers.

III.
It was tradition by now, for us to own the small beach town where we lived. We were two best friends that were on top of the world. We had complete freedom, free roam of the neighborhood. We’d get ice cream at the pizza shop in the square, one we’d later stand feet away from, with the rest of the secluded community, as it burned completely to the ground, leaving nothing but a gaping hole as a reminder.
IV.
But this day, when we got to
the familiar stone steps
and made our way down
to Grey’s Beach,
one that smelled of
salt and dried seaweed,
the sand was bright,
and burning.
The tide was high,
small waves crashing
onto the shore,
leaving just a few feet
for beachgoers.

V.
After we undressed,
and laid our neon towels
onto what was left
of the dry sand,
we walked the few feet
until our white-painted toes
were stricken with the initial
shock of the icy water.
We waded up to
our newly-developed hips,
shivering together,
while families began
to pack up their chairs,
toys, umbrellas, and buckets.
Rain started slowly falling
from the sky,
as the darker clouds rolled in,
shutting the final door of
what was left of the sunny sky.
Mothers called for their children, 
begging them to get out 
of the waves, 
the weather had changed, 
and they deemed it unsafe.

VI.
But we stayed in, 
twirling, twisting, and splashing 
our skin absorbing the frigid 
droplets, rolling off our freckled arms, 
and back into the swirling water 
that surrounded us. 
And then it was coming down, 
layered, in sheets. 
We watched as it pounded 
the water around us, 
drenching our heads and 
our belongings that we’d left 
up on the shore. 
But we didn’t mind, 
we floated on our backs, 
our faces smiling at sky, 
welcoming the precipitation. 
We became almost completely 
enveloped by water. 
In that moment, 
a private beach to ourselves, 
it felt like the ocean, 
and Magnolia, 
was completely ours.
RBG Taught Us Strength

When I heard of her passing, 
I thought first about the democracy. 
I thought about all that she had done, 
who she had fought for, 
and what she had taught us. 
Ruth Bader Ginsberg was a woman 
who flourished in the face 
of adversity.
And my mother was the one 
who introduced me to her. 
She sat me down in front of 
our living room TV, 
had me listen to her speak, 
and whispered to me, 
that “women are strong.”
I grew up idolizing my mom, 
a courageous feminist, 
who taught me to be brave, 
to be resilient, 
who knew RBG was 
advocating for freedom. 
I learned about 
gender inequalities, 
women’s interests, and 
civil rights and liberties. 
She sat on that bench 
for four years older than I am. 
And though I worried 
that without her,
voices would again be silenced,
I’m comforted by
younger generations.
Ones that are full of strong girls,
not afraid to speak their truths.
Girls who wear pink hats,
hold signs high,
yell when silenced,
girls who don’t back down.
RBG will be missed, she will
be mourned, and remembered
fondly.
But her message,
that of equality,
will not be forgotten.
Thanks to girls,
and women,
and mothers like my mom.
tending to the roots
Chat

From Me to Everyone:
how are we?

From Amanda Buchan to Everyone:
She’s giving you red marks haha

From Katie Johnson to Everyone:
“Get rid of this line” - Gabby

From Gabriella Carli to Everyone:
i hate my phone