HERMES

kaleidoscope

Issue II: hermes
(the kaleidoscope)

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Editor's note

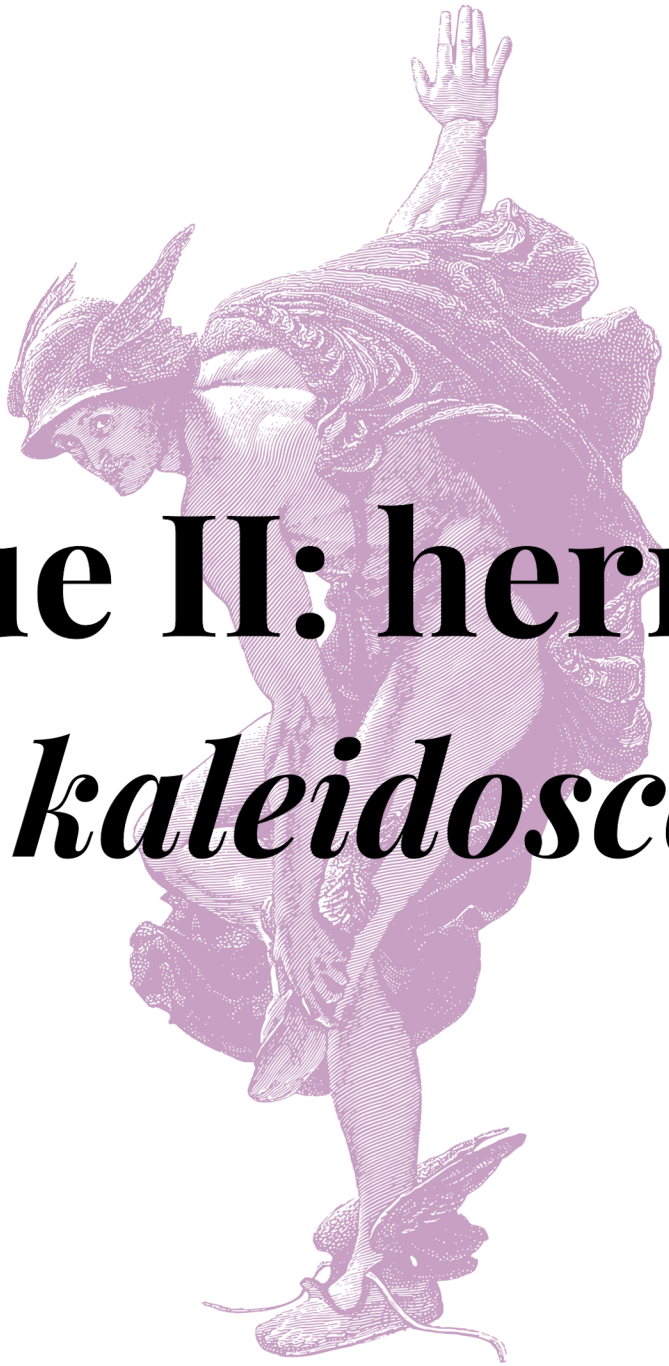
No doubt it is obvious that our first four issues will be inspired by four gods from the Olympic pantheon. We began, in Issue I, with exploring youth and life - what it means to live, what it means to hold on to who we were, and how we can look ahead without fear. Issue II, although continuing to ruminate at times upon life, takes a new path. Our contributors embrace the abstract, the surreal, as well as what the trickster god, the god of boundaries, the messenger god, and the conveyor of souls to the Underworld, means to them.

It was a joy to read and edit together an eclectic array of pieces. It is my hope you will notice how in this issue, through the sheer will and talent of our creators, you will meet Hermes in his power, delve into empowering pieces about womanhood in the face of patriarchal norms, feel the romance and the ache of hurt, imagine yourself in Hermes' place at the shores of Styx, swirl amongst kaleidoscopic pieces and end with reflecting on the self - the multifaceted nature of humanity, how we are ever-changing and never-changing.

Enjoy and please do support the work of our contributors, information about them appears throughout the issue.

Happy reading,

Kristiana



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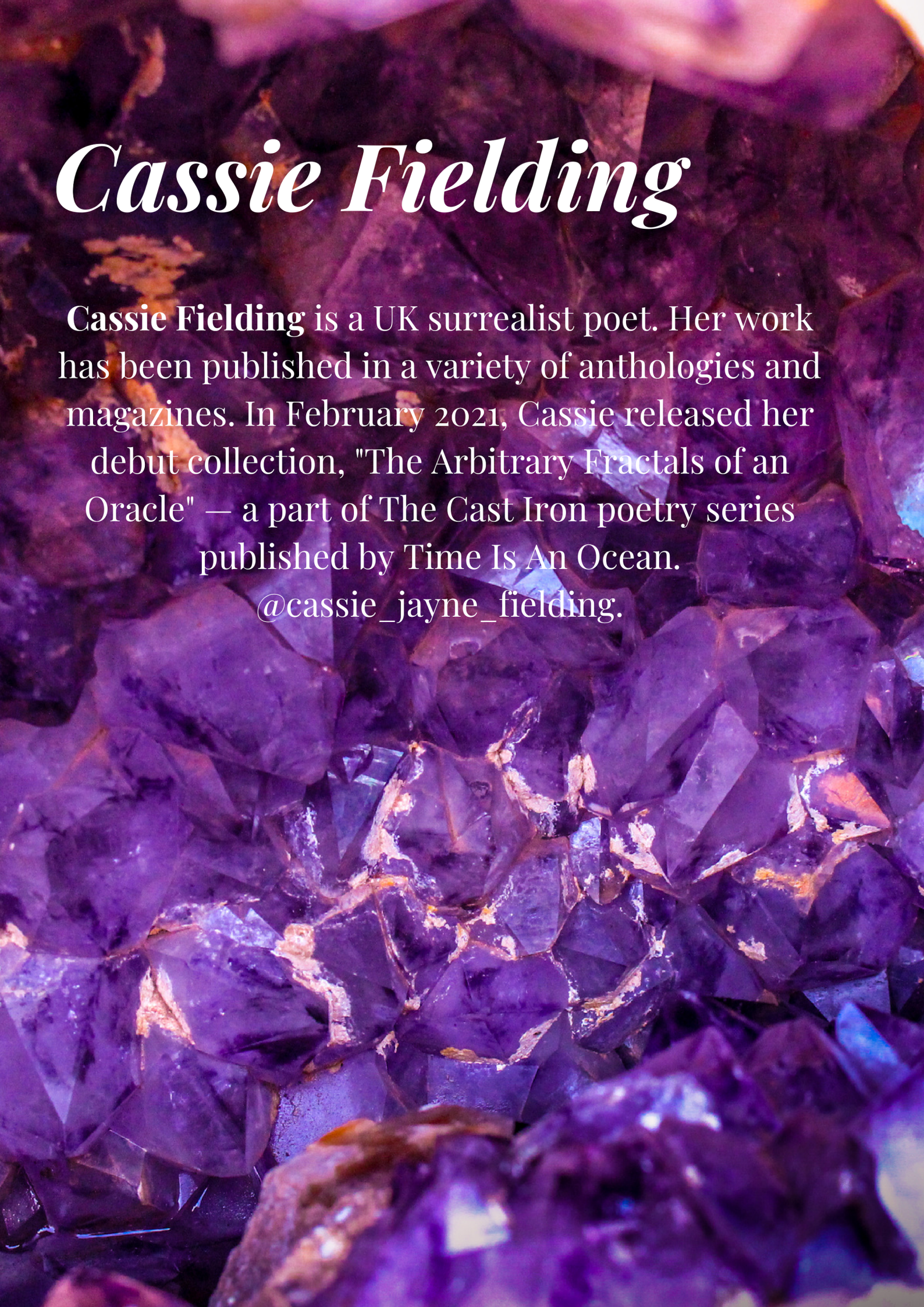


Cassie Fielding

Cassie Fielding is a UK surrealist poet. Her work has been published in a variety of anthologies and magazines. In February 2021, Cassie released her debut collection, "The Arbitrary Fractals of an Oracle" — a part of The Cast Iron poetry series published by Time Is An Ocean.
@cassie_jayne_fielding.

Dream Tea

I hand-make artisan dreams.

Work roots to broken bread.

Simmer slow soup of sweetest peach-fuzz
dust with kick drum
aftertaste.

Mop and down your brew in one then sink
eyes under prettiness
of lull-folded swim.

Cymbal the twilight of constellation ring
while you breathe, as crow,
the geometry of salt dance.

My liquor floods veins dragonfly versicolour jangle.

Trip on over hieroglyphs to temple divide,
golden apple-seeded ratio of an empire's prehistory.

Wake in savasana sleep, buoyant
in satin, fan blown Persian petals,
and carve a new name in granite.

Humble feast of my magick has made lotus
of your necklace shell mind —

Be assured, I whisper you tethered and flesh-real in my hands.

Spore-dusted

Trippy dippy flipping focus
flows in and out
of jelly river
Quiet
is a distance
from point A-being-me
to point B-being-not-me

Eyes are drawn blind
and open curtain swish
skimming images
silk as moth breath;
careful as tiptoe;
eggs are delicious
in their perceived potential —

scrambling too much
a mourning
of liquid window light —
spore-dusted and smiley

Space is hip-width feet
of stars in mountain pose
and equal
to water in skin-bubble
waiting to pop
bursting meaning of A and B —

A-being-me
B-being-not-me

Vanessa Napolitano

Vanessa Napolitano lives in Yorkshire with her husband and daughter and works with international students. She loves to write both about her own world, and through adopting and exploring different personas. You can find some of her work on her instagram page @nessanapswrites, and her most recent publications in the anthology 'Songs of Love & Strength', the exhibit Maternochronics, and in New Normal zine.

Lord of the Boundary

If you were very high above the fields you would see
all the drystone walls like thin lines between the green —
all of the boundaries belong to me,
every biro line across a page,
every fence that holds the livestock,
every space where the chapter ends,
and every no is mine, now and til infinity.

You cannot make a home without a wall,
you cannot have the land without the shore,
everyone I will guide past the end of their breath
will know what that river underscores —
I who know the city limits.

Where your body touches air, that skin is in my remit,
I'm in the scissors that chop your hair,
in the door as it closes,
in the law of gravity, the apple as it drops.

If you were very high above the fields you would see
all the drystone walls like thin lines between the green
all of the boundaries and endings,
they belong to me.

Ellie Morfou

Born in the mid-1980s under a different name in Crete, Greece, **"Ellie Morfou"** emerged amidst the coronavirus pandemic lockdowns, which helped her remember how much she used to love writing as a child. Since rediscovering this passion of hers, she has been writing verses endlessly and enjoys it thoroughly! When she is not writing, she spends time with her family, hangs out with friends, translates legal documents and always makes time to read her books. Her poetic work remains unpublished for the time being.

Messenger Dog

When time decided
to walk backwards
for a change
chaos prevailed
communications blurred
tomorrow stood for yesterday
all rights were left
unattended
heads became tails
messages lost their manners
and their ways.

The Gods were furious with Hermes
for time revolted on his watch
he was to be dismissed for cause
unless he found
how to tame time.
But hours, minutes, seconds – time –
no one may forward, nor rewind;
not even Hermes
mischief-maker.

When time decided
to walk backwards
Hermes forever failed the Gods.
And this is how
the multi-faceted messenger god
has since been titled “messenger dog”.

Victoria Punch

Victoria Punch is a voice coach and musician, writing from her home in Devon (UK) between the moors and the sea. She is currently working on a PhD investigating how we experience silence in text, focusing on ancient myths, and her poetry comes from these explorations. She can be found on Instagram @victoriapunch_ or online at www.victoriapunch.co.uk.

Mercury

you are quick, wits about you
stealing looks and likenesses
picked from pockets
mocking-jay manners
petty thief
you are bad news
the unshot messenger of cons like coins,
circular – two faced
ridged like a cliff edge
you are the note passed under the table,
the old love letter,
the pre-storm grey.
you are everywhere and hard to find
the social pressure gauge
the callous barometer of the bar –
toxic. serpentcircle.

you.

you are a liquid liar
you – a smooth one
with feet like wings
the deer that's never caught
the spear that never misses
you're the mask, the magnet, the multisided
die
cast
down
heavy. poisonous

you are like a broken arm set wrong
shapeshifter, quicksilver
you are the bright mind
of comedy
only tragic – metallic
you bring the plot twist
hydragyrating.
you stir – invisible.
antagonist.

you.

Ginger Harris

Ginger Harris is an emerging writer who lives in Denver. She has a bachelor's degree in English Literature from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, where she also studied creative writing. You can read more of her work at The Rising Phoenix Review or on Instagram @ayla.poetry.

Don't Shoot the Messenger

There's not much to say about continuing,

one eye open as
fields dwindle, made downhearted

wind knocked—me, following whims
with no plan or aim but
pleasure, never asked

for this herd of schlepped
prey. To be a caretaker.
It was the Caduceus crown

swirling with snakes, it was
my brother’s love, it was
my father's fruition
for me

to flit
from swallowed souls to divine
complicity. A split sky navigator
above a world
on fire, sending upward
what fetches a price and
leaving the rest
to pile.

We sink into silk
every day
in paradise. Bathe in lushness
and praise our own soft
hands, nurture ourselves
in perpetuity.

For those strayed
into the jaws of this cause

I will plant a drop
of your blood

in the ground—
give your name
to what comes up.

Lynn White

Lynn White lives in north Wales. Her work is influenced by issues of social justice and events, places and people she has known or imagined. She is especially interested in exploring the boundaries of dream, fantasy and reality. She was shortlisted in the Theatre Cloud 'War Poetry for Today' competition and has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize and a Rhysling Award. Find Lynn at: https://lynnwhitepoetry.blogspot.com and https://www.facebook.com/Lynn-White-Poetry-1603675983213077/.

Quicksilver

Always on the move,
darting here, dipping there,
blowing hot, blowing cold,
mercurial as quicksilver
dispensing woe or joy
in clouds of dust,
fairy dust,
falling like starlight
and landing
somewhere.
I'm just the messenger,
she said,
I don't get to choose,
gold or silver,
coal or shale,
it's just dust
blowing in the wind
and landing
somewhere,
I don't get to choose,
she said.
But I wonder.

Leaded Lights

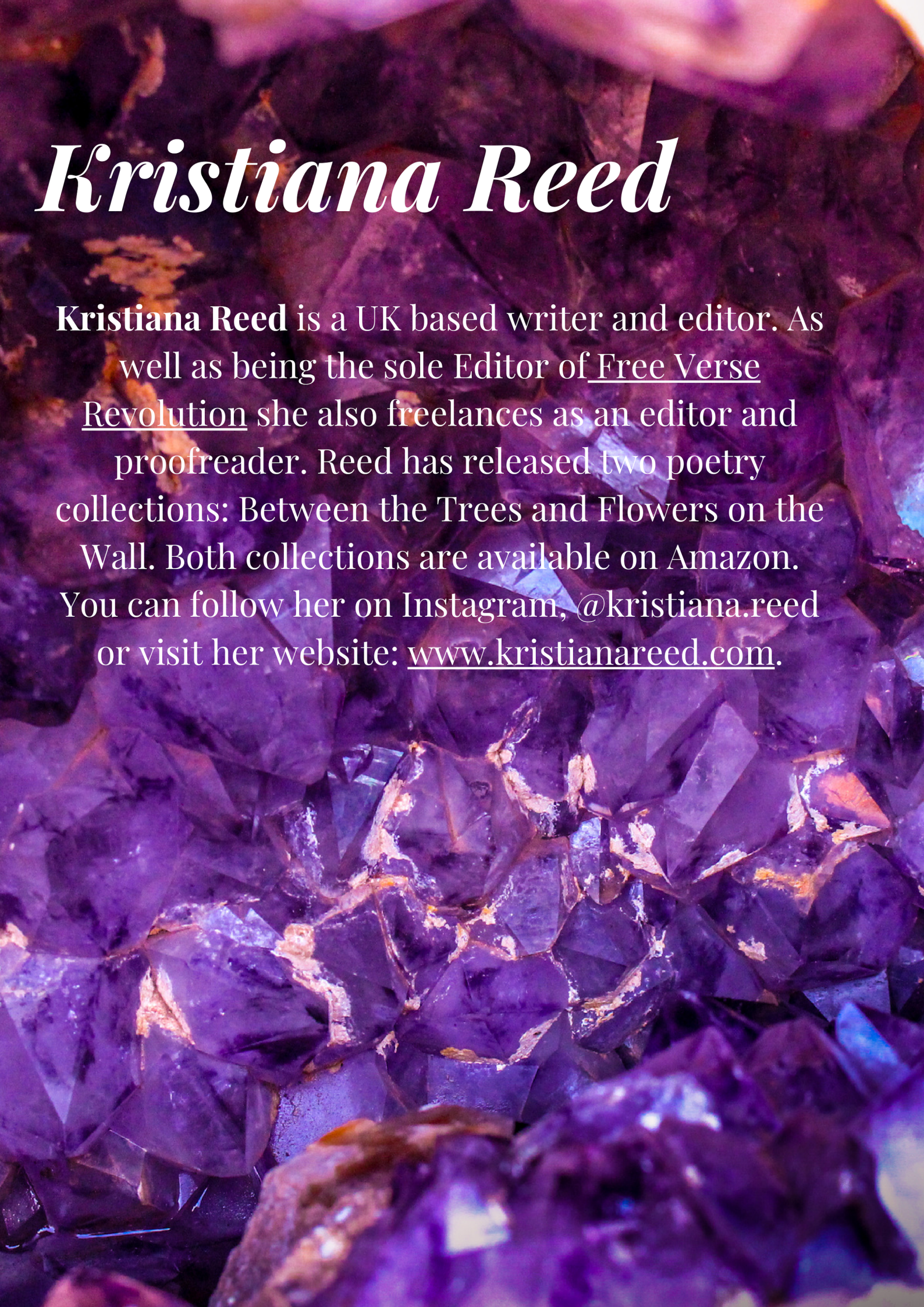
The glass is cut,
so carefully cut,
so carefully arranged
to break up the light
as it reflects it
in a kaleidoscope of colour.
Light cracked by lead,
bright white
or gilded by sunshine
or bent into rainbows
refracted
to paint colours in reflected shadows
to be carried by a quixotic messenger
and reflected into grey lives.
The reflection is fragmenting
as it falls
breaking up the grey,
so that even the shafts
of multi-coloured illumination
can make no sense of it.

Dreamscape

Soon the light will be fading
and the crows are circling
like winged messengers,
a cawing cacophony,
harbingers of death
and confusion.

We try to make sense
of our once familiar place
searching in vain for the water
which we know we must find
and cross.

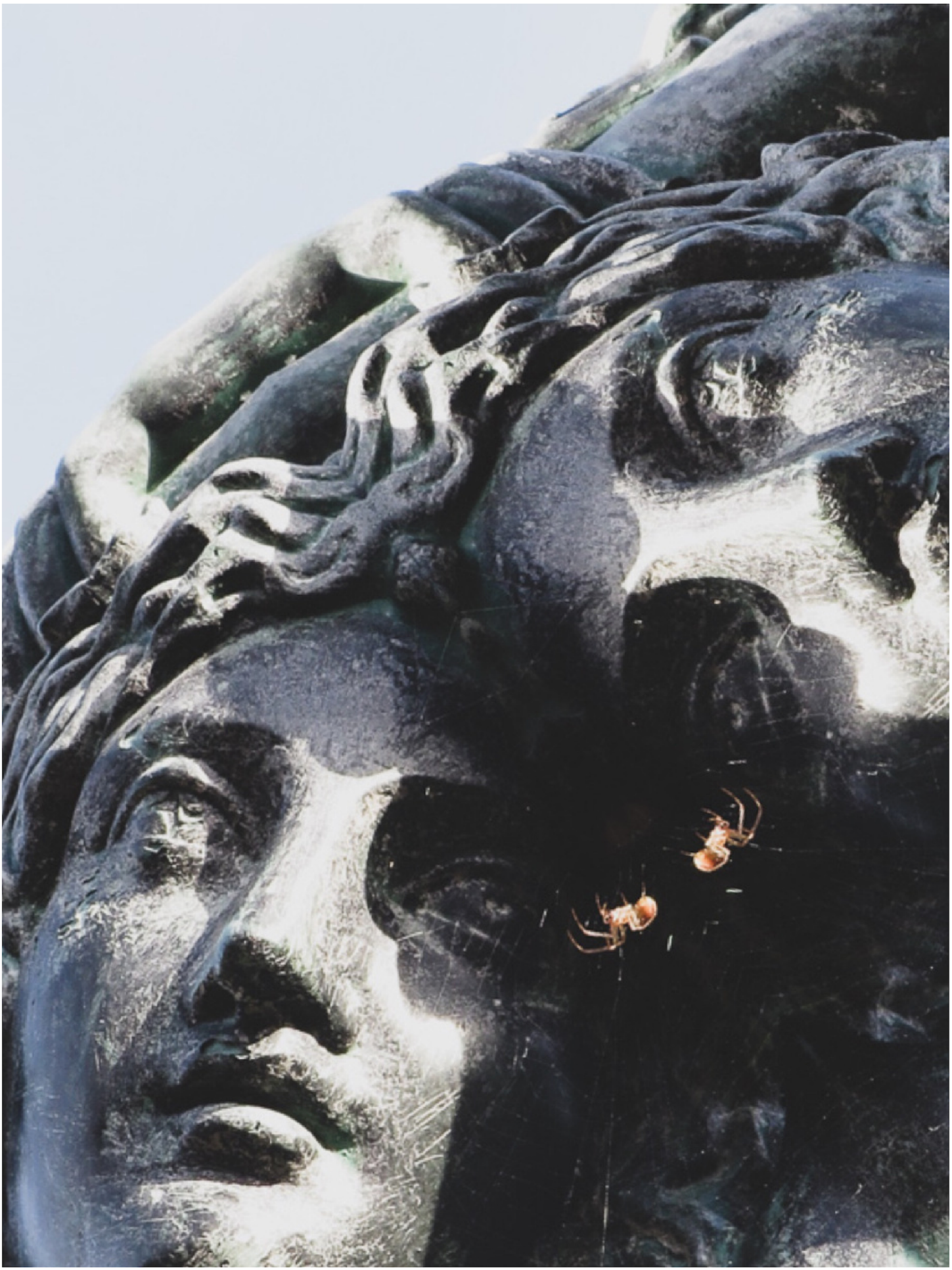
Searching
for something,
anything
to give us a bearing,
to help us find the river
in this dreamscape
of another world.
But perhaps
we have already crossed over.

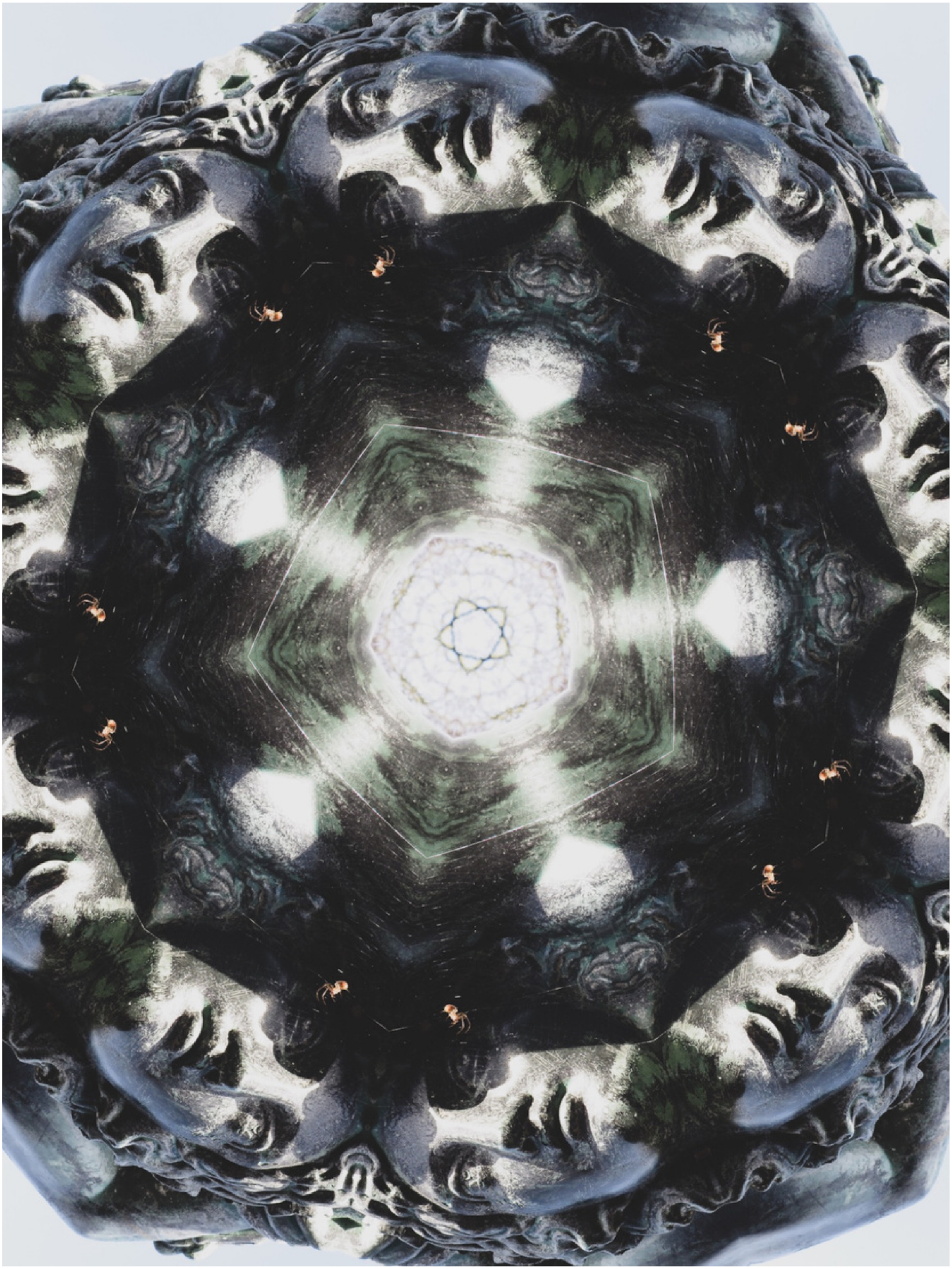


Kristiana Reed

Kristiana Reed is a UK based writer and editor. As well as being the sole Editor of Free Verse Revolution she also freelances as an editor and proofreader. Reed has released two poetry collections: Between the Trees and Flowers on the Wall. Both collections are available on Amazon. You can follow her on Instagram, @kristiana.reed or visit her website: www.kristianareed.com.

Hermes





Limbo

The night and I sit in silent
limbo -
the mist of day swirling, intrepid
at our feet.
I say:
"You look so good in blue."
And the night blushes;
reddening in stars and leftover blinks
of aeroplane light.

I wait.
To be held. To be enveloped
in the ink, the sun closing its weary eyes
on this lonesome part of the world.

I wait.
And the night and I continue
in limbo -
suspended between touch and abyssal forever.
The finality of death.

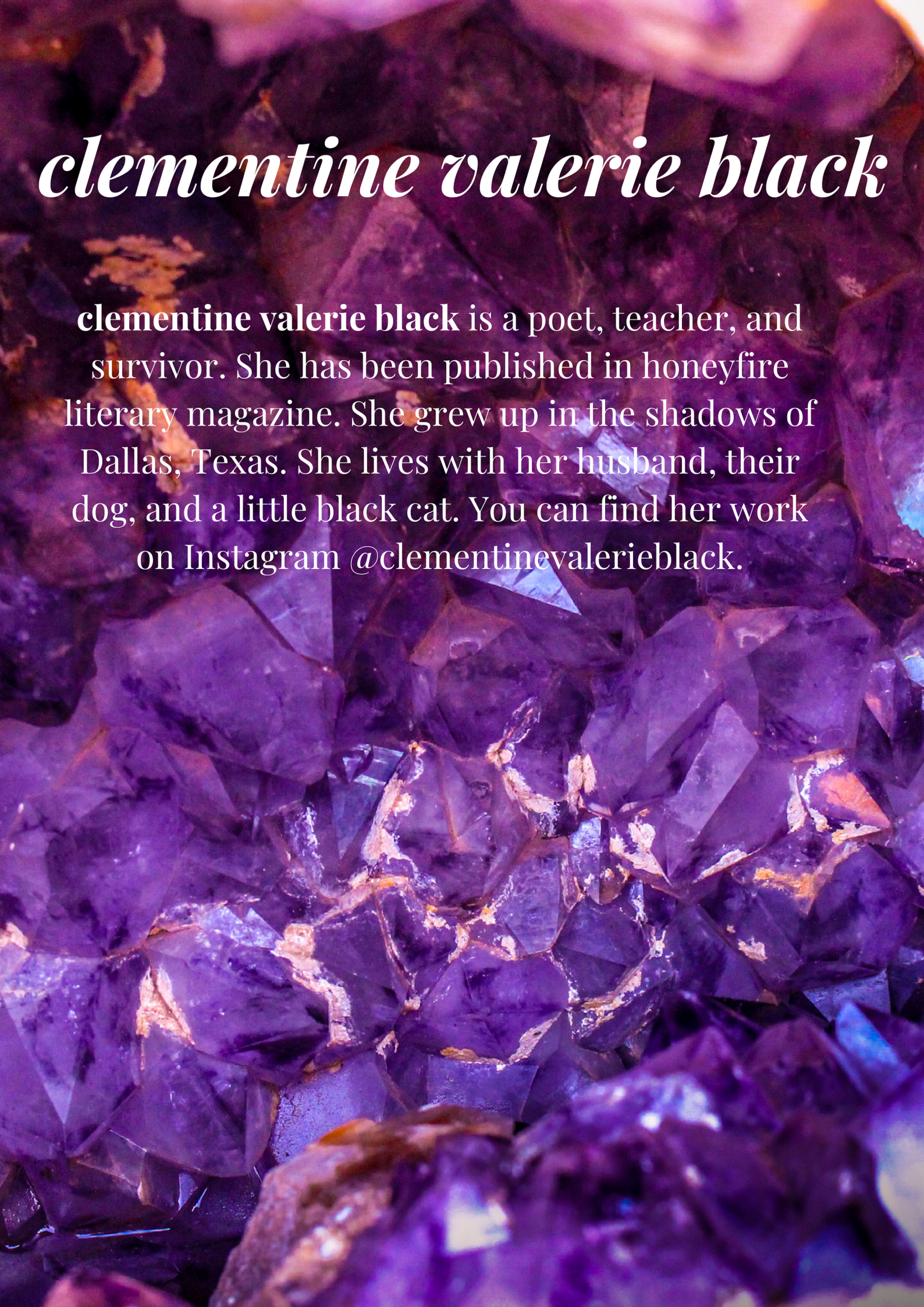
Of taking off - Hermes, winged feet,
Zephyr gathering at my ankles
and never

coming back.

Leaving.
Echoing.
Exiting.

Listening for the collapse of limbo.

The destruction of life
and the howls of pain, still etched
deep into my skin.



clementine valerie black

clementine valerie black is a poet, teacher, and survivor. She has been published in honeyfire literary magazine. She grew up in the shadows of Dallas, Texas. She lives with her husband, their dog, and a little black cat. You can find her work on Instagram @clementinevalerieblack.

uncrossed

i live
tucked like a cigarette
between two stones,
disintegrating between
the shadow of yesterday and
the glare of tomorrow.

i slip
into fool's gold dreams,
pushed past the threshold,
past mortal boundaries.
(the ship is docking,
but the manifest is empty.)

i dip
one toe into the edge
of a shallow grave,
testing the water, blank
and unafraid. tongue
too thick, too listless to pray.

i wait
amber on the riverbank,
bronze soft-sinking into moss,
into summer shade. palms open
for the message that
never came.

come on golden wings,
take me away

Liyona

Liyona is an “average joe” kind of writer who likes to think about ordinary things and then write them down. Ever since she can remember, she has been rhyming words and creating lyric poems. During her college years, she took a more serious bent toward writing and started to post on her blog :The Life and Times of a Quirky Character. Currently, she resides on the East Coast of the United States just north of the country’s capital. Liyona's poetry has been published in Visual Verse, Flora Fiction and Spillwords. You can also find her commenting and collaborating as a Barista at the Go Dog Go Cafe. My Website: https://liyonadancer100.wordpress.com/

The Guide

The desperate finality of
My inner soul
Releasing me to
The great unknown.
I stood between a
Doorway
There the slipping passage
Of time and memories
Surrounded and overwhelmed.
“This way”
He called and
gestured, eyes glowing
A friend for
The lost as they
Seek a new life
.
He asked
For one mark of payment
A gift
And I lifted my face
Lips parted.
He tasted of
Ambrosia
The nourishing sensual
Food
That satisfies
I gasped
As he lead me
To the heaven
I had never known.

The Messenger

In the beginning
When the waters
Moved over the great beyond
How the music from the
Ancient rhymes
Did confuse a
Weary traveler
.
Underneath the created
Stars
Few and far
Reaching across the sky
A messenger flew
To herald the news
Of the morning sun
.
I danced in glory for
A moment
When I realized that
The ever changing beat
Of your heart
Was the way you
Articulated your desire
.
Rounded and
Multifaceted words
And actions
That ultimately
Left me
Breathless
And begging for
More.

Gabriela Marie Milton

Gabriela Marie Milton is an internationally published author and the editor of MasicadoresUSA. Her literary work appeared in various magazines and anthologies. Under the pen name Gabriela M she was awarded 2019 Author of the Year at Spillwords Press (NYC). Her piece *If I say I love you* was nominated for 2020 Spillwords Press Publication of the Year (Poetic). She is the author of *Passions: Love Poems and Other Writings* published in April 2020.You can find her book on Amazon and at BARNES&NOBLE.
Her second poetry collection *Woman: Splendor and Sorrow* will be published by Vita Brevis Press at the end of July 2021. She blogs at https://shortprose.blog/ and you can find her on Instagram @gabriela_marie_milton and Twitter @shortprose1.

Who Was He?

I met him in the mist of that unusual summer when mama looked more beautiful than ever, and pears grew as big as squashes. Their golden and juicy fragrance hung on my lips even after the touches of the evening wind were gone.

He stood by the fence in his winged hat and his weird sandals, a tricky smile on his face, and a lyre on his hand. I knew whose symbols those were, so I laughed. I figured out he was trying to drag me into some weird play.

When he spoke, his voice pierced my entire body. I felt like a butterfly, pinned, and labeled, and then fixed with a nail on the bottom of an insect box.

“We are getting married tonight.”

Something in his voice denoted an unmistakable hunger to overcome mortality. Who was he?

His pale fingers touched the chords of the lyre. The sky started to rain the fragrance of the pears and white petals on us. One of them fell on my left shoulder. When I tried to touch it, it vanished.

He moved toward me and pressed his lips on mine. My eyes closed. I shivered. I felt dragged into a deceptive rootlessness. I could not remember where I was. When I opened my eyes, he was gone.

Under the olive tree on the wooden table there was a basket filled with pears. I touched one of them. It was made of paper. By the basket someone inscribed the words: “That which is above is from that which is below, and that which is below is from that which is above, working the miracles of one.”

I froze. Those were words attributed to Hermes Trismegistus.

Who was he and where did he go?

Sweet Love

In the blue nights of our love, we sprinkled Gnosticism and myths all over the stars. At midnight, under the whispers of a pale moon, we used to watch Hermes, the god of the spoken word, the quintessence of that which is hermaphrodite, crossing our lawn in the direction of the fountain. Putting roses in my hair you told me he was taking the souls of the dead to the lower worlds.

I miss you. Left with your “On Hermes” unfinished treatise, I try to make sense of everything. Your written words make me feel like a somnambule who climbs up and down marble stairs, whose existence cannot be empirically verified. If you would have left me with a bunch of paintings, I would have been able to rejoice. That which comes to my eye is that which it is. But no, you had to write. Words are deceiving. They envelop me with their chthonian and celestial sides – aren’t those the two sides of Hermes? - until I start spinning like a restored pony in the famous C.W. Parker Carousel.

I finished my coffee. The gods did not make us. We made them. We projected all virtues and vices onto them. We needed some mythical creatures to be responsible for our thoughts and actions. The thieves and the liars needed their own god too. They got it. Hermes protects them.

My sweet, sweet love, what am I supposed to do now? I look outside the window. The intense green of the grass burns my retina. I can still see you crossing the lawn in the direction of the fountain. I take off my silk nightgown and I put on the one with French knotted roses you used to like so much. I am barefoot. Scents of tears and love dwell in my unbraided hair.

Are you gone, or are you going to come back to take my soul to the lower worlds?
My sweet, sweet love…

Interview with Gabriela Marie Milton

We would love for you to introduce yourself and share when you began writing and why you decided to share your work with others.

I may have scribbled some poetry in high school, but basically, I started writing in the period between my undergraduate studies and my graduate ones. Now, I write poetry and short prose under the name Gabriela Marie Milton. Three or four years ago, I published my first poems under Gabriela M. Today, my standard introduction is: Hello My Dear Readers, I am Gabriela Marie Milton, 2019 Author of the Year at Spillwords Press NYC, author of Passions: Love Poems and Other Writings, editor of MasticadoresUSA, and author of the forthcoming collection of poems and poetic prose entitled Woman: Splendor and Sorrow to be published by Vita Brevis Press this summer. My favorite poet is Arthur Rimbaud. My all-time favorite novelist is Lawrence Durrell. My heart trembles at Salvador Dali's surrealism, and it is stolen by Chopin every other week. To enchant some readers who may find such an introduction boring, here is a little more about me: I love Italian food, narrow cobbled streets, cats, and oceans. My favorite color is mauve. I was born in Europe, and I live in the USA.

Honestly, initially it was not my decision to share my work, as intriguing as it may sound. Yet, things happened. I will leave it at that.

How would you describe your collection, Passions: Love Poems and Other Writings, to those new to your work?

To me the collective unconscious– as conceptualized by Jung – represents another level of existence that we, as humans, share. In Passions I tried to penetrate that level and bring out perhaps its most important element: memories.

Passions is a book of vivid and lush images brought to light using symbolist, surrealist, and romantic techniques. It is a book for everyone. It is a call to immortality. It is a journey through the corridors of our collective unconscious. I wrote Passions - like all my other writings – almost in a trance. Passions is that which I feel, not necessarily that which I know.

Some pieces included in Passions are influenced by Gnosticism with which I first became acquainted by reading Umberto Eco, Jorge Luis Borges, Lawrence Durrell, and others.

To wrap it up, Passions is what Christina Schwarz, the author of the New York Times Bestseller "Drowning Ruth," described as "a fantastic world ripe with emotion." I am deeply grateful to her for that description.

Your prose pieces often have dominant themes of love and heartache, what draws you to romantic storytelling?

Mama used to say that I am a romantic story. I, the subject, am the same with the object (i.e. my story). The object does not exist independent from me.

Something similar to the concept of endopathy anticipated by Dante: "he who would paint a figure, if he cannot become that figure, cannot portray it." Yet, when mama said what she said she was not thinking of Dante. She was thinking of Kant's transcendental idealism. She made me read Kant when I was in high school. I did it with packs of ice on my head. On every page there were about 10 to15 words that I did not understand. It was an interesting experience to say the least.

What are your inspirations? Are they musical, literary, ekphrastic, or all three?

Something more than all three together: the plan of the unconscious. From there my inspiration flows like a river. In there, I find light and darkness, the whole and its parts, sonorous images with their unmistakable language, memories of the future and of the past, the sound of germinating wheat, the entire world.

You recently announced your next collection is coming soon, can you give us a synopsis and explain the impact you hope this collection will have on your readers?

Woman: Splendor and Sorrow, is a collection of love poems and poetic prose. I hope my readers will be interested in this collection. It will be published by Vita Brevis Press at the end of July. Here is part of what I wrote in the dedication in an attempt to describe my own book:

My Dear Readers,

My favorite novelist, Lawrence Durrell, once asked:
"Who invented the human heart, I wonder? Tell me, and then show me the place where he was hanged."

If you read this book, you will find that place. Yet make no mistake. That is not a sad place. In the pages you are about to read, I resurrect the one who invented the human heart. The splendors of candlelight and roses and the taste of gingerbread dwell in this book. Partake in them.

The core of this book is love. Yet you will also find in it philosophical thoughts on literature, on winning and losing, on hate, on feminism, and on life in general.

My dear reader, from wherever you are in this world, walk with me on the beautiful path of the human heart. I promise you will not regret doing so. On this road you will find love and the symbols that define us as humans.

Issue II draws upon Hermes from the Olympic pantheon, why do you think we continue to reinvent and rejuvenate myths and stories of old? Do you have a particular myth/story you remember fondly?

Oh, myths, none of our civilizations have ever survived without them. We all have a mythical part so to speak. Myths express ontological and moral ideas. Their splendid supernaturality reflects our desire to transcend the materiality of the world, to find our beginnings, and to anticipate the future. Codes, symbols. Their faces may change in time, but they never become old.

I have many stories I remember fondly. However, in myths, as well as in most major religions, there is one thing that fascinates me the most: the fall. Something goes wrong with our world because somebody errs. In most cases that somebody is a woman. Certain Gnostics believe that our material world is not the creation of the real God. The world is the creation of the demiurge (a lesser God) who came into being because of Sophia's fall.

I remember when I first visited Santorini. One early morning, caught between its breathtaking views and the blue of the Mediterranean, I realized that nobody could have ever lived in Greece without concocting myths. The beauty of that place refuses itself to rationality. One needs an entire mythology to absorb it.

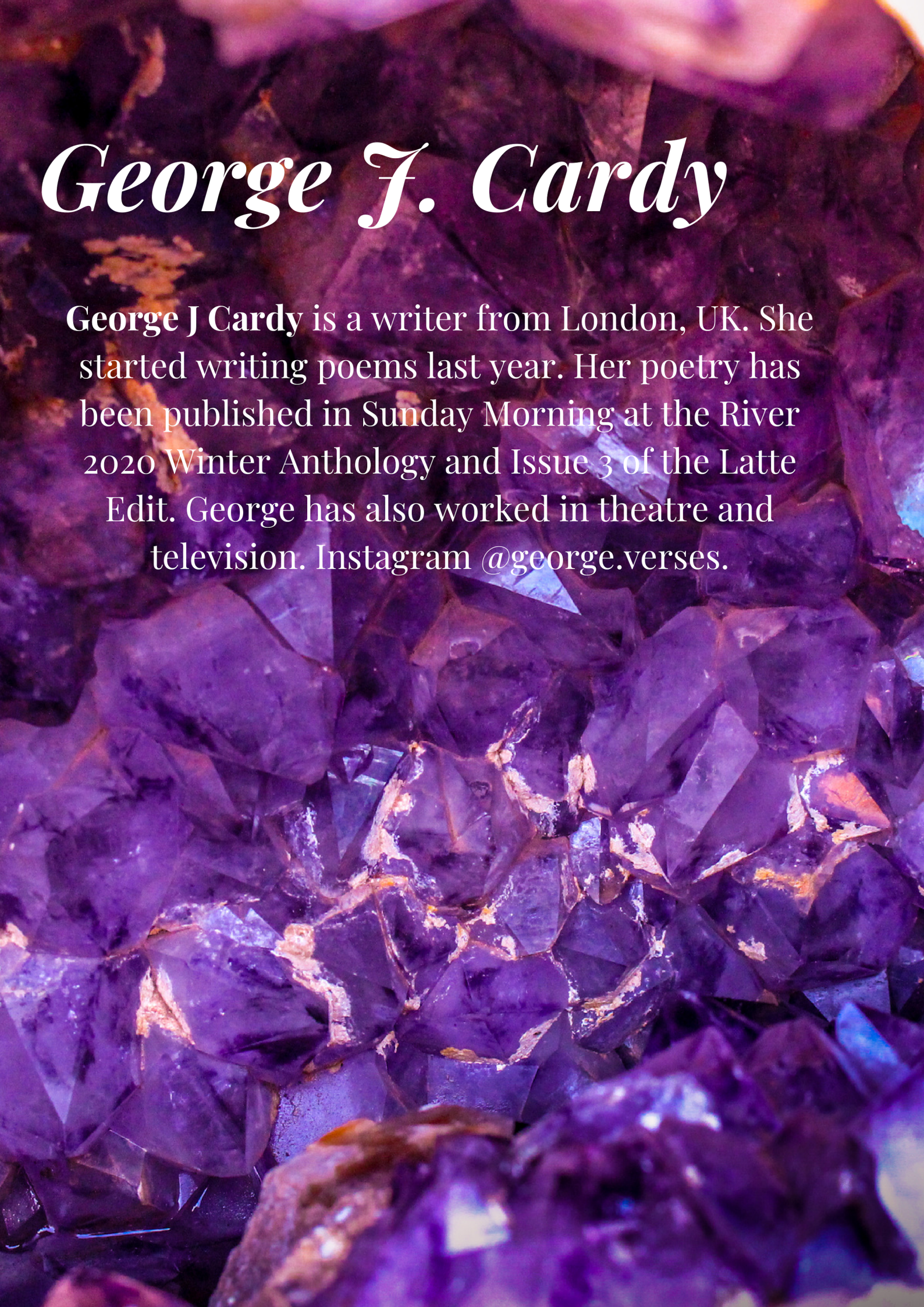
Would you describe yourself as multifaceted like Hermes? Could you use three words to describe yourself?

Hermes is a fascinating figure. He is the messenger of Gods. Some see him as the Logos itself. However, Hermes is also the god of thieves and liars. The Greeks did not leave one single human trait without a God. You must hand it to them.

To answer your question, I do not think of myself as multifaceted. Three words to describe myself: I am mystery. Why? Because I am like anyone else. We all have a sight that we do not understand. Perhaps we are not supposed to.

You are a long time, and very appreciated, supporter of FVR and other online platforms, what do you feel the online community has brought to the traditional world of writing and publishing?

The online community allows people to express their talents without having to go through more cumbersome conventional processes. It gives voice to the poor, and to the misunderstood. It gives voice to those who are unconventional. It allows us to dwell in a multiplicity of talents. It forces us to rediscover ourselves.



George J. Cardy

George J Cardy is a writer from London, UK. She started writing poems last year. Her poetry has been published in Sunday Morning at the River 2020 Winter Anthology and Issue 3 of the Latte Edit. George has also worked in theatre and television. Instagram @george.verses.

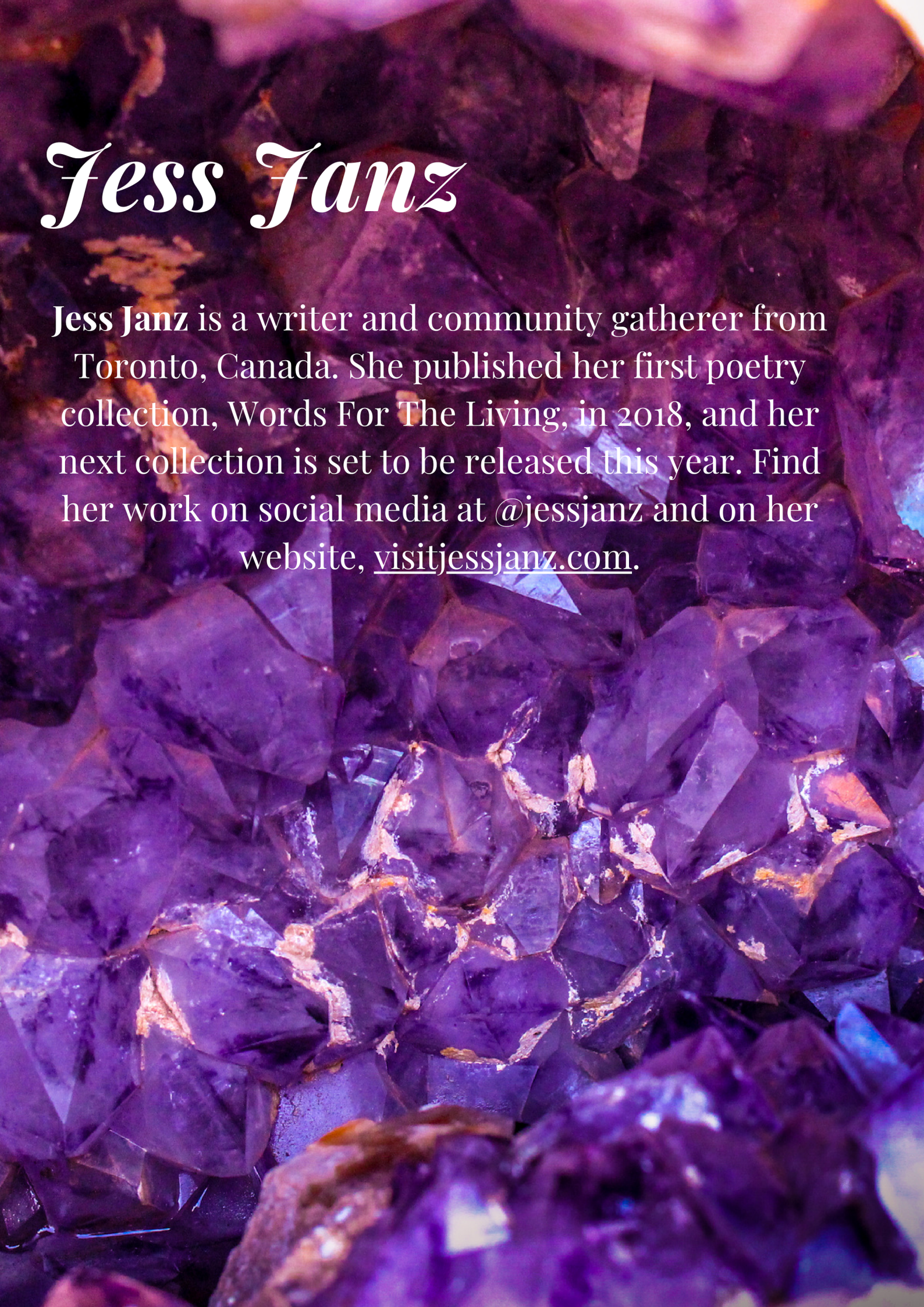
Semi-Divine Love

You wooed me in your usual fashion:
Cooked fish, smooth lies, burnt incense.
Disguised as a goat (but for your
Signature satchel and sandals)
And crowing like a rooster,
You strummed your tortoiseshell guitar.

Your origin story read like
Any other hard-luck history,
Rape; rapid maturation; cattle theft;
An angry, absent father - and then, of course -
Discovery of the aforementioned guitar.

Your mother's beautiful black-eyed son,
You married
A goddess of persuasion, but
She wasn't enough.

Still, you say, we're a lot alike,
You and I,
Both hustlers; wandering eyed and
Fickle as the wind; as light,
In all its phantasmagorical shades; as Fate.
You might be divine
(at least under these just right-
coloured lights,
Against these mirrors
Arranged at all your best angles)
But I think you know what it feels to be
Someone else's inevitable conclusion,
Just another traveller;
A Poet, Thief, a human.



Jess Janz

Jess Janz is a writer and community gatherer from Toronto, Canada. She published her first poetry collection, Words For The Living, in 2018, and her next collection is set to be released this year. Find her work on social media at @jessjanz and on her website, visitjessjanz.com.

Nothing, I Just Like You

I like the things we talk about at the end of the day, when I'm washing my face and you sit on the lip of the tub and we recount the people we saw and everything we felt, I like how you lean against things, I like

when we're in the same room reading, I like the way you reach for my leg, I like when you notice my glass is getting empty and you fill it with whiskey, I like all the half-started sentences and we're off down another rabbit hole, I like when your eyes sweep over me and I get jelly knees, I like

when it's Tuesday, I like hearing you say my name, I like the way you spin about when you're getting ready to leave the apartment, I like standing in line at the coffee shop and getting tongue-tied at the name of the new roast, I like not knowing where it's going (I like knowing where it's going). I like

summer, I like biking beside you, I like the meticulous way you chop fruit, I like the way you hand me things, I like the way nothing feels like something because it's a nothing that happens with you.

All That To Say

All that to say, this is my favourite mug in the house / all that to say, I know every word to Total Eclipse Of The Heart / all that to say, I am still uncomfortable in this body / all that to say, the man at the grocery store in his four coats chose his oranges with such delicacy and care that it made me wonder if I've ever cared about anything in my entire life / all that to say, I haven't written music in a very long time / all that to say, I often wonder how many people think I'm a terrible friend / all that to say, I don't know if I will ever recover from knowing him / all that to say, I have lived in many different apartments / all that to say, I lost the receipt so the lamp is staying / all that to say, I always have a hard time on this day / all that to say, I avoid that part of College Street / all that to say, I know what a broken heart feels like / all that to say, I am trying to learn how to say how I feel -

All that to say, sorry but I am running late.

The Entire Table

Returning to myself looked like this:
I stopped pretending I was satisfied
with the provisional apple a day
placed in my hands. I stopped pretending
that being sensible made me a more
pleasant woman - wait. More like this:
I stopped pretending that becoming a
pleasant woman was what I was striving to be.
I stopped buying in to the story
that being full of desire
meant I was full of lack.
I want the whole feast, the entire table.
I want to live from the wildness that clamors in my chest.
I want to burn down the house that was built for me.
I want to say exactly what I mean.
I want it all, I want it fully, I want more.
I want.
I want.
I want.

Jaya Avendel

Jaya Avendel is a word witch from the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. Her writing is an exploration of the lives she has lived and the life she lives. With work published at Free Verse Revolution, Visual Verse, and MookyChick, among others, and included in two anthologies from Indie Blu(e) publishing, she writes and dreams at ninchronicles.com.

Under the Disco Lights

You will find me
Grinding the devil to salt powder
Under my tapping feet
Distilling him down to his empty essence
I am no lover of gods and
I fear not his blood drop eyes
Or cackle.

Striptease under fairy lights with
Some heated hair for comfort and
Some wine in an invisibly cracked glass
For drink because I am your demon and
You will find me
Grinding the devil to salt powder
Under my tapping foot
Before I take off the other glass shoe and
Let you be the soul on my lips.

Postage Due

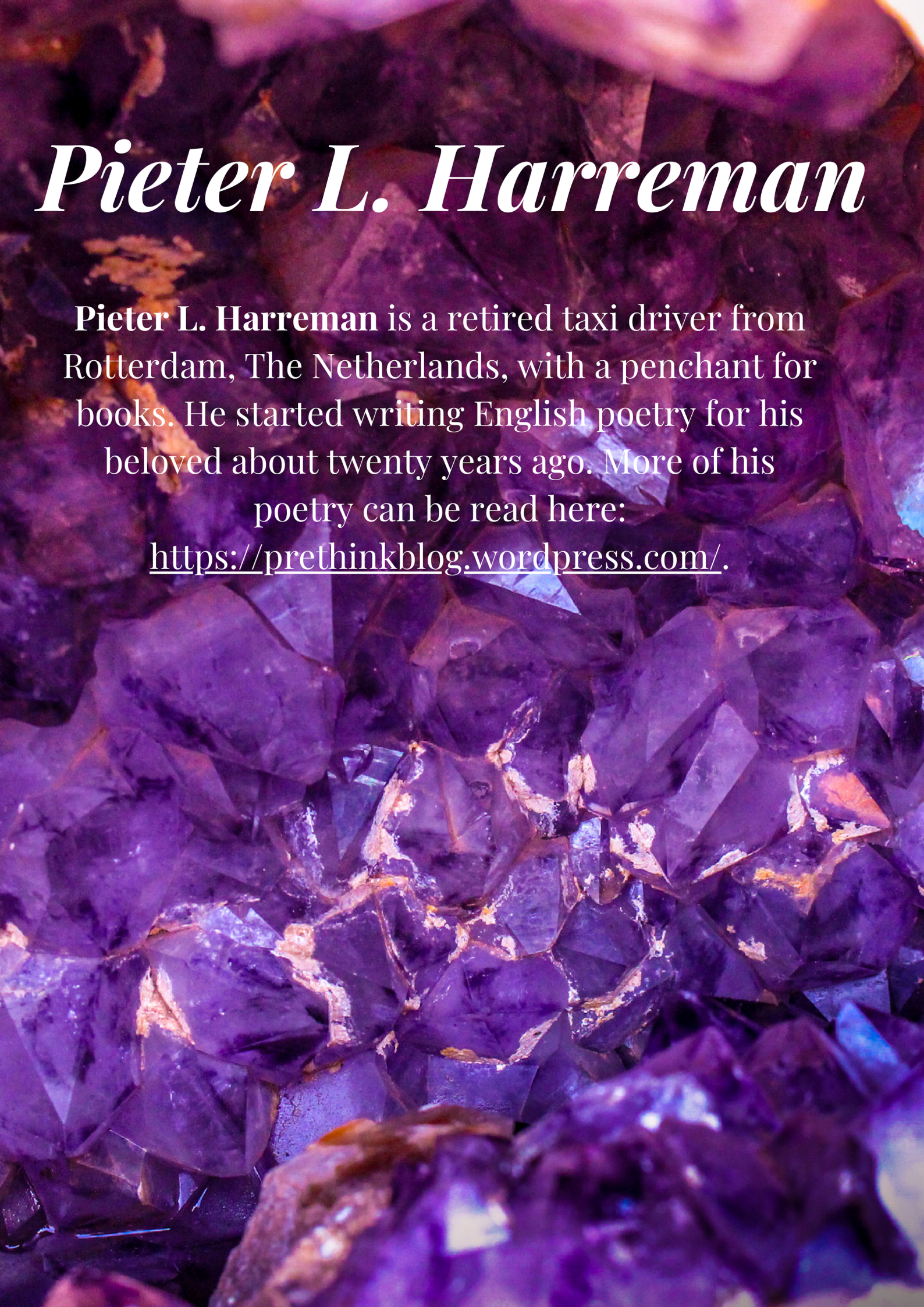
Hermes wrapped his pulsing arms
Around my nine-inch waist and said,
“I love you.”

These three words sting my heart
More than my eyes and the
Strong presence behind me comforts
With its scent of rose and laurel
Distilled down in a
Golden garden.

I lean back into his embrace
Kindly shoulder and whispers of
Being forever in his hair.

Hermes wrapped his pulsing arms
Around my nine-inch waist and said,
“I love you.”

Then he was gone
Having delivered his message
Brought from beyond the grave.
I took one away from his list and
Added one more but it will be
One thousand and one nights before he
Delivers my message to my dead lover’s door.



Pieter L. Harreman

Pieter L. Harreman is a retired taxi driver from Rotterdam, The Netherlands, with a penchant for books. He started writing English poetry for his beloved about twenty years ago. More of his poetry can be read here: https://prethinkblog.wordpress.com/.

Iseult

That homoeopathic time,
before I saw you,
was heavily diluted
with nothing.

Sailing over the forgotten sea,
dotted with small islands of remembrance,
towards an unknown destination,
awaited with dull, painless patience.

Inevitably I lost some things along the way
and so did you, apparently.

But:

You severed my
Testudo-like
outlook on life,
scattered my
burrowing existence
in several directions
through intricate corridors.

My outer shell
was underground
intent on misleading
any prying predator,
but you broke the ground
above my myopic eyes:
a brilliant sky is visible.

Cimetière Du Père-Lachaise

When we walked the city of the dead,
out in the wind and pouring rain
over the glistening cobblestones that led
to the houses which are the eminent domain
of all who went before us and their remains.

We gathered from the silence,
a sense of living in defiance,
just outside the pain of living
you can believe in anything.

Funeral

After the windy, empty spaces
of the remote funeral parlour
filled with the grieving races
gathered from everywhere.

I come to you empty handed
a memory grumbling inside
I made landfall again
on the shores of your flesh.

Nick Reeves

Nick Reeves is a writer of poetry, to-do lists and short, dark fiction with an MA in Creative Writing from Bath Spa University. He has been published by Experiments In Fiction and scratches away at his debut novel, When Bowie Had English Teeth. He rents an attic in Northumberland and is fond of taking photos of singular gloves found on the street. Find out more at Nick Reeves.blog and on Instagram @NickNick _Severe.

The Bitter Taste of Almost Breathing

I rested on the handle of my spade and smoked.
I witnessed a congregation of privet,
solemn hemmed and so cuffed with berries
that even the herring birds, oddly black against the cloud,
eschewed with cackles and coughs and with caution;
such is tumbling rubbish on a breeze.

I worked a thread of wet tobacco from my tongue to my lip
and I rolled it into mush between a thumb and finger
(the bitter taste of almost breathing).
my lungs, half filled with Monday morning graveyard
smoke and air. The cackle of the birds in the trees.

Thursday morning, sweeping leaves, resting on my broom.
I rolled and smoked a cigarette and watched the ceremony;
there were no tears that I could hear, just pale and hollow faces.
I breathed the smoke into the air and crushed the stub
underfoot. the coughing of the birds in the trees.

They Tame Tigers Down That Way

It is my habit to keep your letters, on arrival,
unopened on the mantelpiece, among the mementos
and dusty treasure, for sometimes up to a week.
Anticipation being one of life's sweeter pleasures.
Your bold black hand, the seal of tape (security),
the amusing doodles of hairy noses,
the way you address the envelope *Doctor Reeves…*
are all as good as your signature to me.

*

One 3am, unable to sleep, I opened it and read –

Dear Nick
Matt D has died in a Mexican motel.
The rumour mill grinds, as you'd imagine.
Some say murder by a drug cartel.
And some say the hanging man ain't even him.
For good measure, Julia S
suggested
auto erotic
asphyxiation.
However,
the official line is suicide.
It does seem strange
that a fella such as him,
with two daughters
back home in Blighty,
would consider such a thing…

He was always the prince of adventures. His stories arrived on waves. There had been whispers of sombrero'd dealers, mescaline bus rides, dozes in dust bins, jamming pistol barrels with a finger, adobe jail cells, unpaid bar bills, very high jinx and very high cliffs. Perhaps a lover, too. I don't doubt any of this, but who knows? *I've read somewhere that they tame tigers down that way.*

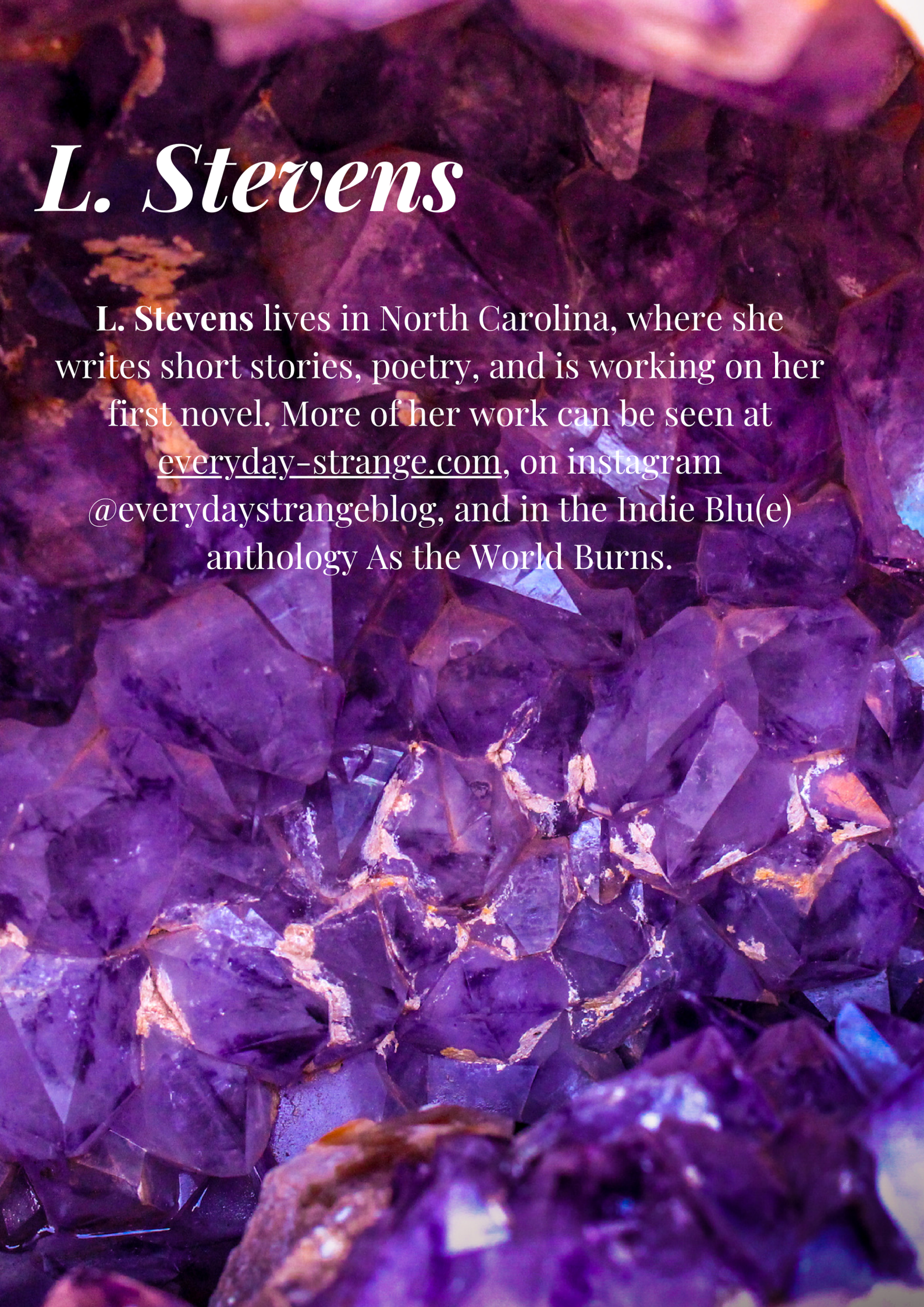
Photocopy Of A Snapshot In The Mirror Frame

I cut Lillian's hair every twelfth week, blowdry it every sixth. It grows. I cut it. I dry it. It has become grey by increments; city pigeon to autumn noon, fading print to cigarette ash. Each accretion of tone slowly highlighting further her pink brittle cheeks, the ancient pools of her eyes. She wears it to her shoulder blades, without layers. She drops a parting in on the left. She favours the front edge, from collarbone to breastbone, softened.

In summer she arrives like the girl she still fancies herself sometimes to be, with it gathered in a bun and stuck with a pencil. In winter she leaves with it beneath a tweed scarf like the Queen. She likes it smoothed out with a large round bristle brush. It takes time, but a soothing rhythm can be found within the arid blast of air and the long drawn down strokes of the brush, the finger twirls of hair in and out of loose knots and, of course, within the trill of her birdlike voice.

She told me more than once that I reminded her of her first lover, a youth named Stewart who, shortly after they had met, plummeted from a 1940s sky in a burning fighter plane somewhere off the coast of Dover in a dogfight. One day she brought in a photocopy of a snapshot of a young and pale airman, his RAF cap sat at a jaunty angle. I felt the heat and the sickening sensation of falling.

I have lost count of the times that confused eyes have been drawn toward this photocopy of a snapshot in the mirror frame, and the question asked, is that you?



L. Stevens

L. Stevens lives in North Carolina, where she writes short stories, poetry, and is working on her first novel. More of her work can be seen at everyday-strange.com, on instagram @everydaystrangeblog, and in the Indie Blu(e) anthology As the World Burns.

Waking On The Banks Of The River Okeanos

flat on my back, eyes open
to sunlight, I stretch
slowly, and rise to sit
on the river's edge

a soft breeze brushes
my cheek, scented with iris
and gladiolus

a golden meadow fans out
from the river bank
edged with shade from mossy boughs
lush and evergreen

a glimmer beckons
from the trees, and I leave sword
and shield to meet it

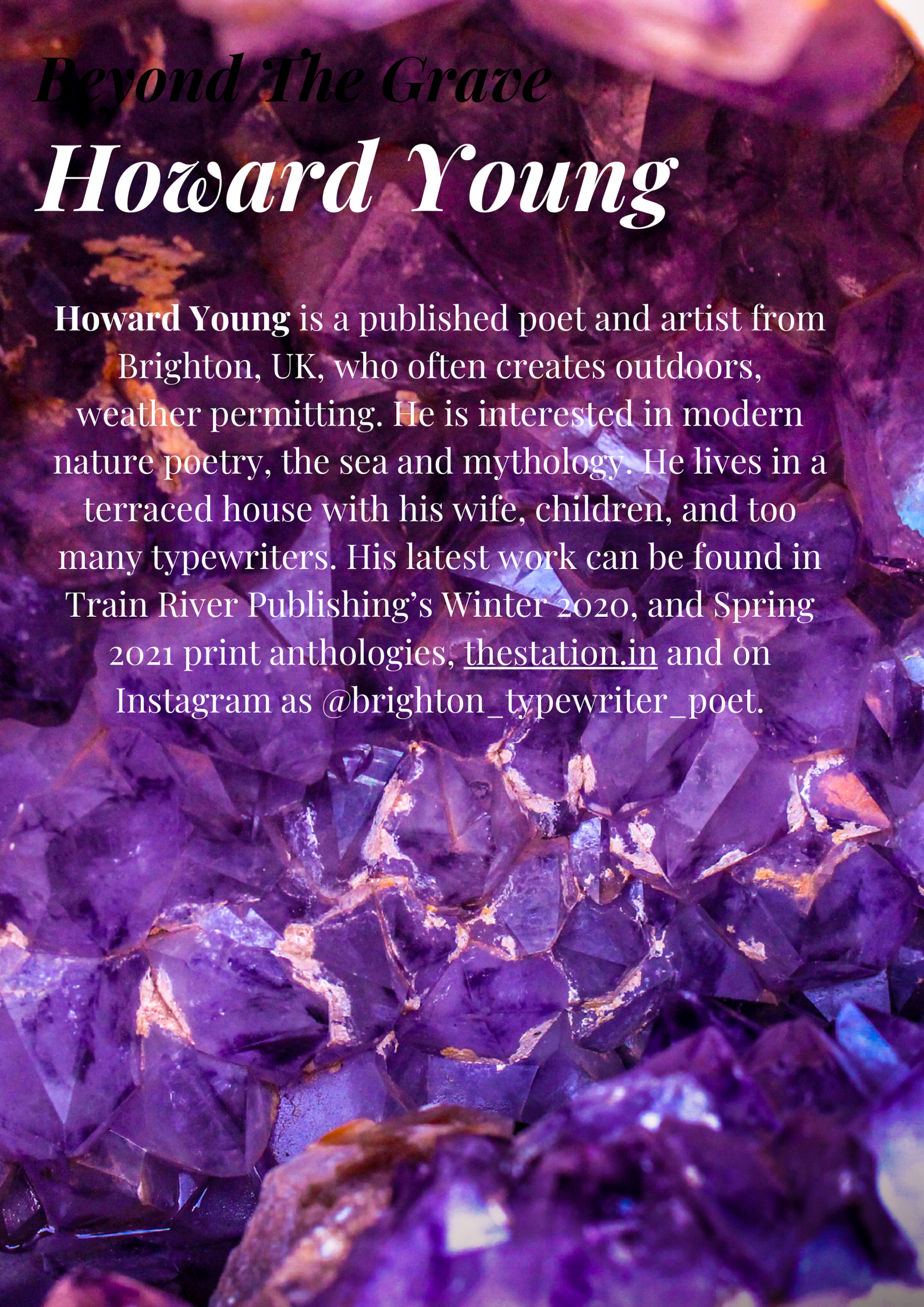
Waking On The Bank Of The River Styx

flat on my back, my eyes open
to darkness, I sit
up quickly, then freeze, feeling
the boat rock and shift

the air is heavy
with wails and groans, the closest
weighted cries of grief

arms reach out of black water
stretch towards the boat
fingers scraping against wood
grips too weak to hold

the riverbank looms
a fiery orange shore
then an endless gloom



Beyond The Grave

Howard Young

Howard Young is a published poet and artist from Brighton, UK, who often creates outdoors, weather permitting. He is interested in modern nature poetry, the sea and mythology. He lives in a terraced house with his wife, children, and too many typewriters. His latest work can be found in Train River Publishing's Winter 2020, and Spring 2021 print anthologies, thestation.in and on Instagram as @brighton_typewriter_poet.

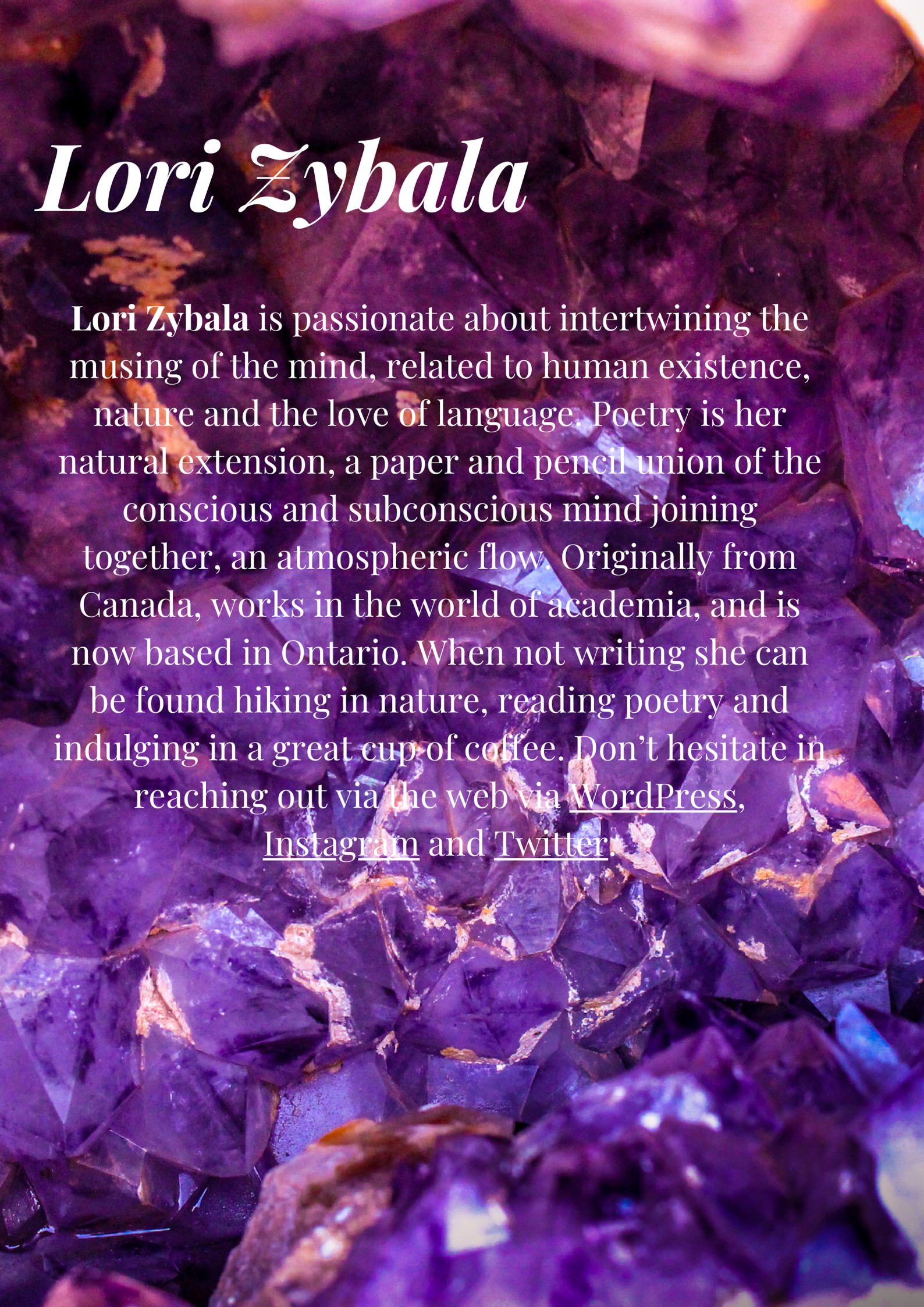
Beyond The Grave

I saw Hermes travelling
beyond the grave
hoarding secrets of the dead
in scrolls wrapped around his heart.

Slivers of paper were pushed among the cracks
pleading to forgive
offering to forget
stealing from the wall
the messenger hunts the night
passing between shades in
deliverance.

I caught Hermes travelling beyond
this old life, sneaking into the next so I
caught him by the ankle
and clipped his wings,
dropping his papers
he cried out in fear and pain-
“I want to read them”, I pleaded
grabbing the scrolls from where they fell.

But like the burning confetti
from a bonfire they ignited
and drifted
in morose disintegration across the
outstretched palms
of my greedy human hands.



Lori Zybala

Lori Zybala is passionate about intertwining the musing of the mind, related to human existence, nature and the love of language. Poetry is her natural extension, a paper and pencil union of the conscious and subconscious mind joining together, an atmospheric flow. Originally from Canada, works in the world of academia, and is now based in Ontario. When not writing she can be found hiking in nature, reading poetry and indulging in a great cup of coffee. Don't hesitate in reaching out via the web via WordPress, Instagram and Twitter.

Black Wings

Still shadows infuse the ceiling
Darkness penetrating - forces reeling

Paranormal aura *transcended*
Heart pounding *rapidly*

Dialect of dark vowels --
Vibrating the surroundings

Blue vein pulses - clenching the brain
Supernatural vision - are you going insane?

Primordial deity
Dark angel of doom
Vortex cavity - circling the room

Black wings quiver -*whispering; "Come and see"*
Tactic deployed to outsmart
Temptation revolving -
Clamps down on your heart

Adversary of the kingdom
Destroyer of good
Power thrives in the darkness
Manipulator of manhood

Opposing force created to collide
Realm battle impending *hold tight*
Steel sword protection
Dark-wing -force fight

Fact? or Fiction?
Dreaming or dead?
Room rotating rapidly
Paralyzed in the ivory bed

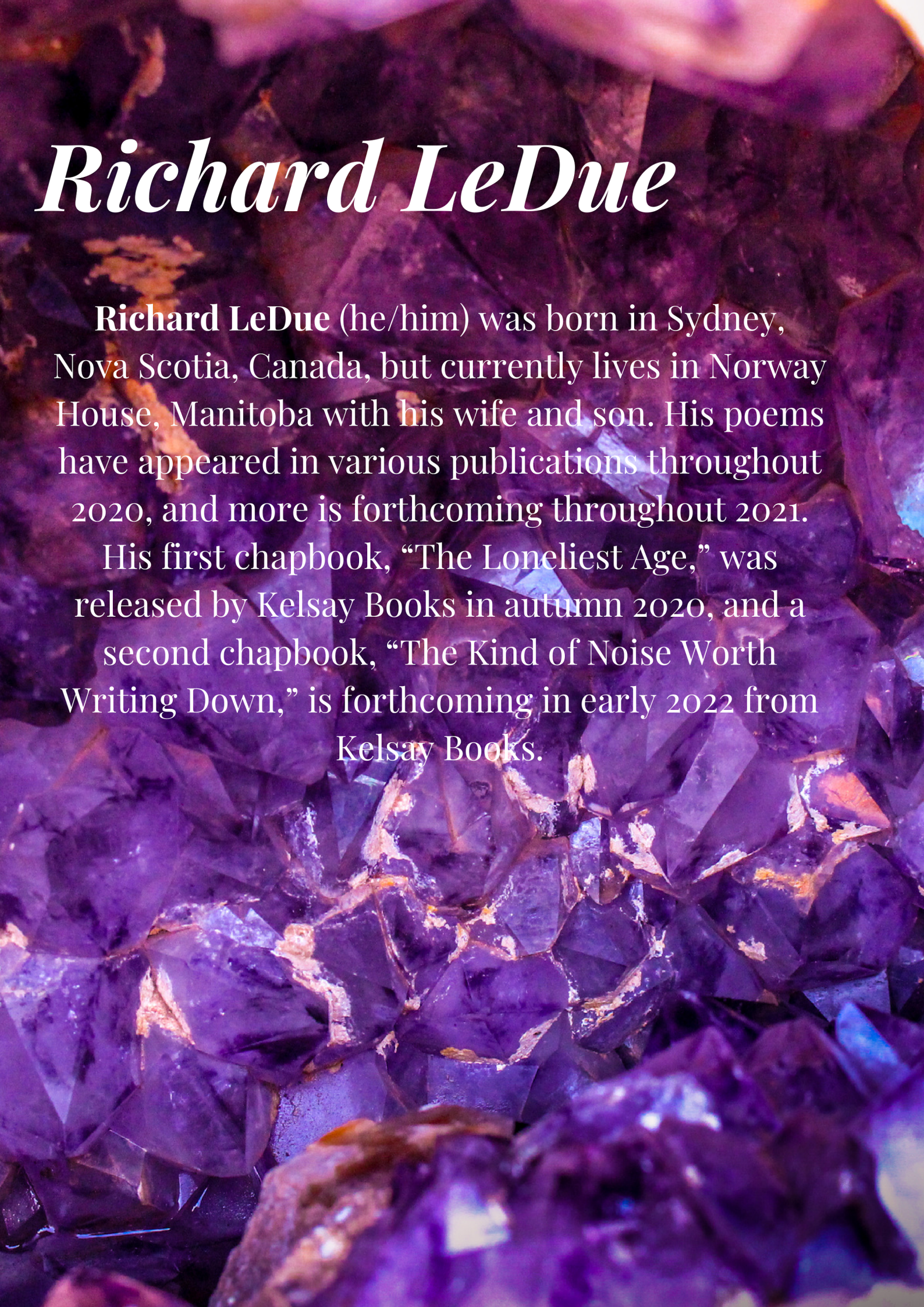
Visions - hallucinations
Mind matter restraints
Darkness into morning-
day into night

Will the mind resurface? - the revelry end?

Suddenly! - illumination infiltrates *blinding*
Deflecting evil's blow
east – south – north - west
Realm protection - altered flow

Circling entity *pivots*
Black wing captured *defeated*

Prophecy eyewitness
The seventh seal rapture
Silently lying in your ivory bed



Richard LeDue

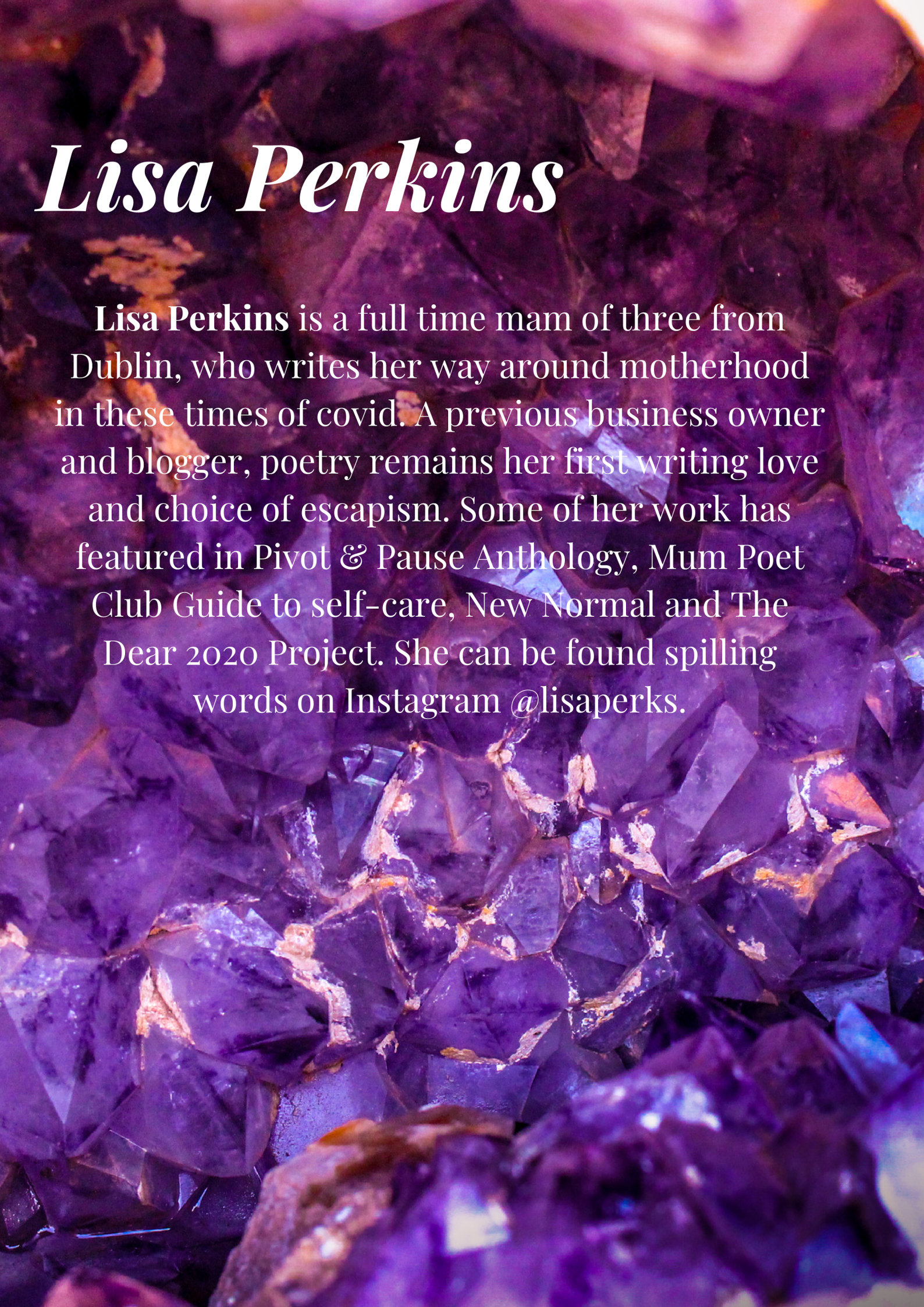
Richard LeDue (he/him) was born in Sydney, Nova Scotia, Canada, but currently lives in Norway House, Manitoba with his wife and son. His poems have appeared in various publications throughout 2020, and more is forthcoming throughout 2021. His first chapbook, “The Loneliest Age,” was released by Kelsay Books in autumn 2020, and a second chapbook, “The Kind of Noise Worth Writing Down,” is forthcoming in early 2022 from Kelsay Books.

I Am No Herald

I have no wings,
nor have I heard the voice of gods,
instructing me like a monotone man
on the phone, placing an order
for a pizza that must arrive in thirty minutes
or it's free- the clouds bring rain,
not sanctuary from mortal appetites,
so I open my mouth,
tasting each drop (dumb enough
with poor aim) that falls
down my throat,
guaranteeing there'll be more words later,
spoken to an empty room
with a high ceiling promising nothing
except an echo giving answers,
bland as communion wafers on those Sundays
when I stared at my feet
and pretended to listen.

Non-Verbal Verbiage

Like a messenger
with a message we couldn't hear,
but then we realized words
were light as feathers on a windy day
and actions carry the most weight,
such as grabbing a hand,
resting your head on a shoulder,
or covering your ears
to hide from a crow,
cawing on a telephone line-
the walls in the doctor's office
when you were diagnosed
white as wings,
soaring where they need to go.



Lisa Perkins

Lisa Perkins is a full time mam of three from Dublin, who writes her way around motherhood in these times of covid. A previous business owner and blogger, poetry remains her first writing love and choice of escapism. Some of her work has featured in Pivot & Pause Anthology, Mum Poet Club Guide to self-care, New Normal and The Dear 2020 Project. She can be found spilling words on Instagram @lisaperks.

The Crossing

A woman's flesh is winding river country
What she leaves rises
Crested iris skin
Tattoo on a blooming lung
Where the stinging fly has been

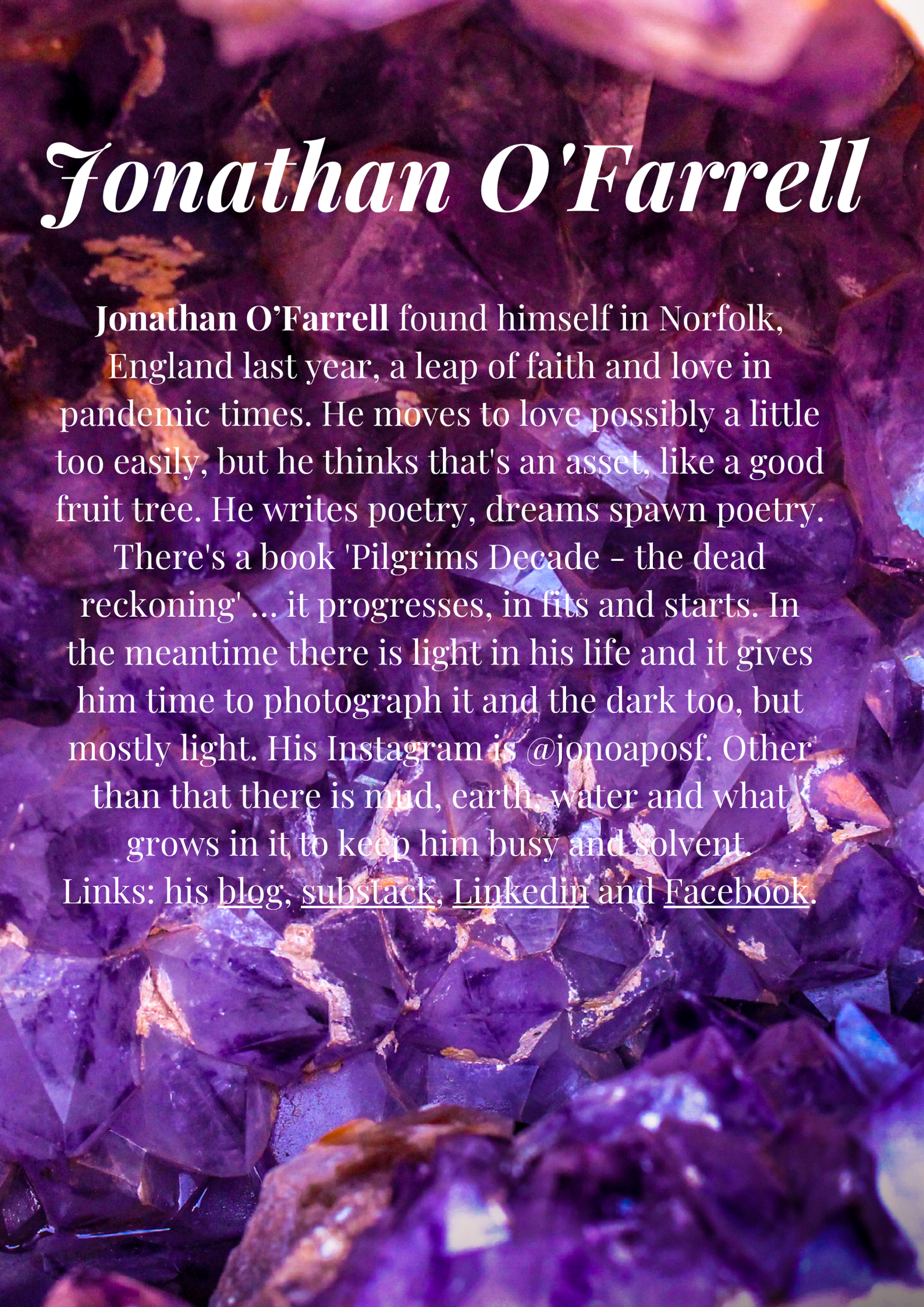
Our drop on the globe predicts
how water circles drain
Why we run with the wash
Fate dripping wrist to sea

Let's not shrink into the pill
we once were for their pain
In a blown glass mouth of rage
Hold it with your breath
as you flood Elysian fields
Exhale at springs top table where
despite the waves we sit
Sweep away the dust mite bones
with a butterfly's left wing
In this garden of Eden's battlefields
we bridge
Grass becomes the blade of choice
to scrape our soles of teeth
Our mothers used these wading feet
to scream
Canaries as contortionists
The bird inside her lonely beak
has eaten

Furious tangle of her tongue
tripping over prayers to meet us

If you're still alive
in the meeting tides
you speak the weight of
water
Release it here

Let's cross sister, nearly there

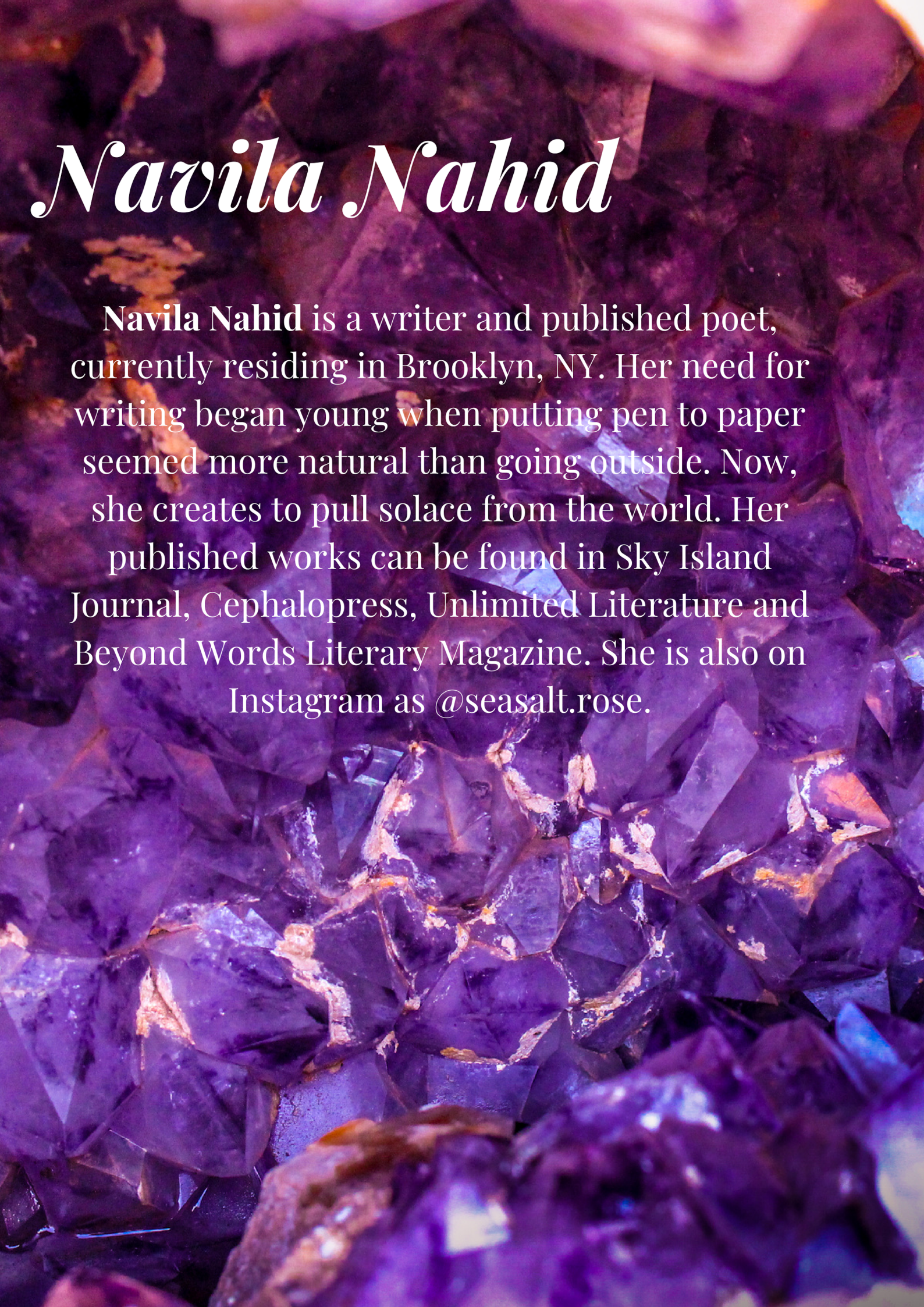


Jonathan O'Farrell

Jonathan O'Farrell found himself in Norfolk, England last year, a leap of faith and love in pandemic times. He moves to love possibly a little too easily, but he thinks that's an asset, like a good fruit tree. He writes poetry, dreams spawn poetry. There's a book 'Pilgrims Decade - the dead reckoning' ... it progresses, in fits and starts. In the meantime there is light in his life and it gives him time to photograph it and the dark too, but mostly light. His Instagram is @jonoaposf. Other than that there is mud, earth, water and what grows in it to keep him busy and solvent.
Links: his blog, substack, Linkedin and Facebook.

Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds

You Are My Wife Now



Navila Nahid

Navila Nahid is a writer and published poet, currently residing in Brooklyn, NY. Her need for writing began young when putting pen to paper seemed more natural than going outside. Now, she creates to pull solace from the world. Her published works can be found in Sky Island Journal, Cephalopress, Unlimited Literature and Beyond Words Literary Magazine. She is also on Instagram as @seasalt.rose.

Splatter

All of a sudden,
they were everywhere
embedded in my tongue
the whites of my eyes
the soft part
of my open palm
at rest,
on top
of the open cavity
that was my chest.

They were everywhere
glittering in darkness
visible as prisms
screaming in sunlight;
the shards
of ravaged menagerie
within crimson splatter
kaleidoscopic—
another massacre
for the crowd
another
h e a r t b r e a k
to keep

Prayers

Prayers unrequited — die
every. single. day.
gathering themselves
into a jump-off
from the tip of brain.

These dead
are indeed visions,
unactualized.
I let them
run through my fingers,
bedded for tides;
un-met desires
throwing color
to the wind,
for always diamonds
entrenched,
never to reach
the cold, cold stars
as home.

Yet — I still
talk to them,
the little deaths.
I watch the burn
of their funerals,
lingering
on hope.

I watch
some birth again
afterbirth Phoenixes
writhing and bloody
squirming and curving
back to light.

And I change
as they rise,
a nugget of gold light
throwing neon
from firm ground,
free.

Trickster

Slipping between worlds,
he straddles
the breach,
travelling all roads—
rootless.

Donned
in chains
of precondition,
the trickster
stands deceived—
a property
of gods.

They distilled him
into noun
of action—
flight.

Jodie Duffy

Jodie Duffy lives in Gloucestershire with her husband and daughter. She is a Chinese Studies graduate and works as a publications manager. Much of her poetry is inspired by motherhood and nature. Her poems can often be found in the notes app of her phone in between her shopping lists. You can read some of them on Instagram @chrysanthemum_poetry.

The Fool

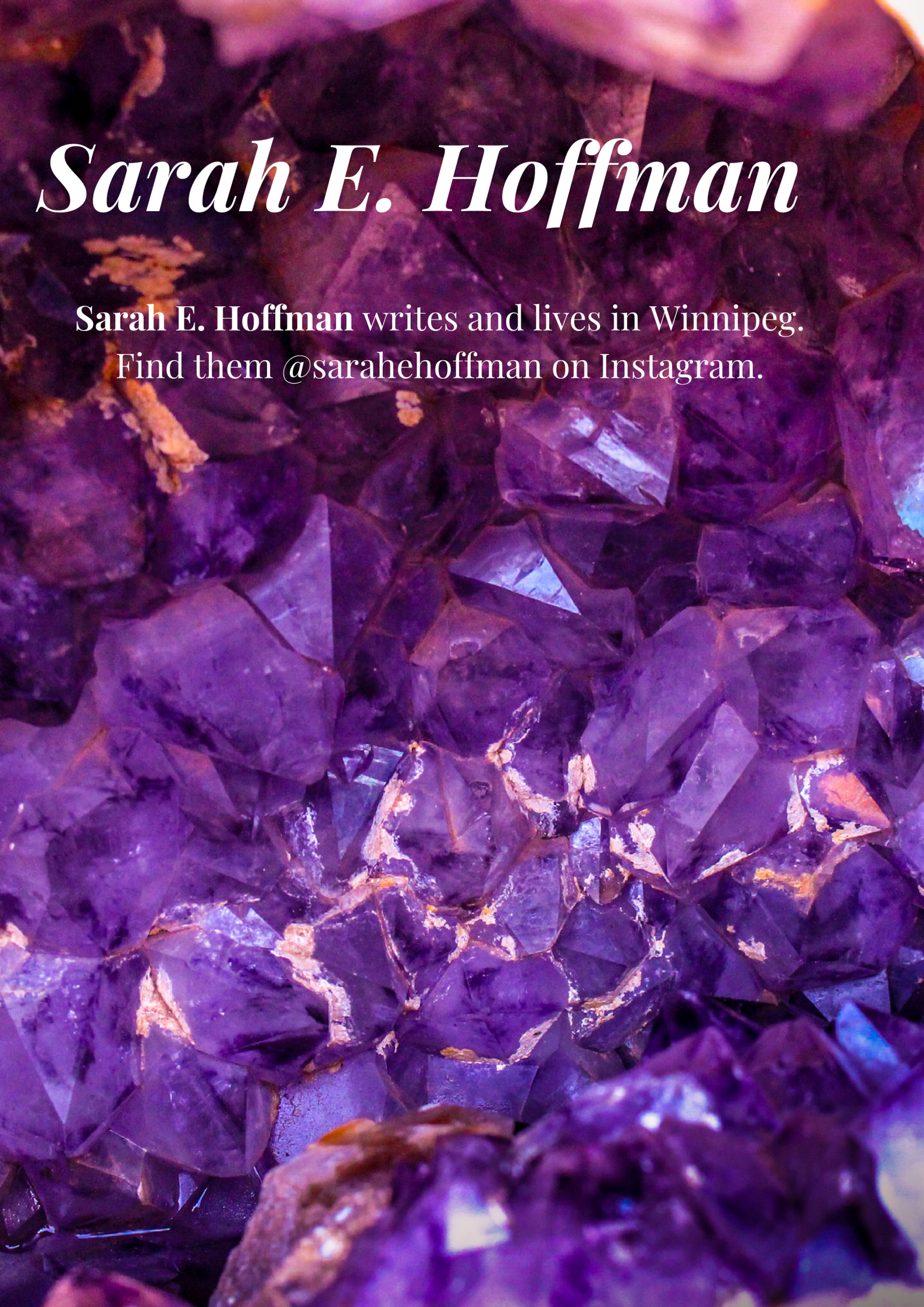
He snatched her words as soon as they were spoken
repackaged them in tacky innuendo
labelled them with clickbait headlines
swung across the classroom
dangled them for laughs

he trimmed her sentences
or he embellished with gleeful relish
as she tried not to blush
he held her intended meaning just out of reach
showed his teeth and goaded her to jump

there was no way she could win
but even worse, his best trick
was making her believe she deserved it
for parading thoughts so revealing
for saying anything at all

that she created the doors
left them unlocked for him to walk through
let him take whatever he needed

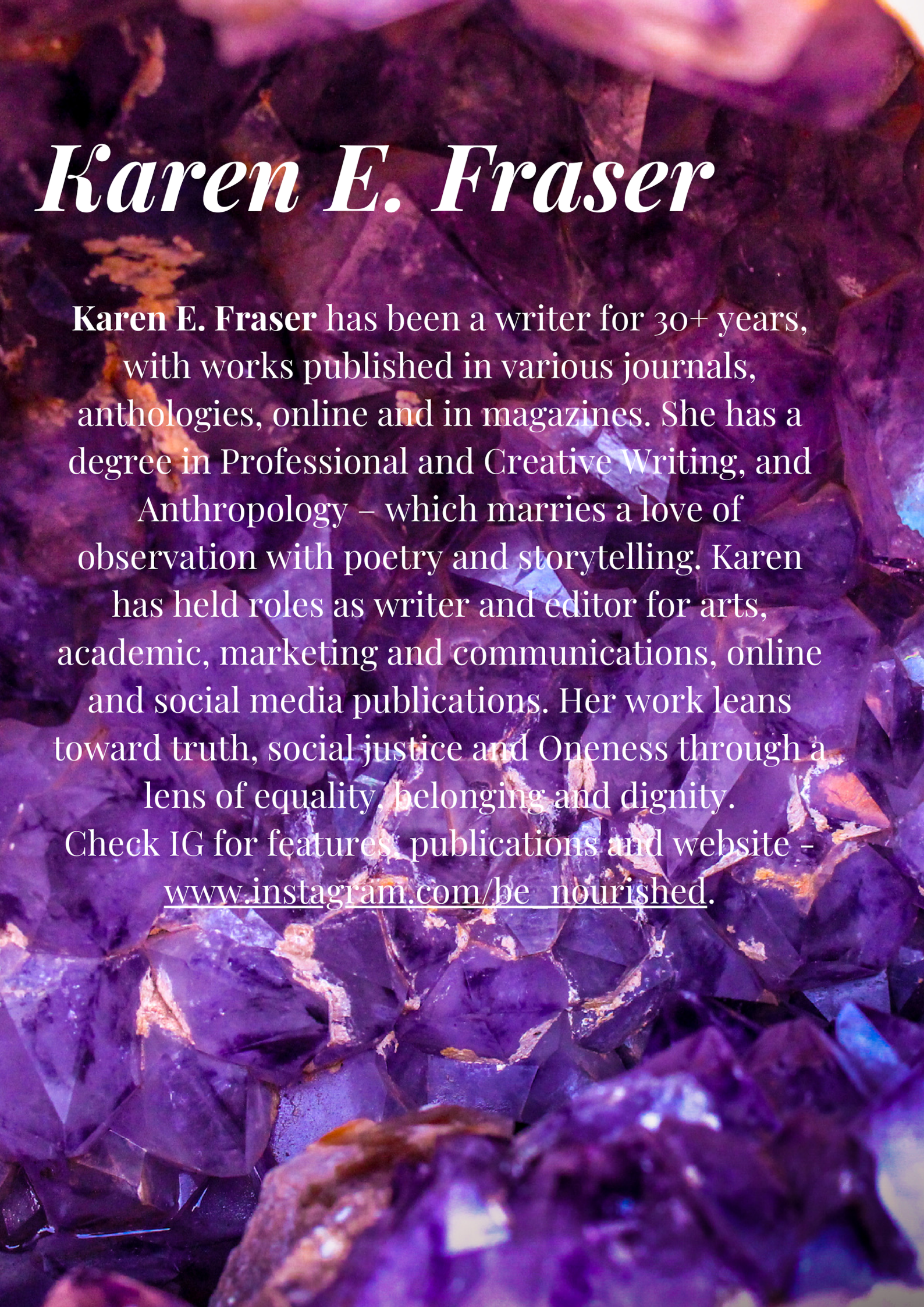
after she slid the bolt across
she wrapped her words in her silence
left them there long after he was gone



Sarah E. Hoffman

Sarah E. Hoffman writes and lives in Winnipeg.
Find them @sarahehoffman on Instagram.

Send a message to the underworld,
Through the bruises on my thigh
Declare your ownership, stolen from the gods,
Through the bruises on my thigh
Walk through me
to-ward divinity
a temporary god.

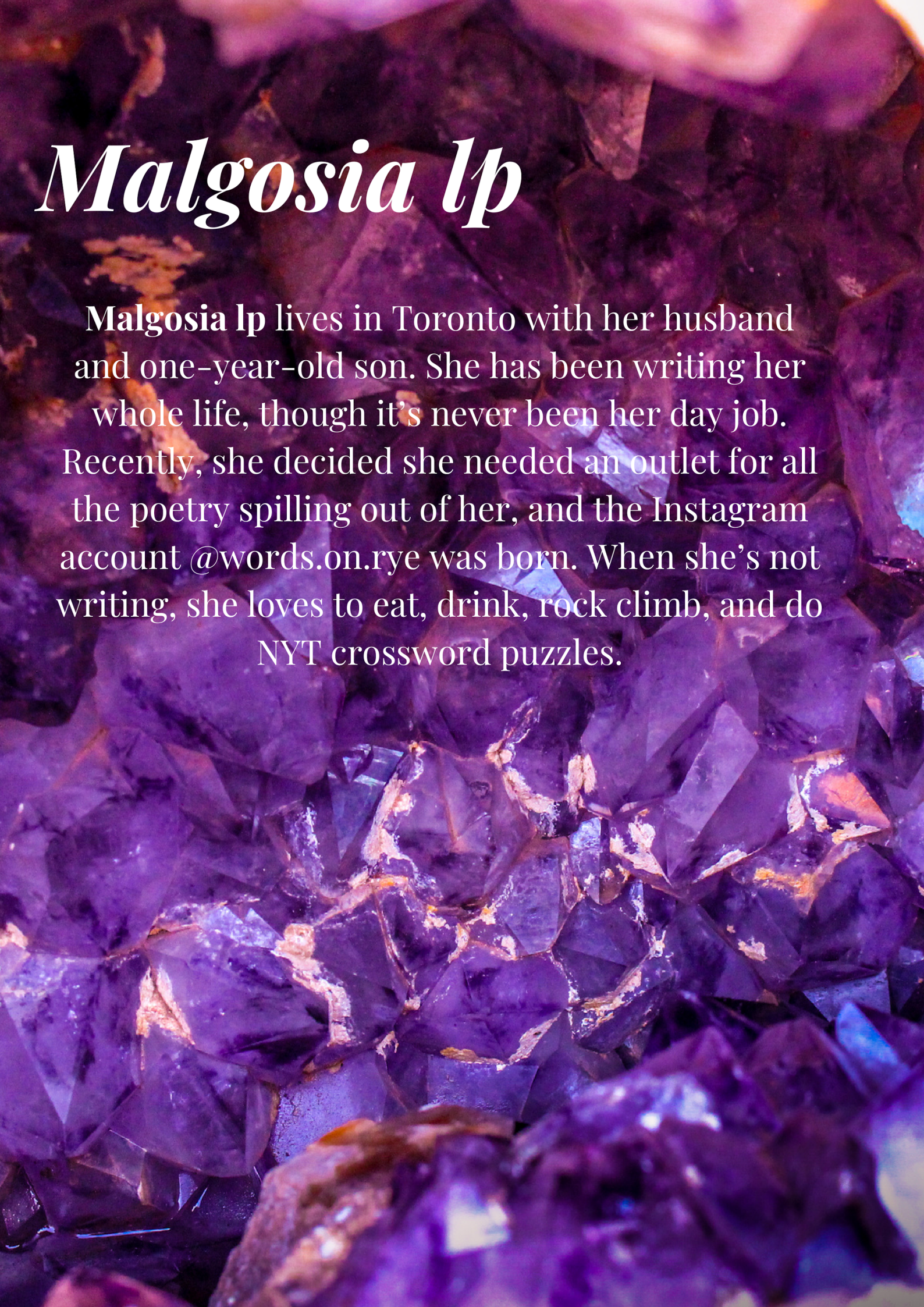


Karen E. Fraser

Karen E. Fraser has been a writer for 30+ years, with works published in various journals, anthologies, online and in magazines. She has a degree in Professional and Creative Writing, and Anthropology – which marries a love of observation with poetry and storytelling. Karen has held roles as writer and editor for arts, academic, marketing and communications, online and social media publications. Her work leans toward truth, social justice and Oneness through a lens of equality, belonging and dignity.
Check IG for features, publications and website - www.instagram.com/be_nourished.

Outback (Daemon)

Reckless, she plunged headfirst
Swimming across raging rivers, boots and all
Gadding off into the bush; a Dingo, dubbed
Styx, bounding behind - both wild about
keeping up. Coveting a rare sense of freedom
that had not been readily afforded to her kind.
She would come to terms with nothing.
Least of all the grand delusion
meant to obscure a woman's worth.
By her sex, ideas of validity
were habitually murdered.
A slow seduction in reverse, slicing
aspirations with shards of ceiling glass
long ago smashed by a shared resistance.
Under breath profanities echoed variously after her.
Backward naysayers, she'd mutter in return.
Them - jostling for notoriety
transforming falsehoods into prophecy -
a stale-bread reflection effortlessly
shattered when faced with her clarity.
They never could rival her depth of determination
or an intellect and wit that carved out bullshit
like a combine-harvester capable of breastfeeding
authenticity into the next generation -
if she chose to – fully in the daemon of her being
living proof that the true value of her resolution
would forever be unassailable.



Malgosia lp

Malgosia lp lives in Toronto with her husband and one-year-old son. She has been writing her whole life, though it's never been her day job. Recently, she decided she needed an outlet for all the poetry spilling out of her, and the Instagram account @words.on.rye was born. When she's not writing, she loves to eat, drink, rock climb, and do NYT crossword puzzles.

Impression Of A Woman On A Summer Morning

Listen to the hiss of my skin as I lay
Down in the lush golden light.
The scales of me cascading,

Coiled and waiting to be charmed –
Silken strands slithering through
Splayed fingers. Tongue flicks across

Unfurled lips, feather soft. Lashes
Fluttering, downy cheek resting
Upon the pillow. See me stretch out,

Pillared, curves belying strength,
The length of me taut. Unhinged,
Yawning jaw, swallowing dawn whole.

Temptress, twisting around a lover,
Enemy, branch of an apple tree.
Harbinger of peace, bathed in original sin.

This is an ekphrastic piece written while looking at a picture of Hermes' staff and inspired by Impression of a Rib by Keith S. Wilson. Depending on where you look, the two snakes on Hermes' staff were either found making love or fighting. Snakes are seen as a symbol of temptation (often like women), but Hermes' staff is known as a symbol of negotiation and peace.

Sarah Bellum Mental

Sarah Bellum Mental is a Write About Now virtual poet and originally from Chicago, Illinois. Now living in Houston she continues being a part of spoken word poetry. She performs poetry live to try to give a home for those who don't have a voice.

Her first and second books are taking pre-orders now: https://sarahbellummental.com/pre-order-swallow-my-sparrow/. She is a 2021 WOWPS and Southern Fried Poetry Indie slam contender.

Disordered Charm

Disorder always had a certain beauty
kaleidoscope dreams
creamsicle sunrises that drip
chaos into a cone
for you to lick
taste what it's like
to release your inhibitions
and let the Joker out to play.

It's a day where your body
exists not by gendered means
where you morph into
whatever capsule suits you
don't be confined by
the rules of men
expand out to what
is to be experienced when
you're the one
to make the world spin.

Call Me God

You call me god because that's what answers
so I train you to see me as more
to become shifting colors
constellations created
in the Big Bang of my voice.

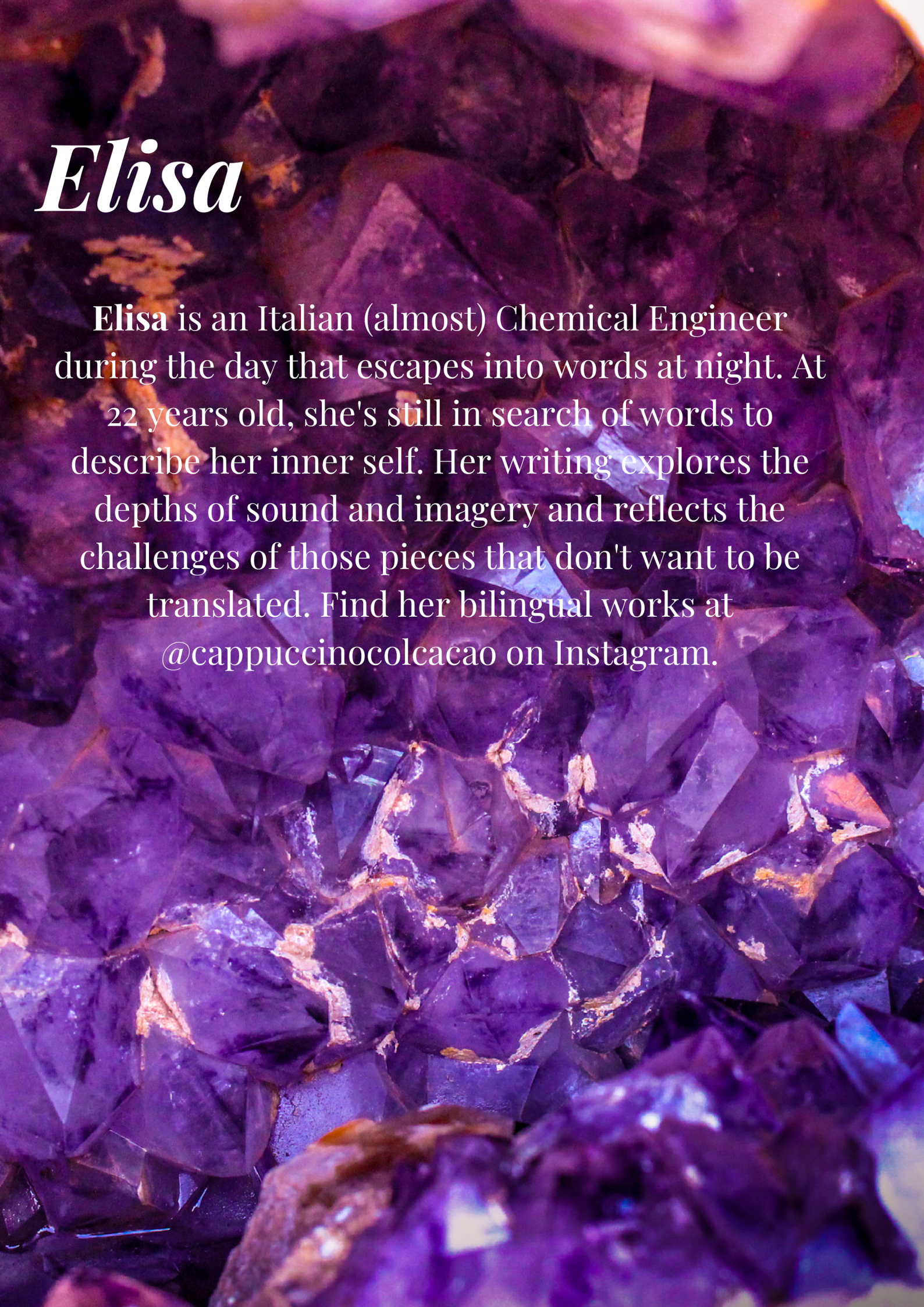
Take the choice of
chaos or order
deliverance or struggle
desire or decadence
a system that keeps you
locked into what you think
you want and what I've always
made the game to be played
by saying my name.

Kim Backalenick Escobar

Kim Backalenick Escobar has been writing poetry for many years, but just recently it has become an all consuming passion. She attended Antioch College and got her degree in something completely unrelated to anything she does now. She has been published in Train River Anthology, Prism Poets anthologies, Poetry 365, Nightingale and Sparrow Magazine, Juste Milieu Zine, and the first issue of Nightshining.

SOS

I never had wings on my shoes.
I was never a messenger
for anybody,
not even the gods.
The only messages I
sent were my own.
Notes in bottles.
Smoke signals.
Freckles marching
across my nose
in Morse code.
I told you;
whatever I think,
whatever I am
is written all over my face.
And still you couldn’t read me,
like I was subversive literature
or a note tucked into the Western Wall.
My message is so simple.
It’s just me.
It was always
just me.



Elisa

Elisa is an Italian (almost) Chemical Engineer during the day that escapes into words at night. At 22 years old, she's still in search of words to describe her inner self. Her writing explores the depths of sound and imagery and reflects the challenges of those pieces that don't want to be translated. Find her bilingual works at @cappuccinocolcacao on Instagram.

Secret-Seeking In The Garden

today I looked through the stems
of the crocus flowers in my backyard—
found three thousand lullabies
& all the breaths I had lost in the cracks

the prismatic light seeping into
my synapses did not scare me off

it said bring this message to
the worlds that cast a shadow,
microcosmos underlying the earth:

embrace the ever-changing,
the orange sprouts
& the sweetness of the rain,
count the needles
you can fit in one palm
& the murmurs
of all your silent nights—
cross the impetuous river
& reunite your pomegranate.

Renwick Berchild

Renwick Berchild is half literary critic, half poet. She writes at *Nothing in Particular Book Review,* and her poems have appeared in *Headline Press, Whimperbang, isacoustics*, Spillwords, Vita Brevis, The Stray Branch, The Machinery India, Lunaris Review, Streetcake Mag,* and other e-zines, anthologies, and journals. She was born and raised on the angry shores of Lake Superior, and now lives in a micro-apartment in Seattle, WA. Find more of her work at www.renwickberchild.com.

Tornadoes

Winds do not carry persons, only their casted dreams. Except
hurricanes, tornadoes, monsoons sometimes transport bodies.

My sisters say water can trap spirits both kind and unseemly.
As a girl, angry at my brothers, I wondered if it were possible
to lure them with my bare legs down to the rivers, and kick them in.
In visions I saw the flows like fire fluming savage around their heads.

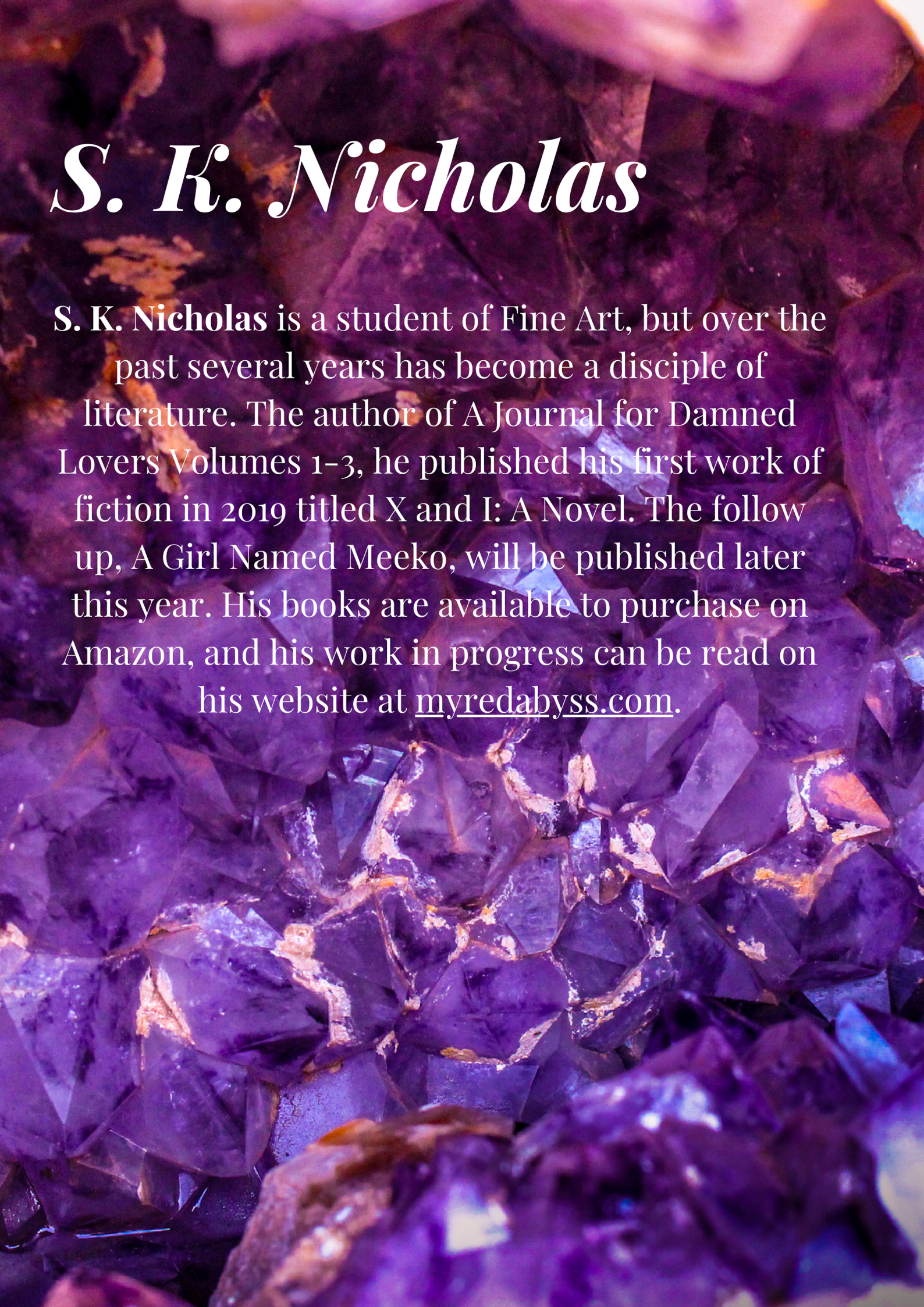
Mari-Morgans make great pets for young women, as do demons
and pigseys and willow trees and night lights that arch and bow.
Though sometimes we lay our forms to sleep and sleep for years,
sometimes we with the wild hair are beheaded and turned to stone,
sometimes we go walking in the wood and are eaten by grey wolves.

As a youth I went outside during storms.
Waved a stick with the lightning
as a meister would handle a baton
and I led an orchestra out the pit and up the chamber walls.

White burning vines clawing down. How much I yearned to be struck dead;
a smoldering heap in the sopped backyard.

Not to die—be dead—but to be hot. Charged like a battery, maybe I could
blow past my limits, slink my cooking mind around the conscious root
and know optimal form, lick a god's thumb, worth the endless time
for a few seconds of sizzling glory.

Kaleidoscope #1



S. K. Nicholas

S. K. Nicholas is a student of Fine Art, but over the past several years has become a disciple of literature. The author of A Journal for Damned Lovers Volumes 1-3, he published his first work of fiction in 2019 titled X and I: A Novel. The follow up, A Girl Named Meeko, will be published later this year. His books are available to purchase on Amazon, and his work in progress can be read on his website at myredabyss.com.

Glass Eyes

There's a bathtub overlooked by a mirror hanging from a nicotine-stained wall. In the watchful glass gazing at my nude body beneath, there are as many eyes as there are hairs on the flesh covering my ribcage. There are more eyes in the cracked medicine cabinet on the wall opposite, peering down at my flaccid cock like a peeping tom. The eyes mainly belong to her. However, some reside in the blistered skulls of the kids I studied with at school. Others are those straight out of a movie. Blade Runner, perhaps, with its oily, neon romance. Bergman's Wild Strawberries, too, with its dance of life that spins in circles upon my furry tongue first thing in the morning in the grip of another hangover. As the steam wraps around my hands, the smoke from my cigarette escapes beneath the bathroom door. My fingers are skeletal; they resemble the veins of dead leaves blowing through the beer garden where we first kissed all those years ago. If I close my eyes, my eyes become her eyes, and I see myself much younger, much lighter, and less grey as we laugh beneath the glow of a youthful moon believing only in the magic of magic as a sea of dead leaves gravitate around our drunken, giddy limbs. I can still taste the beer, and I can still taste her. The two are indivisible. Perhaps this explains why I drink so much. If I squint, the lightbulb above swings like a pendulum—like the clock in the Starbucks where we used to meet after work. Whilst we sipped our fancy coffees, watching the rain slide down the windows as those outside ran for shelter, the clock behind us tick-tocked away, the same way it does today even though so much time has since passed. I know this because I return every winter, wishing to be who I used to be—wishing to see what I used to see. It's my pilgrimage. An attempt to worship what once was and put the past inside the present as a good soul should. She doesn't know. No one knows. Perhaps the eyes do. Those glass eyes. Blinking. Flapping. Like the wings of many bats around the church spire in the village where her dad still lives to this day.

Enrico Barigazzi

Enrico Barigazzi was born in Venice, Italy. He has always had a deep interest for literature since he was a child and this spurred him to pursue classical studies, graduating in political science from the Univeristy of Padua in 2005. He began writing when he was 34 years old, relatively late. He usually writes in both Italian and English. He has published two poetry books in Italian: Il colore delle parole published in 2017 for Irda Edizioni, and Parole scomparse issued in 2019 for Irda Edizioni. Some of his poems have been published by different anthologies –Alidicarta.it, Clubpoetico.it and Scrivere.info-. As far as his work in English is concerned it can be found on the English poetry site Allpoetry.com. His contribution for the magazine Free Verse Revolution is his first publication in an English literary magazine.

A Triangle

I saw a triangle
hanging from a glistening sky
multicoloured lights were mirroring
on its transparent surfaces
i could see through the different views
of the psychedelic meanings of the world
i could see different truths piled up
into the basement of human nonsense
it was enough to grab them by hands
they were in front of us
but we didn’t notice them
i saw a triangle vanishing into
a dazed haze of commonplace.

Cosmogony

Staring at the different luminescence
of the stars
while the sky is putting over
the tangled mystery of its multifarious
spirituality which we're looking for without
understanding it
Hermes' wings are going to spread the immaterial
message of hope
scattered pain is crawling
on the bottom of Hades.

Ellie Onka

Ellie Onka is an American poet who has publications in Visual Verse Anthology, Oxford is my Home Webzine, the Scarlet Leaf Review, and Variant Literature Magazine among others. She has many cats that consider her crazy, and when she's not writing, she is losing sleep over it. Onka is the owner and founder of Lucy's Works: A Little Writing Workshop of Horrors.

Strange Dreams

Eyelids
to push aside half-moons
a body of stone
lies back;

sweeps
your face,
and bleeds the wind

far off from
lips and gathered blood
when in death, I dreamed nothing

I hide from you all
in white lies, lips
castles of my own words I will hide from you all
into bedsheets among the streets
and the statues of pretty women

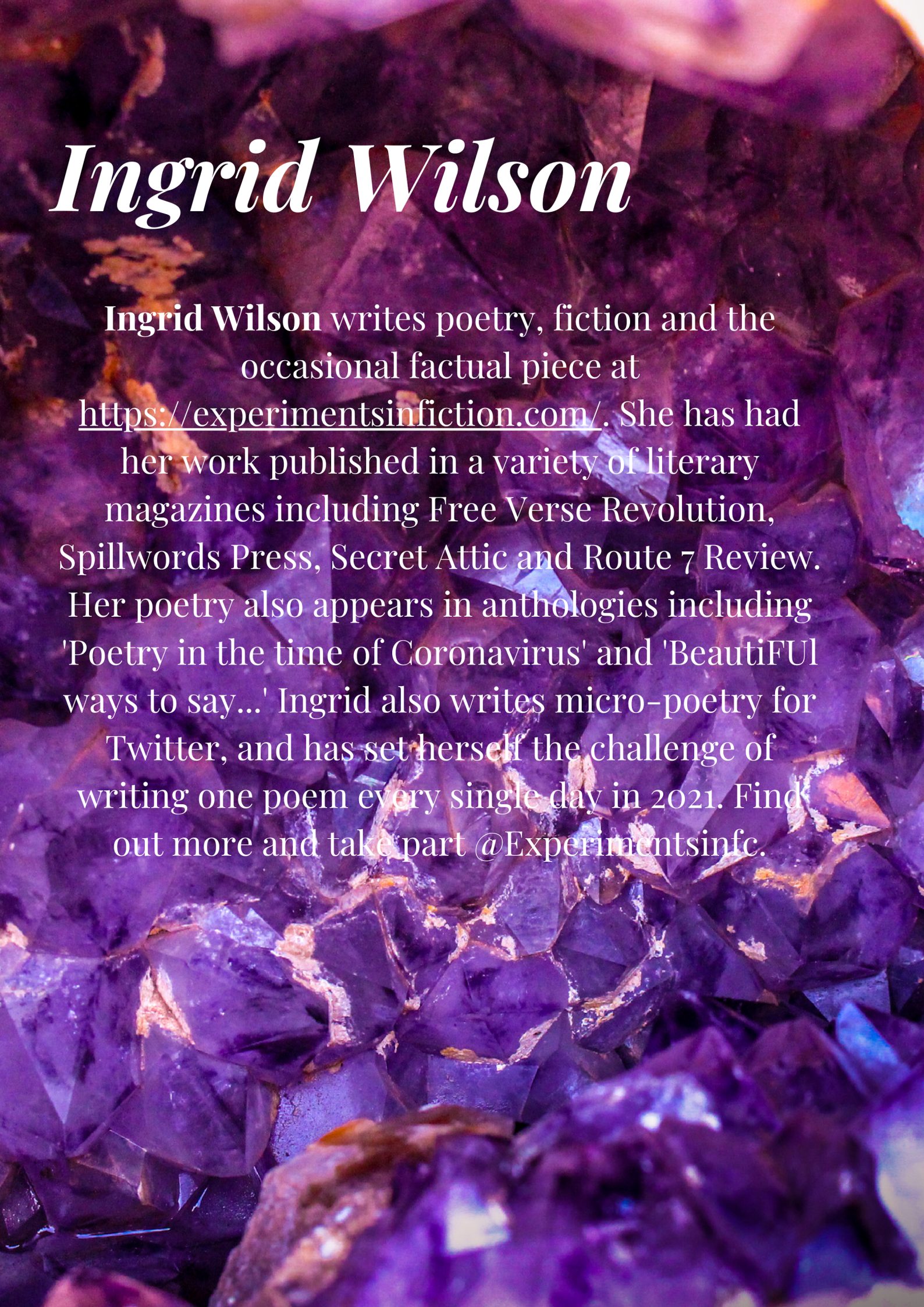
the moon sees me for what I am
a garden of death
that lied

that feasts beyond midnight veins
and recalls children climbing
on rock roots, twisting backbones
and hips

I can’t unsee what awaits in memory peeping
from thunders between years of innocence
and youth

of the years with thorns in my sides, the first to make me squirm
the first woman who dies as a child. I eat the white hot moon
and the fuchsia blood-eating all man

With snakes crawling in our heads it will hide in monde and mind
far off from lips and gathered blood
when in death, I dreamed nothing.



Ingrid Wilson

Ingrid Wilson writes poetry, fiction and the occasional factual piece at https://experimentsinfiction.com/. She has had her work published in a variety of literary magazines including Free Verse Revolution, Spillwords Press, Secret Attic and Route 7 Review. Her poetry also appears in anthologies including 'Poetry in the time of Coronavirus' and 'BeautiFUl ways to say...' Ingrid also writes micro-poetry for Twitter, and has set herself the challenge of writing one poem every single day in 2021. Find out more and take part @Experimentsinfc.

Courier and Curator of Dreams

I dreamt of you last night, and I was glad of that, because I haven't seen you in a long time. It's already been five years. There I was, wrapped up in my own little world with all of its perceived problems, and there you were, sat at a cash register, frantically working away while the chemo ravaged your body. You looked as though you could barely stand:

'Let me take over,' I said, 'I'll go and ask the manager if I can finish your shift.'

On the way to the manager, I checked myself:

'Alison won't be finishing her shift today,' I announced when I got there, 'I'm taking her to hospital.'

And I didn't know the way, and I hate driving new routes, but off we went, because the need was urgent. And I found myself wondering, how had you kept going, and managed to carry on as normal for so long, with so much pain? How had you been so stoical and brave, when I complained at the first onset of illness? And I realised on the journey, as I saw you submit to exhaustion but not succumb to fear, why I'd wanted to work your shift for you. I'd wanted to take your pain upon myself, go through it, suffer for a change instead of you (though no doubt noisily and un-stoically) so you could live the life you so richly deserved.

And when I woke up, I realised that I also deserve to live, there isn't an either-or, and no use thinking 'God took the good one.' Hermes had curated and delivered this dream just in time, to urge me to go on living, reminding me that through our love and through our grief, we shine.

Tan Ruey Fern

Tan Ruey Fern is an undergraduate student who loves learning language, living language and listening to language. She enjoys exploring how people tell stories about themselves in poetry. She mostly publishes on a personal blog, carboniferouschronicles.wordpress.com. She hopes readers can get something enriching out of her writing.

Travelling Earth-Wards

the shards of glass, they bloom around the phoenix
who wishes with all his heart to become a peacock.
they guide him in the flame of morning sun,
the syrup, honey-sweet, the piercing light –

a drop of altitude will bring the dew,
so thinly-veiled the dew between the sky
between the water's face, where golden melt
burns itself to white while blasting mirrors.

reflections – far too many, it hurts the eyes;
diffractions, blue & heavy lies, they splash.
to bring the earth a flower from the stars,
he must forget a million scars & aches.

& when he falls he will make a great crash
into a shimmering sea of smithereens.
the dewy coffee-dark, the greying haze,
the rain: his wings, his gaze, all fall behind.

Campfire Tales

We listen to stories like running down endless corridors,
the orange glow of torches shivering, shadows wavering,
the strange, the familiar walking in and out of doors.

We run into ourselves hurrying from each room,
rushing to the world outside waiting and consuming
us, each one of us like fractal lights, fractal shades that loom.

We guard the border between one arc and the next,
we flood the gates with fire, self-trespassing,
we resurrect the dead between the lines of text.

We wish the flames were just hydrogen-atom-spaces,
filled with lifeless indivisible balls leaping and sparking -
less painful to catch than the many-costumed faces.

ESH Leighton

ESH Leighton is a writer and wanderer who has lived in six cities in the last fourteen years. Her work has been featured in *Mookychick*, *Loud Coffee Press*, *Trampoline Journal*, and *blood moon poetry* among others. Her debut poetry collection, *Backwards Births*, was published in 2020 and is available wherever books are sold online. She currently lives in Las Vegas with her husband where she tends bar, listening to people's stories and tucking them away for future use. Find her on social media @eshleighton.

Antilullaby

How do I go to sleep

With the television on,
volume low, lights flickering
silent colors over your sleeping face

With the ocean constantly roaring
some great blue beast, angry
that I am not something with flesh to consume

With my thoughts falling like puzzle pieces
praying to dream of New York the way it really is
and not the confused jumble it always is in my dreaming mind

Forgetting everything that I learned,
not only today but always, a slate
wiped clean with immaculate ignorance

Tinnitus buzzing like angry bees who
speak a foreign honey language
I cannot stand nor understand

How do I go to sleep

When I did not put the world back together again,
did not tuck in the snowy owls or
say goodnight to the weeping volcanos

When I am just an amalgam of a human
bits of flotsam and jetsam, flora and fauna
bound in a skin sack destined for dirt

How do I rest
when there is so much work yet to be done

The Watertower

I have driven over the Brooklyn Bridge and spotted
the stained-glass water tower half a hundred times
At sunset it catches the eye
a mélange of broken bits of color
a kaleidoscope over the shoulder
in that sweet spot where Manhattan births you onto Brooklyn's belly

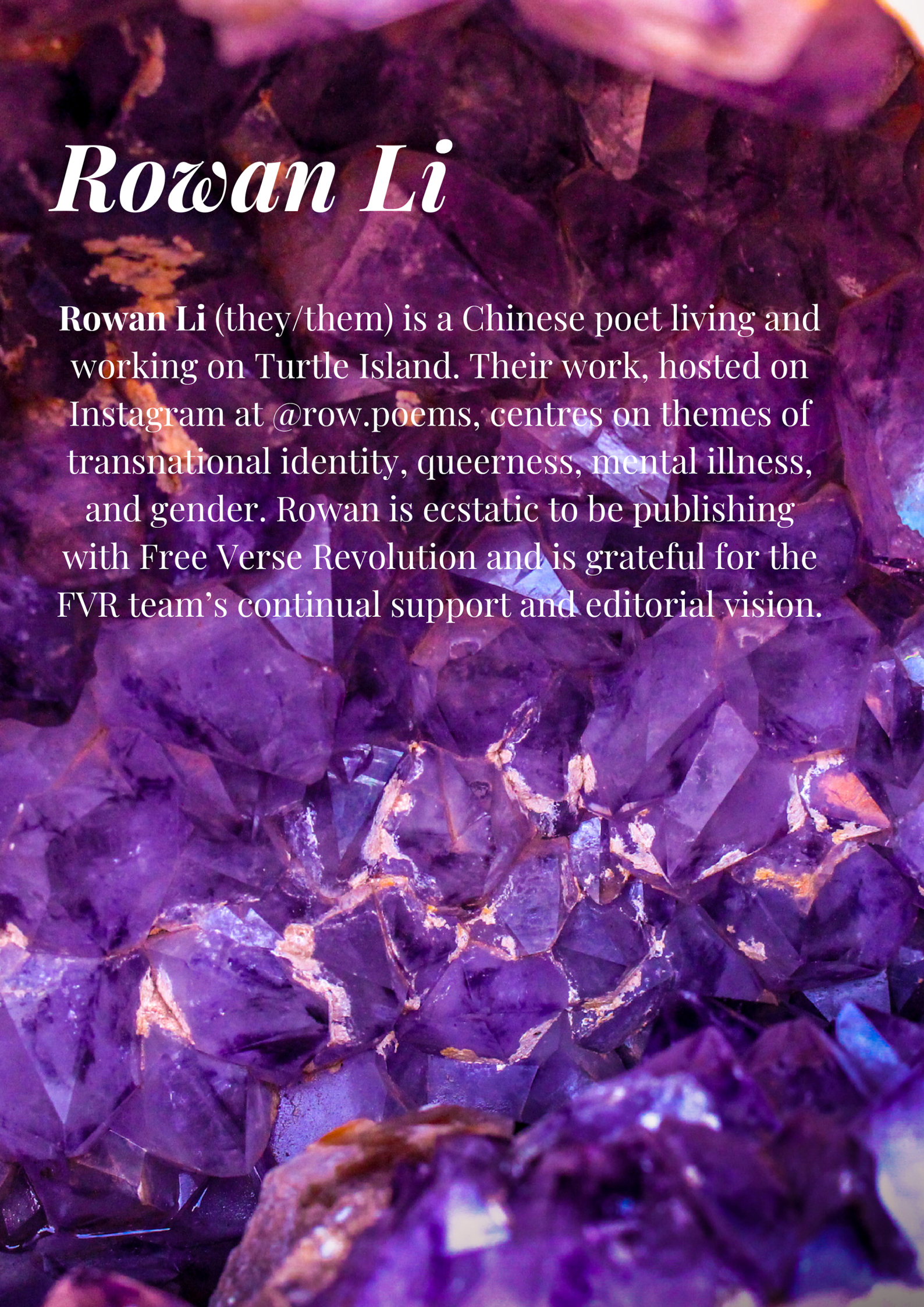
But I remember the first time I saw it
I was driving into the borough with my dogs and a husband
The watershed moment of the water tower
when I went from not being who I am
to suddenly being
FDR and BQE and all the strings of nonsensical letters
I would see in cars and taxis and
how they would change me
It started with the tower

I didn't know if it was a sculpture or an homage or
some leftover vestige from a different time
Brooklyn does that sometimes
takes something old and broken and
metamorphosizes it into something remarkable
Brooklyn didn't do that to me

I wasn't old or broken
I was dormant with eyelids shut tight as Venetian blinds

BK used to be its own city
before it merged and became a borough
It still exudes agency and ownness
and leftover city pride
It beats like a heart beating immediately next to Manhattan's heart
These twin organs vibrating with their clamor and their energy

Two great beings pressed together chest to chest
And caught between them just over the bridge
there's a water tower made of stained glass
like a forgotten pendant hanging between their bodies
I remember the first time I saw it
I do not remember the last



Rowan Li

Rowan Li (they/them) is a Chinese poet living and working on Turtle Island. Their work, hosted on Instagram at @row.poems, centres on themes of transnational identity, queerness, mental illness, and gender. Rowan is ecstatic to be publishing with Free Verse Revolution and is grateful for the FVR team's continual support and editorial vision.

Eureka

13,000 years ago, a mother held
Her child on her hip as it pressed
Small fingers on firelit walls,
Pressed until they yielded, until
They were remade in its image

In the last gulping bowels of tree
Kind, a man stares down a scope
At a stumbling doe and it is holy,
This communion of two hollow
Hunters, each mouth dry for thirst

Laid flat against antiseptic sheets,
An old woman cringes close-eyed
Against the tide of her breath and
Bites down, a red sea slowly parting
Her unresisting jaws

Yesterday, I stood behind glass
And stared into the unlit street,
Waiting. The face caught between
Flesh and air did not change.
Reflection is a self, haunted.