

“You Too Once Were Flesh, I Think”

I am a contemporary in the strangest way: I do not hate my time or yearn for the past; rather, I search for a kind of world that has never existed. I long to be a researcher, a wanderer. I want to be a modern-day philosopher, but this has been deemed an unwise career choice. I have been forever spinning between the obligations of my father, the expectations of my mother, and the sweet, sad words echoing within my brain.

So perhaps I will try and toil in a lab, or else observe in the field. Perhaps I will teach English to dark-eyed natives and live barefoot in a windowless house. Perhaps I will find freedom in the law, fulfillment in the fulfillment of others. No matter where my travels take me, I will write, and write without ceasing. As long as I do, I will suffer no famine of the heart; happiness will always settle softly over my shoulders, warming as the softest wool.

I discovered I wrote poetry the day that I discovered what poetry was. It had been forever flowing from me like vines or waters untested. I discovered this in the strangest way. My friend, a tall Icelandic boy with eyes haunting and hollow, asked me if I wrote poetry. Flustered, I blurted out “Yeah,” and my cheeks burned red at his nod of approval. Ever since, forever since, I have been a poet. It is so curious how we define ourselves through accidents.

Poetry makes me glow. It is an actual discernible light and it eats the shadows, attracting ancient moths like yes, I am the moon, yes I really do control the tides. When sadness threatens to overpower, I spill out my secrets into my innumerable journals. In elation I sit smiling and write endlessly in language flowery and untested. I write love letters and hate mail, proverbs, and proofs. I express science in words, Saturn in sonnets.

Yet above poetry, above prose, above lyrics and narrative, I am a woman of words. Since childhood I scratched out sentences, on paper, in books, on walls and floors, much to the dismay of my already tested mother. With hair askew in cinnamon spirals, she would endlessly feed me more paper, more books, like I was a fire burning. She scrubbed away the runescapes I left on linoleum, making a mental note to invest in waterproof markers next time.



I went to school and failed English assignments, exceeding the word requirement; I read voraciously and poured my reactions out in curves of ink and graphite. While others would groan at the night's essay assignment, I smiled shyly. I began to carry journals to all places, at all times. And then I am here. I cannot wait to see where next my words will take me.