

POEMS

BY KAITLIN CURTICE

A Note to the Reader:

The poems and prayers in this booklet were gathered with care from many corners of my life. Many of them are from my books, and many are from *The Liminality Journal*, an online publication I created in 2021 to cultivate a space where we can celebrate the power and gift of words in poetry and prose. I hope you enjoy these poems and prayers. I hope they bring you peace and that you can carry them with you as a reminder of your own sacred journey and belonging.

From *Native*

Before there was everything,
there was nothing.
But before there was nothing,
there was Something.
Something Other,
Unbound,
Beyond,
Above—
Mystery.
No one could grasp it then,
and no one can grasp it now,
not even with these realities
coming among us
and creating
something new
day in
and
day out,
despite
our dry and weary
bones.
Because before us,
there was everything,
and before everything,
Nothing was Something,
and Something was
The Beginning,
and we are
just dust
from
Its
long,
flowing
robe.

Every now and then,
we should hear the coffee mug clank
as we set it back down on the
glass tabletop,
because there is nothing
to distract us
from
its
presence.

We should listen
for the creaking beams
of an old house,
whose bones ache with a kind of
architectural osteoporosis.
We should listen for her groans
because they remind us
that
history
lives.

And more often than not,
the hummingbirds should get
our full attention,
because they teach us what it means
to gulp the nectar of life.
They teach us to remember
that we, too, are small, thirsty things,
looking for the river to drink from,
or, at least,
a
refreshing
fountain.

From *Glory Happening*

I have discovered you, and I am discovering you.
In the watchful hours of night, I watch my little ones and
you watch me.
In the bright light hours of day, we play, all of us,
and work and toil, back into the waxing moon's shadow.
And there we quiet down again.
And there we are discovered,
and there we discover.
I am discovering you, Being all-knowing,
who seems to give all to me.
You are Giver and Bringer and All in One.
Treasure and surprises seek me out when I am most
unseekable.
You seek me, find me, pour me out and fill me again.
May we discover, and in discovering, find the healing of ages.
May we discover kin-dom come, kin-dom coming.
Kin-dom forever and always and into every horizon
we've yet to unearth.
May we discover the journey of discovering all of you,
all the beauties of you
and the depths in you and widths bounding through you.
Beckon us to you, sacredness in the path
beneath our tired, anxious feet.
And rest us at the edges of ourselves,
the unexpected places,
where horizon meets holy horizon
and we are bound by no shame,
covered by no fear.
Iw, amen.

In the bright heat of summer, we shield our eyes and
search the skies for you.
We dig in our garden for your life,
your promise of nurture.
In the calm death of fall, we watch leaves ride on
your wind,

Watch animals sprint across roads and through acres
of grass to fill up on life.
In the swallowing up of snowstorms in winter, we
hide under covers,
we snuggle by fires to see that you still burn bright,
you still reach us.
And in spring, you usher us back to life, beckon us to
the sun
with mild blooms and glorious stretches
of hiking graveled paths and tasting rainwater.
We see, then, that you're there always, that you're
here,
living and breathing over all of it.
May we know your world,
may we serve it and let it serve us,
all for the love of you.
Iw, amen.

God,
If there is some mysterious order of things that holds
the world together,
we don't really know about it.
What we know is what we see and feel and touch,
what we partake of with the senses.
We know how to feed each other,
to take in beauty,
we share moments with created things,
to remember that we are tethered to each other
for a greater and deeper good,
for a true and lasting holiness.
This seems to be Kin-dom where Kin-dom can be
understood in tiny bits and pieces,
tiny things that keep us longing for more of you.
*Iw, amen.*¹

1. Poems have been edited since their original publication.

From *The Liminality Journal*

What is a journey
but a letting go
and an embrace,
a sheltering in
and a calling out,
a displacement
and a return home,
a question
and an answer,
a threat
and a forgiveness,
an understanding
and a confusion?
What is a journey
but a deep,
resounding yes
and a booming no,
a careful loving
and a moving on,
a gut feeling
and a deep-thought response?
What is a journey
but you and me,
in the world
and outside it,
running toward the ocean
and against the tide
all at once?
The journey,
then,
is simply
everything,
and nothing,
and whatever waits
in between.

The elders are giggling,
but the ancestors are keeling over in laughter.
Did you honestly think you could control
the amount of LEGO bricks strewn across the house?!
Did you think you could control
the noise echoing from their bedroom,
as pillows slap faces?!
My dear, let go.
Let go and feel the hum of life
beneath the surface of the messes
and the noises.
After endless moments of frustration,
I finally ease, let my shoulders drop,
close my eyes,
laugh to myself, because it's true—
control is a construct,
and the sooner we learn, the better.
The sooner we learn,
the better we take the messes,
the noises,
the waiting
and the struggling to keep something,
if anything, in order.
The sooner we learn
patience
and
deep breaths,
the sooner
we recognize
the myth of
a spotless house
with happy children
or an endlessly quiet one
filled with contentment.
Do you hear him singing
as he digs through that basket full
of LEGO bricks?
Yes,
I reply.
I hear him.
And it is everything
good in this world.

Belief
can trick us
into believing
that the most important thing
—love—
has nothing
to do
with us.

Success.
They tell us how it's supposed to be—
success is earned,
learned,
fought for,
worth dying for,
success is a thing that you'll
climb every mountain
to achieve.
But I think there's a gentler way.
What if success, for you, for me,
is simply learning to be—
to be with ourselves,
to be with the quiet,
to be with Earth, our Mother,
to be when the noise is loud,
to be when the hustle is demanding,
to be when we "should" be going.
Success isn't a thing to earn or achieve
but a letting go
so that we get to the right stuff,
the good stuff,
the stuff of magic and love
in the end.
Success to them is an unattainable dream.
Success for us, right now, is this moment's breath
and every little sliver of sacredness that follows.

God,
I whisper,
like it's a sacred thing to say,
I'm told the most sacred of all,
a prayer from my lips
to some holy place above—
but no, that's not how I mean it,
I mean it like I say hello
to my best friend
while I'm dancing amongst
dandelions that are changing
through the summer heat.
I say *God*
like I can barely grasp it at all,
this idea,
this image,
this being,
this boxed-in caricature
that I've been handed by
too many white men.
God,
I say,
then
Mystery,
and I breathe a little deeper
and everything expands,
this friend,
this *Great Beyond,*
this expression of love
that I cannot seem
to let go of,
even if I try.
You,
I say,
how are you? how are you really?
into the vastness of the air around me,
into the ocean's tide,
into the plant I'm tending,
into the words I write,
into the tears
and the laughter,
the sighs
and the tenderness.

Eternity

My kid asked me
if I'd like to be
immortal
and I said
no.
I'd like to
believe
this life is
eternal, though,
that everything
we are today,
all the healing
and becoming,
and the life
that waits
for us tomorrow
lingers
and ripples
into the coming
generations
forever and ever.

Shalom, her magnetic heart

You and I are "other" to each other,
foreign creatures,
locked in our independent skin.
You and I, we're unnerved
when we're together,
we're fractured, disconnected,
thin as moth-wing.
And yet, the same stuff
that tears us from each other
gravitates us to each other,
and all along,
the earth keeps spinning
to help us shake the
regret-dust from
our shoulders.
I cannot assume you,
and you cannot assume me.
And yet, we began in the same
womb of thought,
the same dream of beginning.
We started and we will end,

and in between we can
detonate bombs
or
unmake them;
we can tighten the noose
or
make climbing ropes;
we can pull triggers
or
bury our weapons
beneath the trees
in our city parks
and let our
oneness
grow out of their
metal mouths.
You and I are "other" to each other
but desperate enough to invade
these spaces—
desperate enough to fill up the
missing places,
patch up the broken links,
reengage where we've
abandoned.
Shalom—She is a sacred word,
an everlasting act.
Shalom—She is an enduring
vision on the
darkest night,
and that magnet-force that keeps
fighting against our
pulling
and
tugging,
because she puts us
always back
where we were before—
hand in hand by the fire.
Shalom—She knows us better.
Shalom—She binds together the
blistered souls,
and we quiet ourselves,
eyes locked,
all "otherness" dissipated
in a stream of
perfect light.

New Poem (no name)

Give me your hand—
the one that's been burned so many times
by the fires of your life.

Let us remember the
fingerprints that are
still in tact.

The essence of you—
the surviving one,
is all that matters from this day forward.
There are old scars
and fresh blisters—
I see them, even if I don't understand.

Can you remember their stories?
Would you tell me
even if you could?

Give me your heart—
the one that's been waiting
to remember they're not alone.

We are lonely and we belong.

We are tired and we are revived.

We are bruised and we are healed.

Give me all of you,
and the alchemy of our stories
will heal the world.

From *Living Resistance*

What is a poem?
It is the quietest,
softest part of you,
held to an invisible microphone,
held up to the light,
held up beyond the
hustle and bustle of the day
and the groaning aches of the night.

A poem is the anger
that releases itself
in your time of greatest need,
when you are ready to fracture
before you believe again,
ready to break open
and receive yourself
to yourself.

A poem is the whisper
that tells everything,
the secret that cannot be denied:

You are exactly as
you've always been—
Beloved Word,
Spoken Self,
Relieved Ache,
Tender Child.

The poem is you.
It always was.

I want to tell you something.
That ache, that exhausted longing,
that hole that seems to fill with nothing but air—
Remember the nothingness that fills it.
One day, you'll need space to breathe,
to remember,
to accept,
to grieve,
and that big open space inside you will
become home.
It is a space that is ancient and modern,
there and here,
everything upon everything,
nestled in the quiet.
And one day, you'll need it.
One day, you'll go there
and you'll stay a while,
and all that air around you
will be the very thing
that cocoons you
and prepares you again
for the outside world.
I want you to tell me something.
Do you feel it?
Do you long for home?
Do you need that air?
Do you believe in it?
Do you believe in you?

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