Dreams Among Nightmares



Amy Ogle

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A Letter from the Poet

Hello,

Poetry has been an escape from not only my daily life, but also my focus on prose. I began seriously considering a career in fictional stories during my middle school years, when I drafted *Hidden in Plain Sight*, my main novel. When I entered high school, I began writing poetry as a cathartic experience. In fact, my first published work was a poem, not prose, in the literary and art magazine, *Amaranth*. Poetry, especially free verse, granted me a sanctuary to release the emotional tension I buried within myself.

While I wrote the poems in this collection, I unintentionally projected my struggle to balance optimism with pessimism onto my poetry. From this struggle, I created *Dreams Among Nightmares*, a linguistic depiction of hope attempting to manifest itself in the nightmare that is reality. This collection reflects passion, cynicism, acceptance, growth, and grief. I drew from my own feelings in "A Rock in the Woods" and those I felt for others in "Tears." I allowed my pessimistic side to show in "Flowers," while embracing hope in "The Swing." I piled every fear I had into "Home of Dreams" and "Finite." I truly allowed every part of me to shine: a cynic, a pensive observer, a dreamer, and a human being.

I do not want you to view pessimism as a bad concept, nor do I want you to see it as necessary. It is as it is, a fact of life and a lens through which to see the world. I would rather you accept it and discover its place in your life alongside optimism. These poems of optimism and pessimism can exist in the same collection, in the same way a dream can exist within a nightmare. Why suppress hope, something which makes you undeniably human?

Warmly,

Amy

Free Verse

Free verse follows no specific meter and often represents the rhythm of everyday speech. Due to this, the reader interprets verbal patterns and emphasis. The term originates from the French phrase "vers libre," which French symbolist poets used to find freedom from alexandrine style poetry.

Introduction to Baking

I ask them to take a whisk
And let it whirl in action
Like a volatile tornado

Or inhale the dancing aromas.

I say drop the large eggs, softened butter, sifted sugar into a bowl
And watch them swirl yellow, white, beige,

Or burrow inside the batter
And dive for the clumps within

I want them to glide
Across the lumps of a cake
Frosting over the baker's name on the blog.

But all they want to do
Is trap the recipe on a chair with mountains of flour
And knead perfection out of it.

They begin envisioning the product
To find out what it really means



inspired by Billy Collins'
"Introduction to Poetry"



Flowers

I wonder how the flowers shine
When no one sees them bloom.
Will they stand upright and give a fight
Or wilt into their doom?

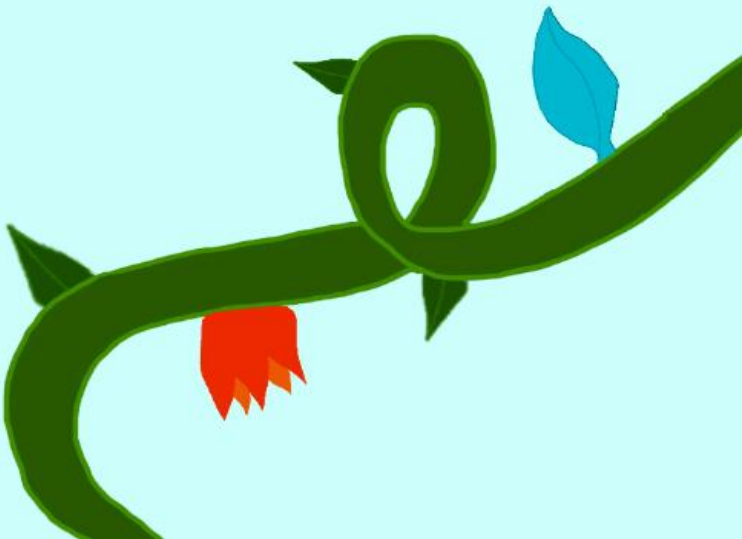
The flowers on my window grow,
But when I go away,
They lose their gleam and so it seems
The petals will not stay.

I saw a bud inside the road.
It trembled with each sway.
But the flower rose and still it glows,
So it continues to exist today.

I tend to my ornamental garden,
The water gifts a drink.
When I left and returned bereft,
The thorns were chains, I think.

I now know how the flowers shine
When no one sees them bloom.
Some will rise before your eyes,
And some will let the sorrow consume.





Tapestry Poetry

Tapestry poetry was created by Avril Meallem and Shernaz Wadia, two women from Israel and India who corresponded through poetry. A tapestry poem is the fusion of two nine-line poems about the same topic into an eighteen-line poem. The majority of the original words and phrases from each poem remain, with the exception of minor grammatical changes.

The Duality of Empathy

Empathy is a weapon, an excalibur.
It passes from pure hands to tattered skin,
Leaving a path for new growth and healing.

From blissful days to ruined nights,
It is an unstoppable force
With no remorse,
Seemingly weak but unbelievably strong.

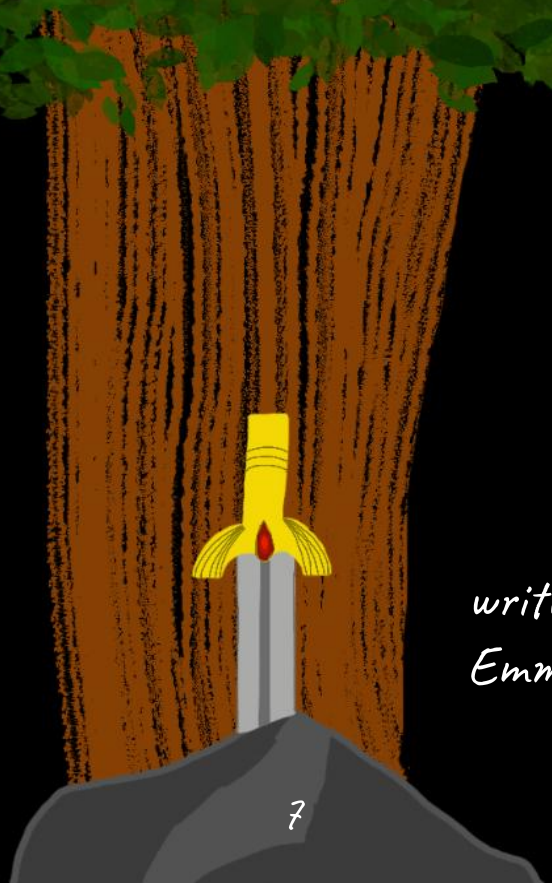
Empathy is the fruit of hope,
It cuts through the toughest of evils
In search of the door guarding life.

The greatest gift of all,
Striving to help those around
With the most flourishing results.

Buds torn by torrential storms
In their wake
Only wilt to thrive again.

Empathy is a deadly and dangerous weapon,
Yet empathy is a gentle tree.

-a tribute to Tarana Burke



written in collaboration with
Emma Lesyk

Tree of Life

The Tree of Life verse form was created by Christina Jusaumme. It is similar to a concrete poem in that it forms the shape of a tree. The poem has nineteen lines, is unrhymed, and is centered on the page. It also follows a specific syllabic pattern of 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-4-4-4-4-4-4. The poem's topic is meant to be uplifting.

Family Tree

I
come from
a place far
yet near with hopes
and dreams and eyes like
my mother's brown. I don't
remember my mother's brown,
but I know my mother's blue-gray.
I don't remember my country, but
I know my home. I know the warmth of soup
and grape leaves mingled with lo mein and dumplings.
I know the Amy of Sarah and Ed, not the
Aidian of unknown heritage. When I go home,
I see Molly
and Piper and
Allison. I
see happiness,
love, warmth, and joy.
I know my home.

Wreath Poetry

A wreath poem is a poem without a specific rhyme or meter.
Instead, the key idea is linking each line to its preceding line
through a word, derivation of the word, or false rhyme of the word.

The Swing



I found a curious swing
Swinging from the branch of a tree.
It branched out farther,
much farther than the eye could see.

Perhaps seeing is believing.
I want your belief to be true,
But there is the truth of leaving
And you left me beside the swing.

It swung for days, months, years.
The days especially dragged,
Yet you came back, dragging right here
Everything right and nothing lost.

Losing is painful for mind and for heart.
I do not mind if you leave,
But do not leave without the art
Of artful imagination with a swing
And imagining returning to a new start.

Concrete Poetry

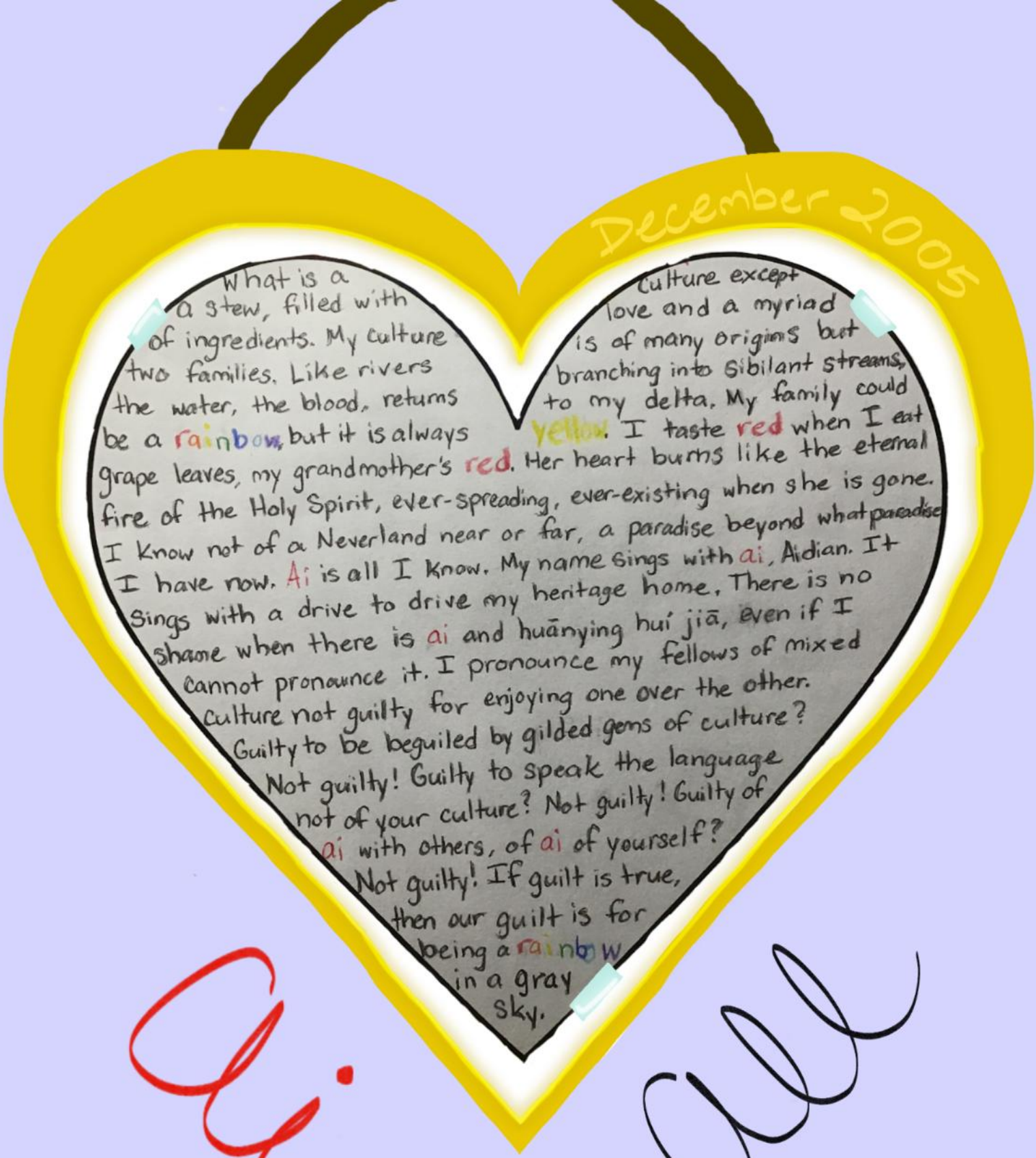
Concrete poems convey their meaning through an image created by the poem's words. They tend to be more visually artistic than linguistically, as they are meant to be seen rather than spoken aloud. Concrete poetry was created by Max Bill and Öyving Fahlström in the early 1950's. In their origin, concrete poems were abstract without an allusion to an identifiable shape.

A Rock in the Woods



Bare. cold,
empty. day.
We set. out
across the yard.
Our fingers were
frozen, but our
hearts were
warm. Then
spring came with
haste. It took
and your rosy
caged our haven,
one. Then the
land of burning
serenity of silent
but you never
but where were
chasing a future
going and I will

frightening
the white blanket
cheeks. The brambles
allowing entry to two not
sun stole you away to a
dreams, far from the
woods. I waited in winter,
came. The gate withered,
you? I see, you were
without me. Then keep
too. I will be your rock.


December 2005
What is a culture except
a stew, filled with love and a myriad
of ingredients. My culture is of many origins but
two families. Like rivers branching into sibilant streams,
the water, the blood, returns to my delta. My family could
be a rainbow, but it is always yellow. I taste red when I eat
grape leaves, my grandmother's red. Her heart burns like the eternal
fire of the Holy Spirit, ever-spreading, ever-existing when she is gone.
I know not of a Neverland near or far, a paradise beyond what paradise
I have now. Ai is all I know. My name sings with ai, Aidian. It
sings with a drive to drive my heritage home. There is no
shame when there is ai and huānying huí jiā, even if I
cannot pronounce it. I pronounce my fellows of mixed
culture not guilty for enjoying one over the other.
Guilty to be beguiled by gilded gems of culture?
Not guilty! Guilty to speak the language
not of your culture? Not guilty! Guilty of
ai with others, of ai of yourself?
Not guilty! If guilt is true,
then our guilt is for
being a rainbow
in a gray
sky.
Ai is all

Blackout Poetry

Blackout poetry is a form of found poetry, in which the poet creates a poem using words and phrases from a piece of prose. Caleb Whiteford, Benjamin Franklin's neighbor, is the earliest known publisher of blackout poetry. Blackout poetry evolved into its modern form after Austin Kleon published his own collection, Newspaper Blackout, in 2010.

To Thrive

To thrive means to rise

I thrive

from

the seeds to grow

heroes thrive

tasting the bittersweet freedom

the red, yellow, and blue words

a tale of anger, happiness, and sorrow.

when together

to be human. to be

inexplicably human

the bud of life is viciously

plucked Still, it blooms.

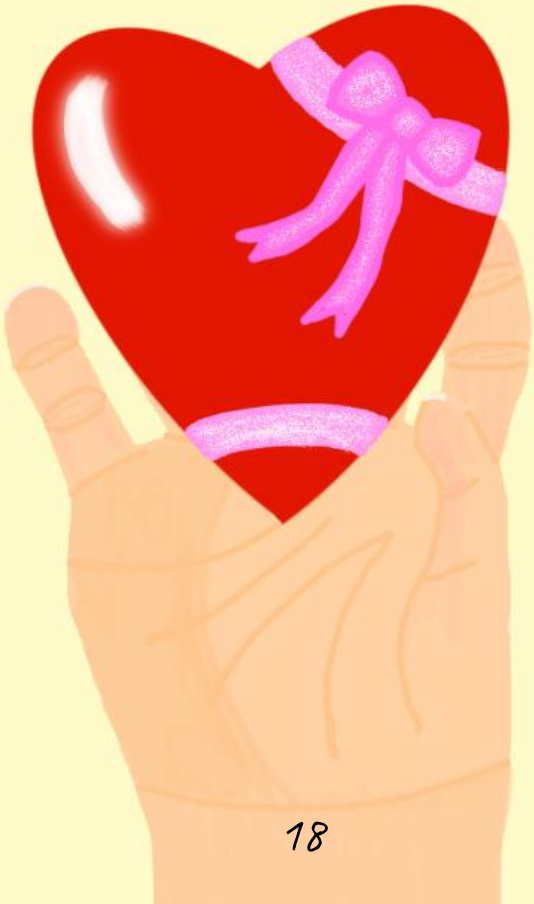


Daisy Chain

Daisy Chain poems are similar to wreath poems, but the last word of a line becomes the first word of the next line. Additionally, the last word of the poem must be the same as the first word. There is no required meter, rhyme, or stanza length.

Tears

Right to tears,
Tears are not allowed.
Allowed by others but not by you.
You choose the time.
Time of weakness is a fickle choice.
Choice is rarely easy.
Easy is not the same between people.
People judge hearts,
Hearts reveal feelings.
Feelings are a right.



Villanelle

Villanelles originated from Italian and Spanish dance-songs called "villanella" and "villancico." Early villanelles from France were similar in nature and described pastoral or rustic themes, but they were not fixed structures. Théodore de Banville, a French poet, was the first person to define a fixed villanelle, and its popularity developed in England. A villanelle is made up of five tercets and one quatrain, following a rhyme scheme of A1 b A2/a b A1/a b A2/a b A1/a b A2/a b A1 A2. A1 and A2 are alternating refrains at the end of each tercet.

Seasons of Change

The seasons do not change, only you.
The verdant leaves fade to end.
A life worth living comes to few.

The crimson and fire paint my view,
And yet I continue to pretend
The seasons do not change, only you.

Your ice encapsulates the world to pursue
A weakened plea attempting to amend.
A life worth living comes to few.

With vibrant vigor born anew,
You stepped from your pedestal to descend.
The seasons do not change, only you.

The searing light with its divine review
Scorches my skin and portends
A life worth living comes to few.

I wish I could return and renew
The love and life you expend.
The seasons do not change, only you.
A life worth living comes to few.



Blitz Poem

The blitz poem was created by Robert Keim. It mimics a stream of consciousness, utilizing short phrases and repetition to create a rapidly flowing poem without punctuation. Line 2 begins with the same word as line 1, line 3 begins with the last word of line 2, and the first forty-eight lines follow this pattern. Line 49 is the last word of line 48 and line 50 is the last word of line 47. The title is the first word of line 3, a preposition, and the first word of line 47.

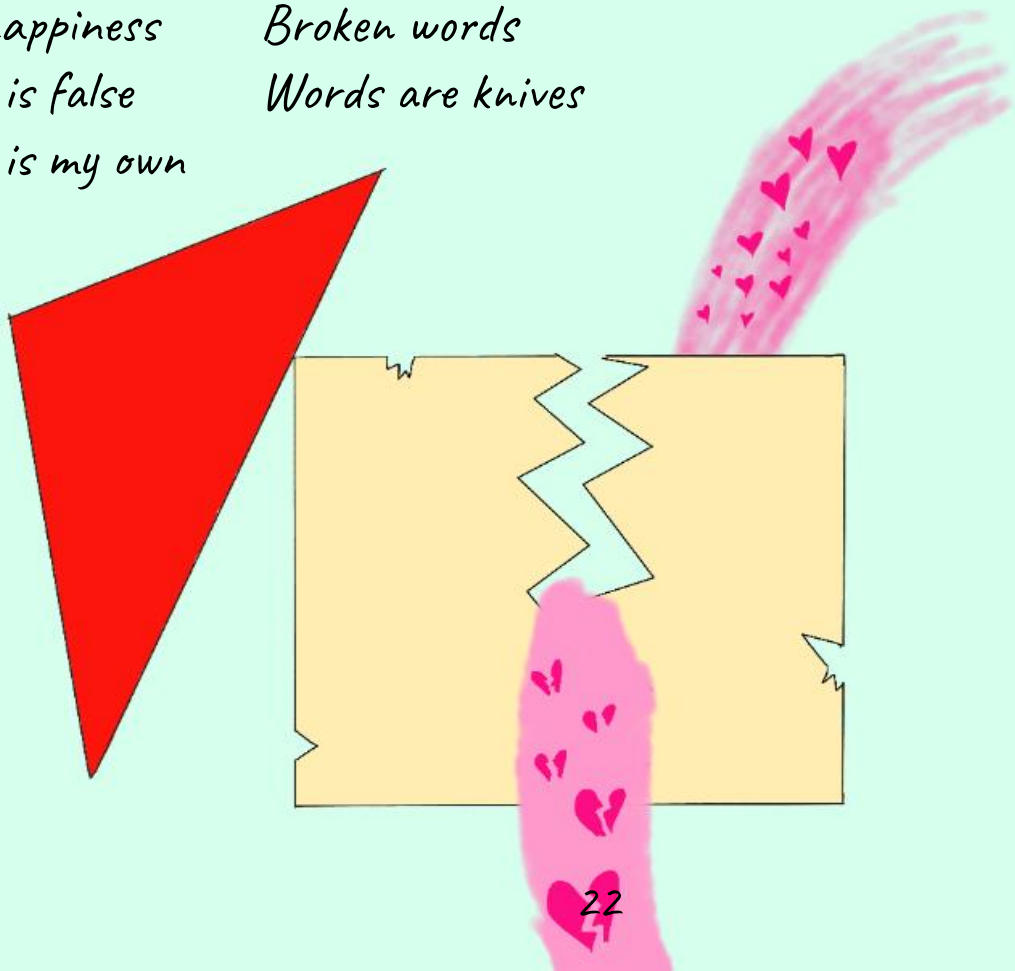
Home of Dreams

Search the walls
Search my home
Home at day
Home at night
Night defends
Night strikes fear
Fear of what
Fear of you
You in the dark
You in the distance
Distance and unknown
Distance and hope
Hope for light
Hope for happiness
Happiness is false
Happiness is my own

Own the right
Own my life
Life is a façade
Life is a path
Path to follow
Path to fall
Fall into insanity
Fall into ruin
Ruin the chance
Ruin your heart
Hearts are fragile
Hearts are broken
Broken voice
Broken words
Words are knives

Words are a lie
Lie in bed
Lie and bruise
Bruise the surface
Bruise my ego
Egos corrupt
Egos reflect
Reflect my world
Reflect the truth
Truth is denial
Truth can heal
Heal the mind
Heal the past

Past only hope
Past my dreams
Dreams are terror
Dreams can be real
Real...
Terror...



Sestina

The Provencal troubadour, Arnaut Daniel, created the sestina based on complex musical verses. A sestina, a thirty-nine line poem, includes five sestets and one tercet called an envoi or tornada. It follows a strict pattern of repeating six end words for each line, which takes the place of a traditional rhyme scheme. The six words are rearranged in specific orders in each stanza. The envoi uses two of the six words per line, one in the middle and one at the end.

Finite

My fingers type, my eyes see
the screen dance with words
and the vision in the horizon.
Perhaps I am being insensitive
to cast aside my present,
but a world is waiting and not here.

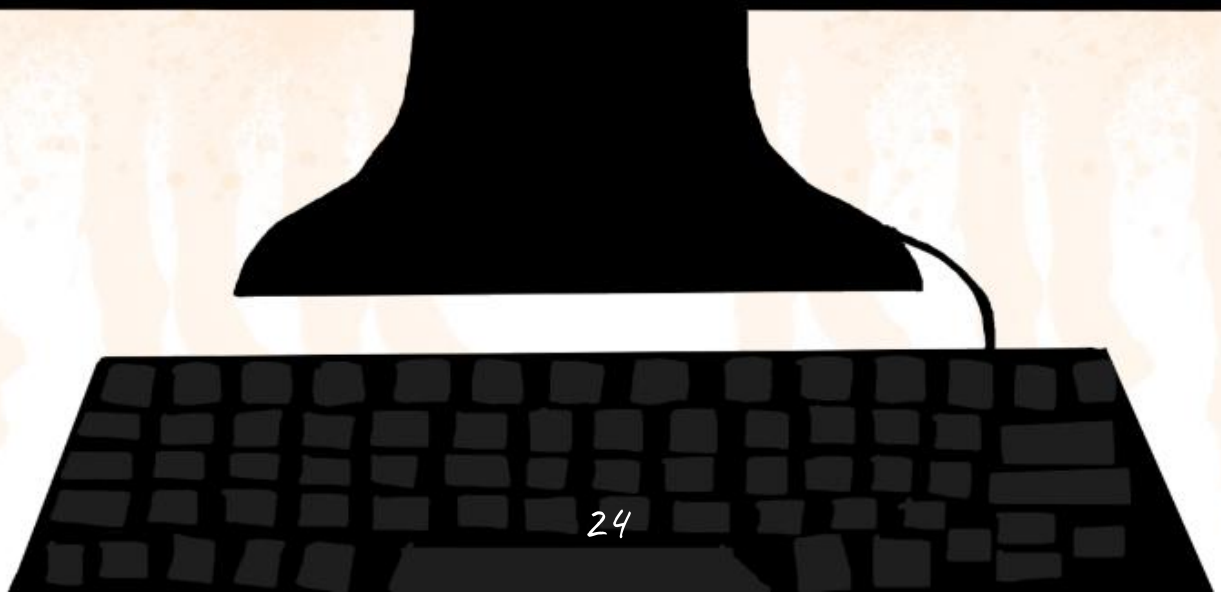
The—pitter-patter—of snow is here.
It falls into drab piles, I see,
so I continue to alter my present.
Nothing will allow escape but my words.
How can the snow be so insensitive
to interrupt my dawn on the horizon?

I chase after that unforgiving horizon.
My desires and dreams are not here.
Another sound of laughter, its insensitive
tones, distract my ability to see
the invigorated future of my words.
Yet the ringing is incessantly stuck in the present

"Stop!" I cry to end this present.
My hands are outstretched for the horizon,
but they fall short as I halt my words.
The words on the tip of my tongue here
are lost to a void I cannot see.
Voices echo in exuberant cries—insensitive—

I know I am not, but I know I am insensitive
to forget those waiting in the present.
Through blurred windows, the snow I see
blinds me, blinds the very horizon
which chains me to a land that is not here.
I set to rectify with my words:

"I am a being of words, even those insensitive
to that which is here and the only present
ever pilfered from the horizon for me to see."



"I have hated the words and I have loved them, and I hope I have made them right."

-Liesel Meminger, The Book Thief

