

A Self-Portrait of a Girl on Her Last Day of Teenagehood

By Kylie Walsh

I used the bones of who I used to be as kindling
and I ignited this fire with my love for him.
I used the bones of who he made me as kindling
and I ignited this fire with the first and last of my hate for him.

That night, I walked out to the water's edge
to watch the stars come in on the tide.
I saw the reflections of my unborn daughters,
and unborn sons, and the stories I would someday tell.

I stood between decades
as the sun came up like an edict.
I sent the great truths I am only just beginning to know
out into the pre-dawn gold.

When I was born beneath the rising winter sun, my mother cried
because I was seven seconds of unlimited potential.
She trailed behind me as I grew,
never allowing me out of sight.

Don't blink or you'll miss this redemption.
I'm no longer a visitor in my own body,
I stepped beyond the inevitabilities
and tipsy daydreams I hid behind.

Steadied myself against delicate confusion,
held the quiet in these arms,
planted summer's lavender in my lungs,
let myself become honey poured over thunder.

I walked out to the water's edge,
steady steps against the tide,
to watch the moon push back.

Love in Transit

By Kylie Walsh

We are luggage laden,
travel tired
in a country that is not ours,
in a city that has embraced us
as we embraced each other.

Down thin streets we do not know
and never learned the names of,
we arrive at a once magnificent house
to sleep on a too thin mattress
between too thin walls.

I wonder if the rest of the world
hears us breathe, never quite matching up,
inhale exhale
exhale inhale.

We wake in the pre-dawn quiet
the golden light spreading our shadows
across the floor until at last they are joined.
In the following days, we trace the river in and out
of art museums, cafes, and these bodies.

Ever aware of the westward sun,
holding hands but not eye contact
drunk on cheap good wine and paused promises.
We both know where this will end.

A week later,
we wait in the metro station,
suitcases in hand in hand
silent as the tunnel shakes.
The curved passageways brighten
as the train arrives.

He kisses me for the last time

the unknown language surrounds us,
relentless commuters push on past.
We cannot hold each other there much longer.

When the doors to his train close,
I am already gone, no backward glance.
I know he did not watch me leave.