

## **Growing Pains: A Poem Anthology**

### **Gaia's Sonnet**

Across the winding road the young deer rushed  
I slam on my brakes as not to hit him  
He scurries off back into the forest  
His eyes full of fear and his body slim

Down to the lake my sisters and I play  
More and more houses fill her crowded shore  
Her water recedes a little each day  
One day she will dry up and be no more

The temperatures will continue to rise  
And then there will be no more falling snow  
Next the plants and the animals will die  
As the oceans will fill and overflow

A beautiful provider Nature is  
Oh but how much longer can she persist?

### **I come from the past**

My hair comes from the fields of wheat and hay  
Sprawling out in the rollings hills of my home  
Harvesting the golden tips in the hot august days  
Bailing the thin strands once they are grown  
Their roots running deep into my town  
And to my heart they are bound

My eyes come from the ocean's dawn  
They come from far off lands I want to explore  
Like a distant memory of a place where I belong  
They dart in the distance longing for more  
Yet they're the same color as the sky  
Under it we all live and die

My hands come from my father, calloused  
His calluses come from the handle of his ax and driving posts in  
Mine come from the strings of the guitar and the end of my mallets  
He taught me to work hard, his labor allows for my passion  
I will do the same when I am his age  
And my hands will be calloused in the same way

My skin comes from those who I am descended from  
Those who have struggled, fled, and suffered  
And those who can't realize the privilege we now own  
For me, knowing I may succeed more than others  
Due only to the complexion of my skin  
Is an injustice I will strive to fix

I come from the past  
My soul is as old as the fields and sea  
My heart is with the people who came before me  
But I am the future  
My mind is innovation  
My spirit is of revelation  
I am the change  
I am the beginning

### **The Ballerina**

She moves with the fluidity of water  
She leaps into the air against the power of gravity  
She spins with the weight of her body on her toes  
Her bun is perfect with not a hair out of place  
Her pale pink tutu and laced pointe shoes  
Her bright smile towards the audience

They don't know the strength it takes  
Her muscles are sore after long days of practice  
Her feet are covered in blisters  
She is exhausted by routines  
She even spends hours darning her shoes  
I know it, and I watch her with awe  
The work is worth it for her  
And my heart is filled with pride to have her as my sister

But I worry  
I worry about the boys  
Their arrogance as they get the star roles  
As she fights for a place in the show  
Their cruelty towards her  
As their actions go unpunished

I worry about the girls  
And what they may be saying to her

When she sticks to the diet  
Does she do it because she worries about her body?  
When she does all of her beautiful makeup  
Does she do it because she feels she has too?

Maybe as a young ballerina, my sister understands what it is to be a woman  
Behind the trappings of femininity  
There is a strength no man can understand.

### **Christmas Eve**

All other times of the year  
I am a devout atheist  
I condemn a belief that projects hate  
I critique the holes in the logic  
I don't follow my family to church

But Christmas Eve is different  
Because every year my family has gone to service  
Every year I would dress up in my prettiest attire  
Let my mom put some curl in my hair  
Every year as the snow falls down  
At the white building on the edge of town

Some of the happiest memories of my childhood  
Stained with the pain of what I was taught  
About my value as a person  
And the validity of my identity  
But still every year I go to church  
One night of the year

We walk in the door  
Grab a candle from a woman with a kind face  
Where is the invisible judgment that is now absent?

The pastor begins recapping the church's work  
The same kind of charity I strive for  
Who is it that taught me to care for my community?

The congregation begins to sing carols  
And I find myself singing that he is lord  
Why am I now able to raise my voice?

The paster begins his sermon

This time of the year he preaches of peace on earth and goodwill towards men  
How is it that now his view of his fellow man has changed?

This one day of the year  
This little white building is changed  
Gone is the hatred  
And suddenly I don't feel isolated

Why can't it be like this every Sunday?  
Usually I feel a freedom  
The chains of religion I am released from  
On Christmas Eve I don't  
I mourn a culture that is lost to me.

### **Mother Bird**

She sits by the wood fireplace needles in hand  
Kitting until the tips of her fingers turn red  
Mother bird

They run around with grimy fingers covered in paint  
Blissfully unaware in a world of their own creation  
Baby bird

Mother bird rips her feathers out  
And sews them to her baby's bones  
So that they may fly one day  
Above the walls that keep them home  
As her mother did for her  
A baby made in her image

And it is idyllic, it is picturesque  
At least that is what she remembers  
The hellish she forgets

But then the baby bird is no longer small  
Their own wings start to grow in  
And then the war begins

They scream I hate you  
Out of naive anger  
In a child's mind it's righteous  
She whispers I love you  
But baby bird won't listen

They look in the mirror  
And see an amalgamation of feathers  
Who they feel they must hide  
And who she wants them to be

But what can they be but grateful?  
The sacrifices their mother made  
But the pressure is too much  
Eventually they skip  
Half of themselves they hate  
And the other half their mother can't accept  
Like knives, her words almost cut their wings  
As they threaten to pull out the rest

And what does the healing look like?  
They find the good in their mothers colors  
They may pluck some, but most they embrace  
She learns to breath, and she learns to let go  
And a smile returns to her tear stained face