

Mama

By Gialina Morten

Knuckle in the lungs beautiful
even after you became a stranger -

your cerebrum fought you
your body betrayed you
I can't believe I ever blamed you

for never

being able

to braid

my hair.

I know your limbs
are a basin of bad dreams
and I know your severed speech
makes you want to scream,
and I know
you keep breathing for me,
even though I know you'd rather rot anywhere else.

Now listen,
there may be gaps in our rhythm
and slits in our souls
but Mama,
I am still your blood
and I will stitch "I love you"
into your torn seams
until your veins feel holy

and don't worry,
because the parts of you
that you were too sick to give me
found their way inside me,
and they sing of your resilience
every day, reminding me

that you are a sky they cannot bury,
that you blister-gripped that bible
like it was God's neck, warning him
that he could not take you yet -
that the metals in your chest
are the instruments that make your heart beat like a symphony

these parts of you
sing to me, reminding me
that you will forever be
far
more beautiful
for having
been broken.

Gialina Morten is a Filipinx-American poet currently based in Brooklyn, New York. She doubles as a publicist for mission-centered leaders in the social impact space. Amplifying stories of progress for those committed to making a more equal and equitable world, is an immense catalyst for Morten's creative work. Her poetry explores the facets of social cognition; particularly our tendencies toward social and self-deception, the ways in which our behavior often contradicts our rhetoric, and how we navigate seemingly irreconcilable beliefs that occupy the same space within us. Her poems have appeared in USC 's Levan Institute for the Humanities: The Social Justice Review, The Indie Memphis Film Festival 2020 and Adwoa Aboah's: Gurls Talk.

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