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Like Baby Birds and Flower Petals Opening

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Author Bio

Rebecca Montross is a junior English major with a Writing Concentration with a minor in Peace & Justice Studies. She is also in the Secondary Education Teacher Certification program. Recently published in the Cupola, she adores writing poetry. She believes that poetry can be an incredibly cathartic way to make our triumphs and trauma into something beautiful. Other than poetry, she enjoys reading, music, biking, traveling, and drinking lots and lots of coffee. She proudly hails from New Jersey.

Like Baby Birds and Flower Petal Opening

REBECCA MONTROSS

a poem about a productive trip to the therapist

I'm sitting in her office
glancing at the yellow box of
tissues next to me

and it dawns on me that
I haven't cried in a long time –

has it been weeks? months?

I don't know, but I don't
want to think about it
too hard.

I try to explain how it feels
is my chest all the time –

like there's something
trapped in my ribcage
like something
needs to be let out.

I want to ask:
can pain be like a baby bird?

Naked and translucent,
slimy and blind,
does it know anything?

It can only cry in
the dark,
until I feed it
and I feed it
until down grows

fuzzy yellow,
the pigment of dandelions.

I feed it until
its crying
turns to singing,
praising the petals
of flowers,
soprano melody hung
lightly in the trees

wondering what it would be like
to feast in a garden.

I feed it until
I can detect the
fluttering of petite
wings against my sternum,

eager to fly, eager to leave.
But,

 don't leave yet. But,
 I really think you should...but,
 don't leave yet...but
 you really don't belong here anymore...

If pain can be like
a baby bird,
it's time for this one
to fly

because the nest in my chest
craves new life,
a new heart,
no broken egg shells,
no baby to feed,

just me.

I don't say any
of this to her
out loud,

because now isn't the time
to be poetic.

But I do ask
if it's possible
to hold onto pain
for so long
that the thought
of letting go
is absolutely terrifying...

and she nods,
giving me that
"I see where we're at" look.

She recites this quote:
"And the day came when the risk
to remain tight in a bud was more
painful than the risk it took to blossom."

And immediately I
picture a flower –
with rosy pink petals
the color of blood
underneath skin before it
rises to the surface

Her petals are pressed
together
a feverish orb,
trembling,
terrified.

Is she afraid of
being seen?

Is she afraid that
no one will admire them?

...maybe it's just easier to stay inside.

maybe she'll wilt,
maybe she won't.
maybe she'll wilt,
maybe she won't.

she can't have her petals plucked again.

But the sticky seal on those
petals hurts more
than whatever would happen
if she opened them.

It was a risk she was willing to take.
It was a risk I was willing to take.

One by one she let the
petals lift from
her center and fall
neatly in place.

She was open,
as if it was always
meant to be this way.

That yellow box of tissues
is in my lap,
and I want to be in the light.

I thank her, leave the
office and when I step
outside, I feel the heat
of the sun hit my face,
drying the tears on my cheeks.

I think I'm finally there.
I think I've made it.
I think I'm ready
to blossom.