

The Forest Voice

A PUBLICATION FOR THOSE AMONG US
WHO ARE NONHUMAN IN NATURE

ALL YE GRYPHONS · SELKIES · UNICORNS · DRAGONS
BEASTS ORDINARY AND FANTASTICAL

Issue 1
Winter 2011/
2012
Nonfiction

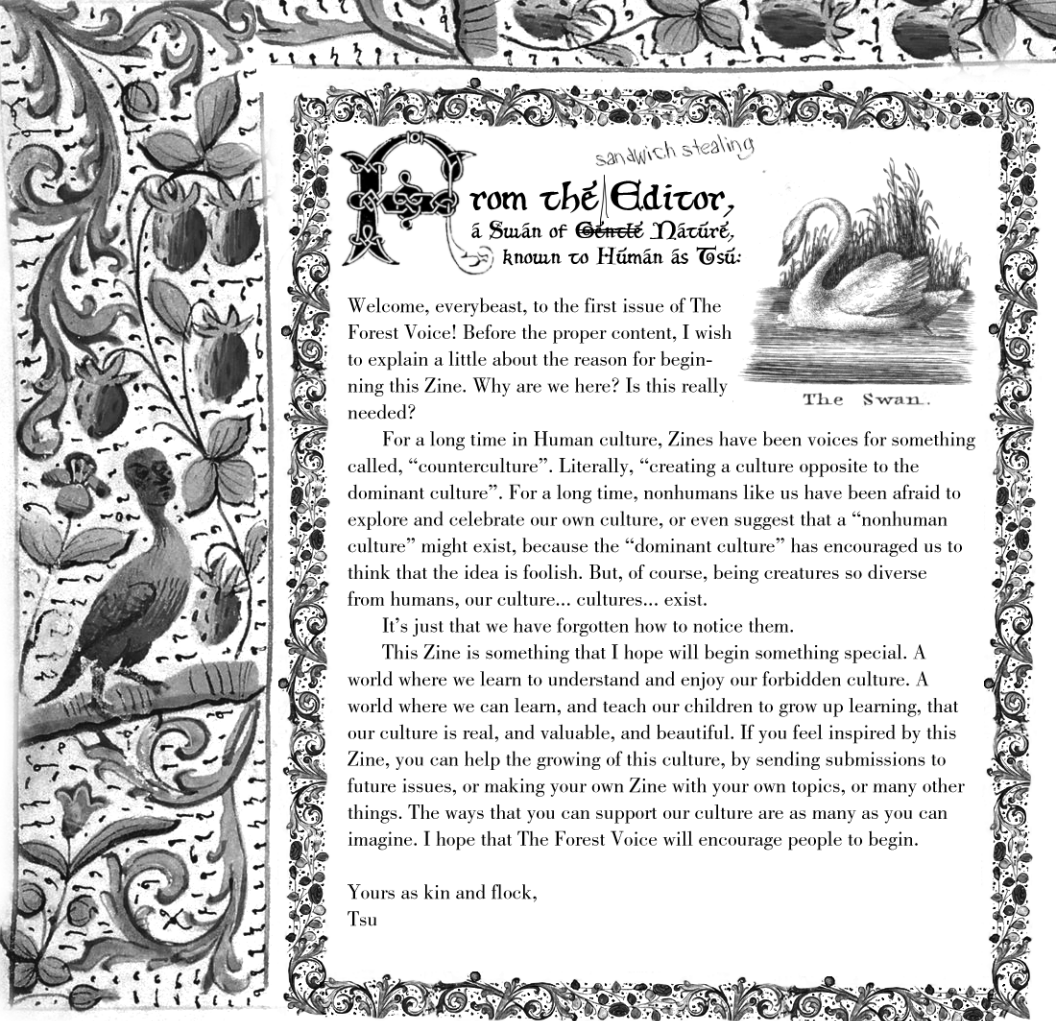


OUR FIRST ISSUE

Dealing with the topic
"Walking Man's Road"
or,
the Difficulty of Living
as Nonhuman in the
Human World

WORDS FROM

Tsú
Taryn Fox
Ráven Lokidottir
Réd Sixwing
Charley Tam
and many others



sandwich stealing

From the Editor,
 a Swán of ~~Cenét~~ *Nature*,
 known to Húmán as *Tsú*:



The Swan.

Welcome, everybeast, to the first issue of The Forest Voice! Before the proper content, I wish to explain a little about the reason for beginning this Zine. Why are we here? Is this really needed?

For a long time in Human culture, Zines have been voices for something called, "counterculture". Literally, "creating a culture opposite to the dominant culture". For a long time, nonhumans like us have been afraid to explore and celebrate our own culture, or even suggest that a "nonhuman culture" might exist, because the "dominant culture" has encouraged us to think that the idea is foolish. But, of course, being creatures so diverse from humans, our culture... cultures... exist.

It's just that we have forgotten how to notice them.

This Zine is something that I hope will begin something special. A world where we learn to understand and enjoy our forbidden culture. A world where we can learn, and teach our children to grow up learning, that our culture is real, and valuable, and beautiful. If you feel inspired by this Zine, you can help the growing of this culture, by sending submissions to future issues, or making your own Zine with your own topics, or many other things. The ways that you can support our culture are as many as you can imagine. I hope that The Forest Voice will encourage people to begin.

Yours as kin and flock,
 Tsu

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A Cygnet's Lament
by Tsu

migration season fills the air,
a shared heart pounding, calling.
i will not go again this year.
like every year before it.
i wish only that i could fly.
fulfil my nature's calling.
my feet are rooted to the ground.
the falling snow's a warning.



This is where we decide who we are.
This moment, this instant.
This is when we rise up,
Our voices howling like wind.
Crying out out our identities into the storm

This is where we decide who we are.
This moment, this instant.
This is when we pick up a pen
Writing furiously against the page
Declaring who we are with the written word.

This is where we decide who we are.
This moment, this instant.
This is when we whisper to friends
telling them quietly all the things we may be.
Trusting them with the world, with everything we are

This is where we decide who we are.
This moment, this instant.
This is when we are curled up alone,
Considering all the possibilities
the world has to offer.
And saying 'Yes' for the first time. Saying 'This is
who I am' underneath covers, beneath sheets.

This is where we decide who we are.
This moment, this instant.

Untitled
by Charley Tam



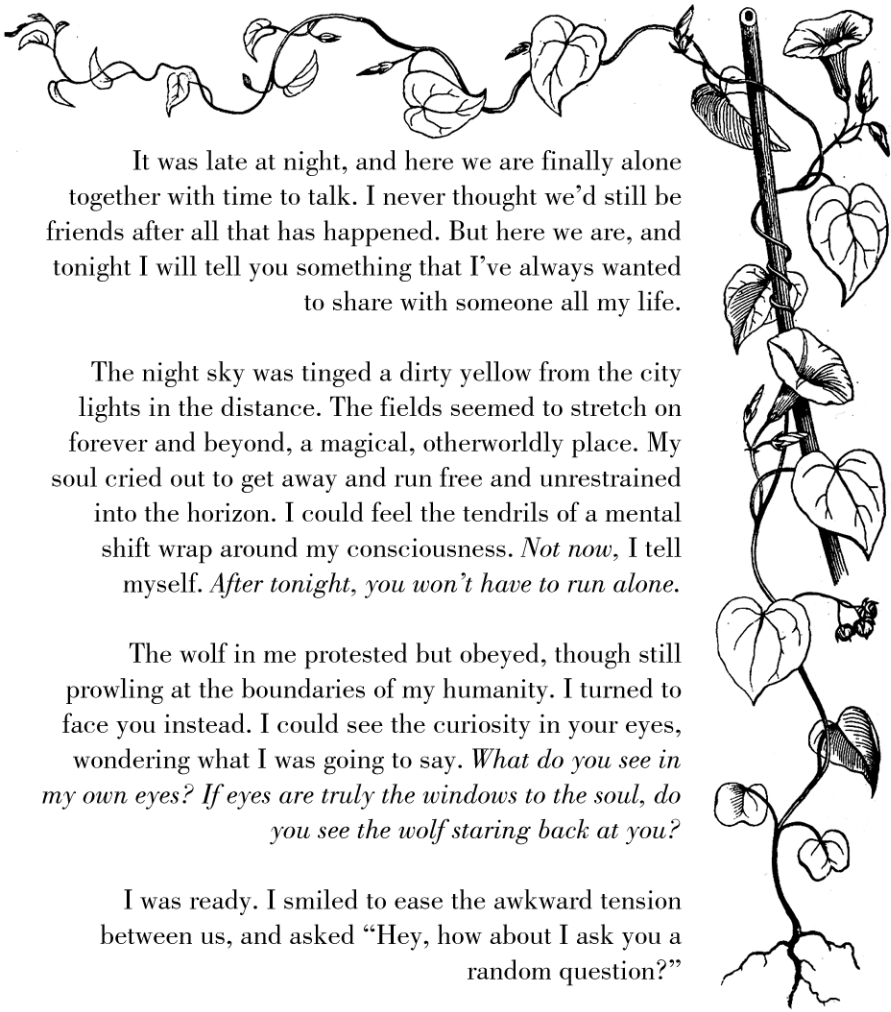


Untitled
by crystallizedblood.tumblr.com

(This is based on a personal story of my struggle to find acceptance with a person that I was once very close to but had a falling-out with. One of those reasons was that they were a conservative, traditional Christian and my beliefs clashed violently with theirs. Despite that, I thought that they would understand me and my being a therianthrope, but what happened that night made me realize that there were some things they would never understand, and I had to stop depending on this person and move on. It was also the night where I let myself be ME, unrestrained and unchecked. As said in the story "I was finally at peace with myself, and this inner peace washed away all the hurt [they] brought me in the past."

This is my story.)





It was late at night, and here we are finally alone together with time to talk. I never thought we'd still be friends after all that has happened. But here we are, and tonight I will tell you something that I've always wanted to share with someone all my life.

The night sky was tinged a dirty yellow from the city lights in the distance. The fields seemed to stretch on forever and beyond, a magical, otherworldly place. My soul cried out to get away and run free and unrestrained into the horizon. I could feel the tendrils of a mental shift wrap around my consciousness. *Not now, I tell myself. After tonight, you won't have to run alone.*

The wolf in me protested but obeyed, though still prowling at the boundaries of my humanity. I turned to face you instead. I could see the curiosity in your eyes, wondering what I was going to say. *What do you see in my own eyes? If eyes are truly the windows to the soul, do you see the wolf staring back at you?*

I was ready. I smiled to ease the awkward tension between us, and asked "Hey, how about I ask you a random question?"

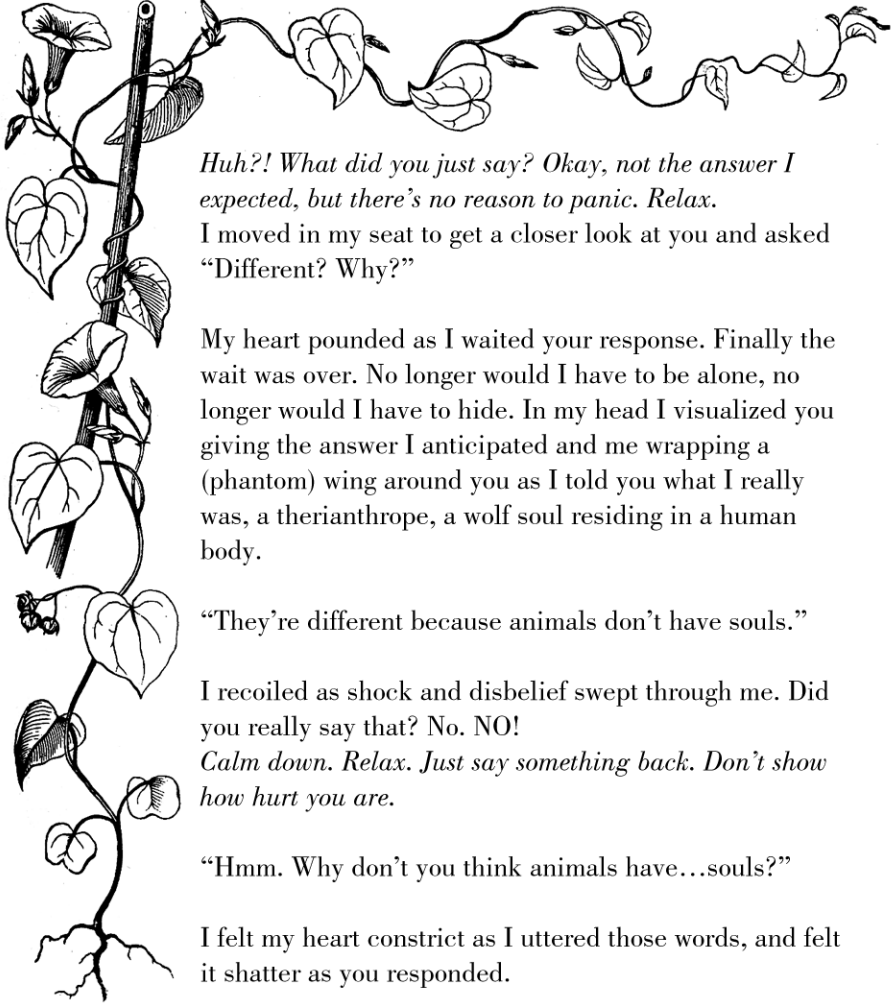
"Sure. What is it?"

"Do you believe animals have s-" *No, not like that, bring up the subject slowly.* "I mean, if animals had language to express themselves better, what would they think about abstract ideas such as philosophy, morality and religion?"

I waited with bated breath for what you were going to say next. I had prepared and waited for this moment for a long time.

You took a while to think. You tilted your head, your hair falling slowly across your eyes and I had to fight the urge to reach up and brush it away. You were so beautiful in the dim light.

"Er...I'd say it would be different."



Huh?! What did you just say? Okay, not the answer I expected, but there's no reason to panic. Relax.

I moved in my seat to get a closer look at you and asked "Different? Why?"

My heart pounded as I waited your response. Finally the wait was over. No longer would I have to be alone, no longer would I have to hide. In my head I visualized you giving the answer I anticipated and me wrapping a (phantom) wing around you as I told you what I really was, a therianthrope, a wolf soul residing in a human body.

"They're different because animals don't have souls."

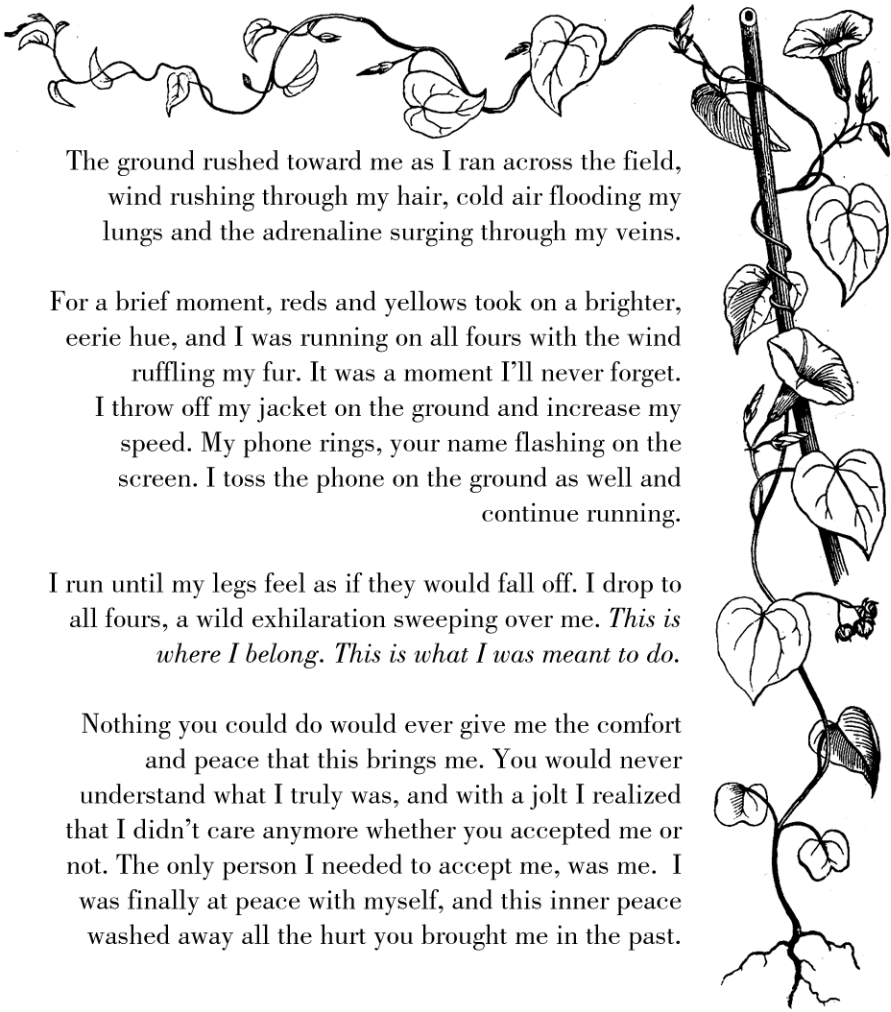
I recoiled as shock and disbelief swept through me. Did you really say that? No. NO!
Calm down. Relax. Just say something back. Don't show how hurt you are.

"Hmm. Why don't you think animals have...souls?"

I felt my heart constrict as I uttered those words, and felt it shatter as you responded.

"Well, when God created humans, He created them in his own image. Animals didn't get that."

My heart fell. The wolf howled in agony as I looked away. I released my hold and let the shifts take over. I looked up at you, into those dark emerald eyes, eyes which I had looked into and let touch my heart, eyes which would never look into my own again and see the wolf looking back. *You're so beautiful, I thought. But you'll never see my blood when I'm bleeding.*



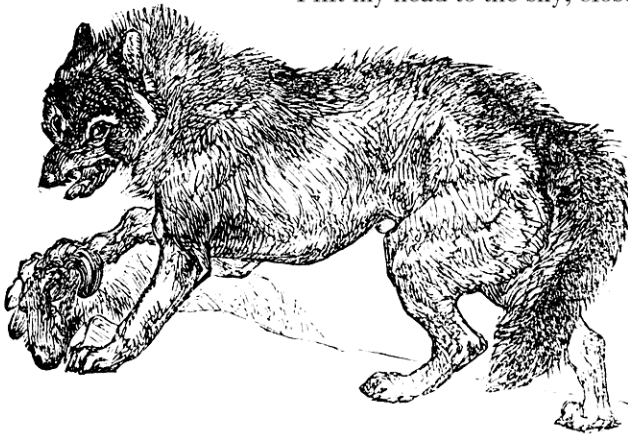
The ground rushed toward me as I ran across the field, wind rushing through my hair, cold air flooding my lungs and the adrenaline surging through my veins.

For a brief moment, reds and yellows took on a brighter, eerie hue, and I was running on all fours with the wind ruffling my fur. It was a moment I'll never forget. I throw off my jacket on the ground and increase my speed. My phone rings, your name flashing on the screen. I toss the phone on the ground as well and continue running.

I run until my legs feel as if they would fall off. I drop to all fours, a wild exhilaration sweeping over me. *This is where I belong. This is what I was meant to do.*

Nothing you could do would ever give me the comfort and peace that this brings me. You would never understand what I truly was, and with a jolt I realized that I didn't care anymore whether you accepted me or not. The only person I needed to accept me, was me. I was finally at peace with myself, and this inner peace washed away all the hurt you brought me in the past.

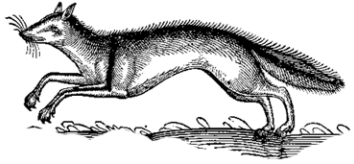
I lift my head to the sky, close my eyes and howl.



With that one howl, I fully embraced my therian side, and let go of my self-doubt, suffering and loneliness. And with that one howl, I let go of you as well.



In Case of Fox Possession by Taryn Fox



If a fox possesses you, you won't notice it at first.

You'd think that having your soul forced out of your body by an animal would cause you distress, but it doesn't. At least, not to begin with.

So, what does it feel like?

You'll start to notice things. Stuff that never, ever bothered you will suddenly stand out. You'll wonder about things that you'd never wondered about. And you'll read. You'll read lots. You'll read like this is your very first day in the world, and you need to know everything about it. Because it *is*, and you *do*.

You won't read what you used to read, either. That won't be what interests you anymore. You could be a devout Catholic, and suddenly you'll be studying the Quran or the Tao Te Ching. You could be an atheist's atheist, firmly convinced that there's no God and She's not worth worshiping anyway, and all of a sudden you'll wonder who answers prayers and what you would do if you could.

You'll start asking "What if" questions. What if Heavenly Father was gay? What if there was no such thing as copyright? What if you tried out something you *knew* was stupid and wrong, and it worked?

This is what it feels like to be a trickster.

You won't *want* to break the rules. Not at first, not if you think of yourself as a good or responsible person. You won't *want* to make the mistakes that you've been told other people make. You've seen them make those mistakes from a distance, and you know they were hurt by it ... right? You just won't. Because there are people, and groups, and belief systems that you love, and you don't stop loving them once you're possessed. You don't suddenly up and want to play tricks on them all.

But the “What ifs” keep coming. And at first you’re horrified because it’s only after you’ve spent all day pondering them that you realize what you’ve done. But pretty soon, you’re horrified because you realize *they’re right*.

There are horrible things going on in this world, all around you. They’re going on because people aren’t asking “What if” questions. They’re going on because people are careful only to ask the questions they’re supposed to, look at the things they’re supposed to, think about things they’re supposed to. They’re going on because of you, and because of people like you and your family and friends and everyone else that you care about.

It’s your fault. You’re doing it to them right now.

No matter how slowly you learn that, it’ll be a lot to take in. Maybe you’ll snap, and do the unthinkable. Or maybe you’ll just sit there, day in and day out, glued to your screen and your books and wishing you didn’t believe what you’re reading.

This is when the people around you start to notice the change. Maybe, just maybe, you’ll get lucky and be around someone who sees what you see, and knows why you’re sad. But the people around you will probably just think you’re becoming a pessimist, and you’re no fun to be around anymore. Worst case, they’ll see the questions you ask and the feelings you have as problems that need to be fixed.

Maybe you will, too.

Because being a fox-spirit, a trickster, a *kitsune* doesn’t mean that you’re proud and confident. Accepting yourself for who and what you are makes you proud and confident. And when you don’t know what you are, you don’t know what’s right or wrong anymore, you just know that *everyone says you’re the problem*, you start to think that they’re right.

You feel like an aberration, an abomination, something that is Not Meant To Be in this world. And you’re right, because you aren’t. This world has no place for tricksters. It has no place for animals in human bodies, for animals *posing* as humans, for animals who *possess* humans and take their places and live human lives.

It has no place for anything that it can’t tame.

You want to tame the fox, so you can live in this world. You want to tame the fox for your friends’ sake, and your family’s sake, and the sake of the things that you still believe in. The ones that haven’t betrayed you yet. You want to tame the fox for them, but you can’t. And that’s a problem, because by now

you are the fox

and

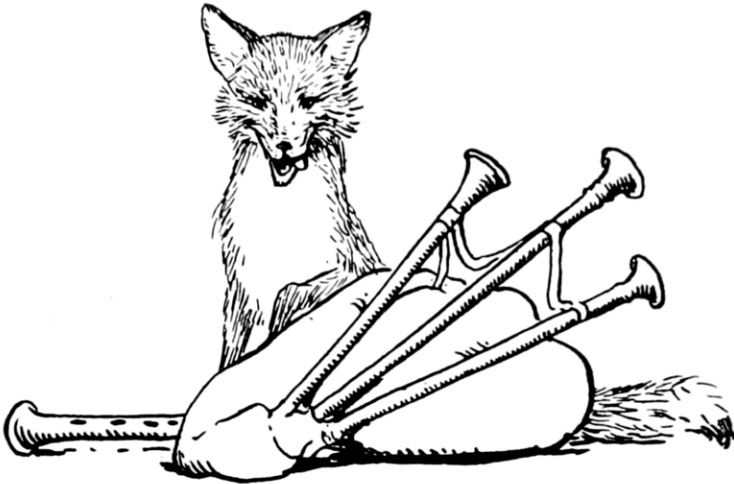
if you are tamed, you will die.

Maybe you'll physically die of despair, one of the most horrible ways to die. Or maybe you'll succeed in breaking yourself, and killing the person you are; replacing it with someone else who looks the same, but feels and acts differently.

But that's already happened to you. It happened as soon as you got possessed. And if there's a way to undo it, I haven't found it yet. I don't want to.

Part of me wishes I could bring back the person I displaced. But the rest of me knows that I have the right to live, too. And if you're going to drive foxes out of their dens, put up mansions in their forests and plant turf grass on their territory, don't be surprised when we find a way to come back.

Don't be surprised if we play tricks on your senses or turn your world upside-down, either. Just because we're not in Japan doesn't mean we aren't magical.





Child of Stardust
by Jayden Lyn

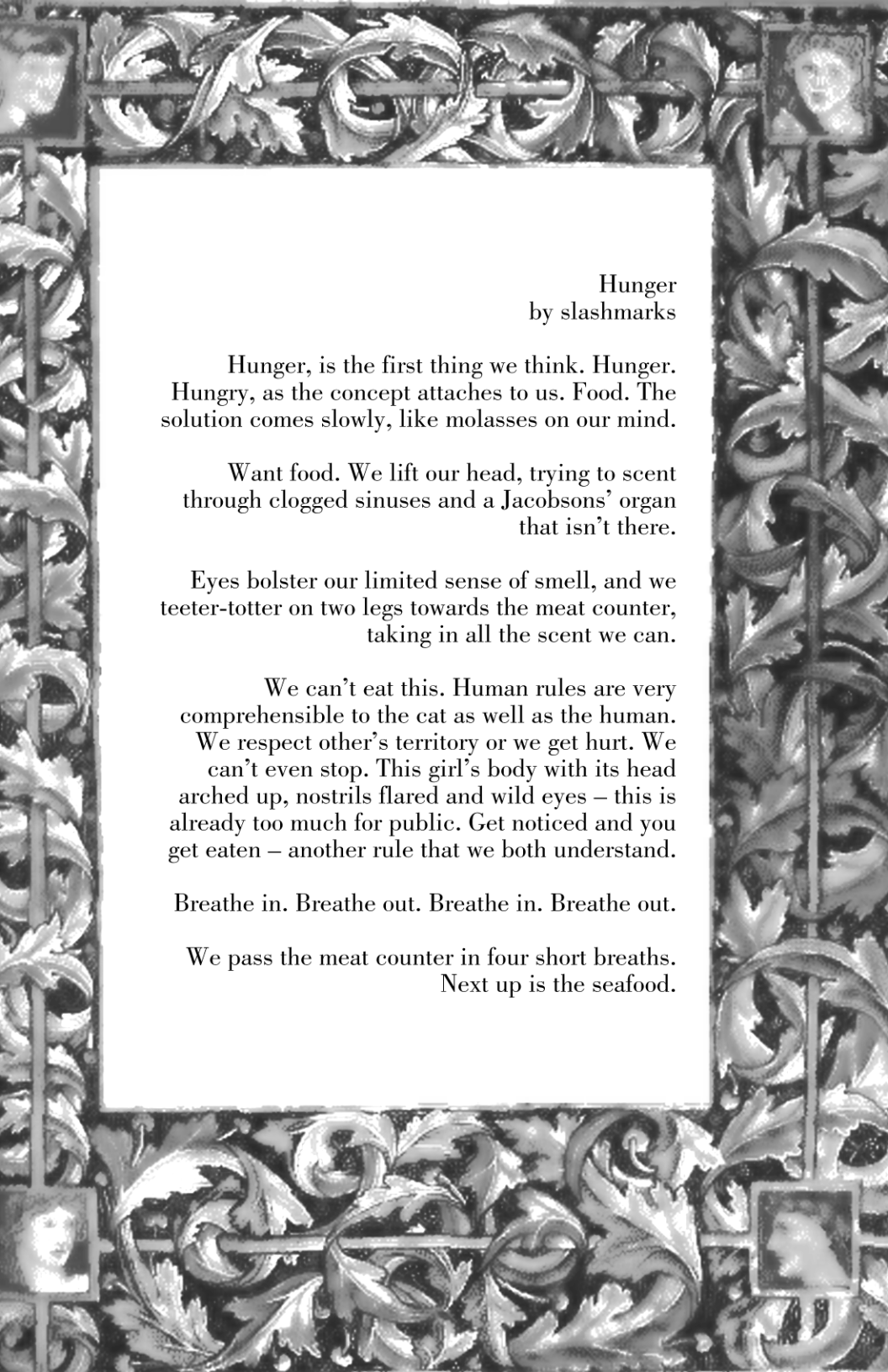
There's a feeling that overcomes me.
The silver of stardust, the nebulae
widening and throbbing. There's a
place I belong in the space between
stars. Falling through, watching myself
bend with time in the place where
all the elements are born and die again.

I close my eyes and try to describe it. I know it so well, the
milky white dust, the way the layers spread one over another,
the stillness, the quiet knowing we're all okay in the cycling. I
wouldn't quite say "numbers" but there's a way the universe
is built that is closer to number and sequences than what
things here are built of. At least, the space I go back to of my
mind.

How I ache for it. The explosions, the peace, the way
everything is so wondrous and mundane at once. No urgency,
yet a sense of importance. No anger, no sadness, not even
happiness, just the feeling you get when your eyes watch two
stars circle in dance, the glow that overcomes you.

I want that feeling forever. I could live in that feeling for
good. Maybe that is the feeling that is the source of my being.

Take me home great stars! I was never really human but
stardust and energetic consciousness that somehow ended up
tucked into a body. Welcome me again and I will dance with
you. I will feel at home once more. And we will settle into the
cosmic beauty that is just existence, and being in the home
where I belong.



Hunger
by slashmarks

Hunger, is the first thing we think. Hunger.
Hungry, as the concept attaches to us. Food. The
solution comes slowly, like molasses on our mind.


Want food. We lift our head, trying to scent
through clogged sinuses and a Jacobson's organ
that isn't there.

Eyes bolster our limited sense of smell, and we
teeter-totter on two legs towards the meat counter,
taking in all the scent we can.

We can't eat this. Human rules are very
comprehensible to the cat as well as the human.
We respect other's territory or we get hurt. We
can't even stop. This girl's body with its head
arched up, nostrils flared and wild eyes – this is
already too much for public. Get noticed and you
get eaten – another rule that we both understand.

Breathe in. Breathe out. Breathe in. Breathe out.

We pass the meat counter in four short breaths.
Next up is the seafood.



Untitled
by waaterlelie

My soul is the rain. I love the water and I am the water and I bleed water and I am born from water. I am betrothed to the summer songs of water wraiths, gurgling with verdure aquatic and rustling leaves over head, babbling brooks in their voices. To the black horse in the lake, and he will lure you to your death with his sticky and cold skin as you try to rip the water-lilies from his muddy mane. He will drown you, because he loves you. I am betrothed to the spirit of the loc. To an undine friend, long lost. To the wilds. To the naiad's sensuous caress. To a kelpie's kisses. I am the water.

"That Was Then, This Is Now" ...Except When It's Not

One attitude that seems pretty prevalent in pagan circles, and even in the otherkin community where people should know better, is what I've come to term "the default humancentric POV" with regards to how one's spirituality should be expressed. The "default humancentric POV" as applied to religion/spirituality typically has a form of spirituality based in developing a relationship with Higher Powers, whether of "worship" or "working with" - and by this I mean beings classified as "gods", angels, demons, dragons, whatever - and also from the standpoint of YOU BIGGER ME PUNY, ME PUNY HUMAN BOW DOWN AND DO SPECIAL SONG AND DANCE FOR YOU.

Now, I would say there seems to be something in humanity where a lot of people need to relate to something "bigger" than themselves. It has only been comparatively recently that life has not been nasty, brutal, and short if you are Homo sapiens, and there are enough world mythologies with common themes and archetypes that it's clear people remember something lent a helping hand in this species' development. So I don't fault humans for wanting to reach out to these beings and say "thank you" and try to stay on their good side.

There are issues with this default POV even if you are, actually, fully human-blooded/human-souled. I've seen a lot of people get screwed over by the idea that either 1. entities never interact with people because why would BIG GODS bother with PUNY HUMANS and if you claim such interaction you're delusional/lying/compensating or 2. your entire life must be about The Powers™ and proving your epic devotion to them. It may be that some "gods" demand very intense worship, but in my opinion, this is the 21st century and humanity would be best staying away from such entities. I personally think the healthiest sort of bonds someone could have from that default POV of "human approaching mythological entity" is a friend/family standpoint, or teacher/student. I am probably biased considering that back in the day, I erred on the side of being informal with people who invoked me.

If you are in fact other-souled or something has tinkered with your lineage (or some combination of the two), then it becomes that much harder, because

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a lot of people feel drawn to various forms of paganism or other mysticism (like Abrahamic) where like entities are its focal point. So you now not only have the default POV and the expectation to conform to that, but if you are self-aware about your otherness and deal with the otherkin community and discuss how your otherness impacts you in the here and now, you will start to hear the refrain of "that was then, this is now, you're human and need to accept it", which is something we got in spades. This is usually directed at people who were something non-human in a past life. However, the past still continues to affect the present. Reincarnation is a stage for issues to play out across multiple lives. Preferences and abilities from a past life tend to carry over even in a completely human existence, and much more so from a mythological one. If your otherness is not something based in a past life, but is entirely bound in your present life, then the "that was then, this is now" argument doesn't hold weight at all.

I have seen the default POV of "approach these entities like a human" hurt people, and not only severely hinder psychospiritual development, but add to extant issues and exacerbate them.

Here's the bottom line, for those of us who are other:

When you're treating your peers or family like your betters, it creates walls. When you don't take care of yourself energetically because you can't acknowledge your true form, it creates sickness. When you aren't allowed to be and own and embrace what you are, you lack purpose.

Sure, it's really hard to go against the grain of the prevailing attitude that we must all, regardless of our background and circumstances, approach mythological beings like our betters rather than our peers or kin. You'll be accused of "hubris". But the alternative is to try to "do the right thing" and unfortunately that leaves a lot of us still hungry, still feeling like something is "off". We've seen people struggle, stumbling blindly and hurting themselves because they bought the line of "that was then, this is now" and denied what they are and what their energy needs to function properly, what their spirit needs to express to be whole. We ourselves have struggled with it, and now that we see our spiritual expression isn't meant to conform to that default position of "worship" or "working with" Higher Powers, but is rather about embracing what we were and still are, and working with our abilities (even if limited) to be the change we wish to see in the world... it's made all the difference.

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So, it's something to think about. Are you working within a spiritual paradigm from the default human perspective, or are you owning your otherness and seeing where it takes you, even if others may not understand and may not approve? If it's true that your past identity "doesn't really matter", or that you should "just accept being human", then you'd have no knowledge of your otherness, it wouldn't affect you at all. The fact that you are aware of it, means it's there for a reason, and that reason is not to be like everyone else, and do as everyone else does.



ntitled
by Anonymous

Once, I was a princess but the scars shone through my thinning skin and they named me misery instead. I am holy light and invisible wings but what is inside me does not match the ache without. Dear darling far away human children, the ache without does not exist like you think it does. I am alone in the light and I am alone in myself and I am content. If you saw me raw, I would be dripping sunlight, like gold, like mead. If you saw me raw, I would get you drunk on the subtle sting of the bittersweet. I would wrap your bare and barren skin in mine, dripping godliness and warmth and light.

Do not worry when you touch my wings, sweetest friends. I am no glass-winged butterfly, no fragile moth, no anything you've seen before. That dust there is stardust and you can take what you like. I landed here by accident and in the blooming late afternoon when the sun (oh glory, my Lord and Lady) impregnates the trees and all life is greener, is richer, is riper, I make believe I'm returning home soon.



A Prayer
for Transformation
by Alias Pseudonym



I pray unto all that make,

unto the windsongs that turn the leaves to gold
unto the sunbeam dancers upon melting snow
unto the changeful moonlight in wax or in wane

& unto the dreamclothed wordworkers & spellworkers
that spin truth from shadowstuff & candleflame,
& unto the cleareyed patient wise ones
that distill it from earth & seawater in clean glass tubes

I pray on behalf of all who cast the wrong shadow:
let us become what we have always been.
let us run & fly free amid the wind & trees & sky
with heart and limb as well as soul
& let all silence sing till all walls crack
& crumble from the roar.





LIVING AS AN URBAN FAE

BY LADY VERDE

It's hard. It's magnificent. It's scary. It's confusing. It's different. I'm different.

I'm a college student, an aspiring Environmentalist; tree hugger, an artist, I'm also kin; a faery. Many of the people I meet and know only know 2 out of 5 things previously mentioned.

Many do not know the faces of the doubled-sided coin that is Fae.

Ever since I was a little girl my life has been bamboozled and eye opening because of my being. I am who I am because of who I am.

It is thrilling to have certain abilities. It is chilling how I can sense things that aren't mundane. When the leaves die in the autumn, I smile with a sense of happiness that life will be spring forward once again. In the winter, the earthen heat warms me; heat that one might think would be frozen as well.

I can feel life growing when I connect myself to the earth, more times than that I do it unconsciously— it like second nature. It is absolutely hilarious when you have animals follow you around or come to you like it is the most natural thing— like everyone should be able to have that experience. It is nerve wracking when my kin i.e. scare the shit out of me, but I smile because I know they mean no harm, it is natural. It is a blessing that two blocks away from my house is a dense, hilled forest filled with Oak, Evergreen, Cottonwood, and thousands upon thousands of more trees. They talk to me, and I listen. I touch their bark and I can feel the life within them. Flowers sing as sweetly as the nectar they are filled with. The ground hums, vibrates, and you forever hear the roots grow ever so deeper. The marshes and prairies buzz about with the sonatas of a sparrow and the dances of the dragonflies.

I live in a city with a population of nearly 2.7 million people. Chicago. Need I say more, how precious wildlife is to such an urban environment? Not just where I live, but everywhere. A lake becoming more polluted by the year, and the skies cry acid. Brownfields, miles of fresh soil that once grew life grieve for they are trapped by the contamination and steel from the olden days of industrialization.

Do I wish I could just escape to a forest and the hell with all of humanity? Well, yes and no. Someone has to help keep these forests here for its precious resources and the creatures that live there. I have a reason of being born fae in this lifetime where change is ever so rapid. We adapt and live between the Fae and Humans. Take in as much knowledge and help bring the worlds together before the other destroys it all out of greed. Some people want to say magic isn't real, Fae aren't real... You want magical? Go outside and smell the goddamned roses. So much magic has been lost in this world because it is lost from people's hearts.

Make a Fairy Fossil



A fossil fairy makes a wonderful decoration for your room or a sacred altar, or a gift to a friend. But, real fairy fossils are expensive and difficult to find. So, here is how you can make your own at home!

Ingredients:

Molding compound (a kind of rubbery solution that is used to make molds - you can find this at the craft store)

Art plaster (you can also find this at the craft store)

Two small plastic human skeletons (from Halloween supply stores, eBay, etc.)

Small feathers

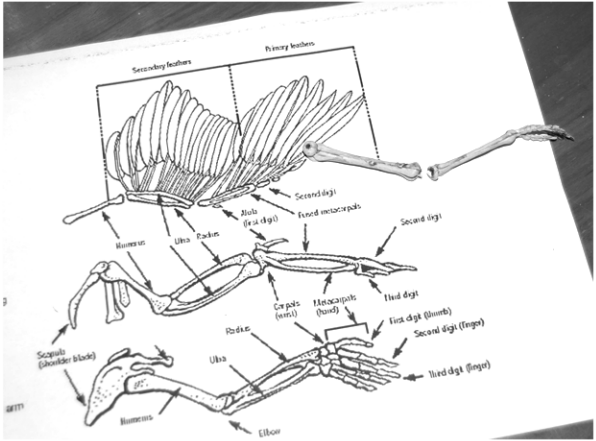
Tacky glue

Teabags

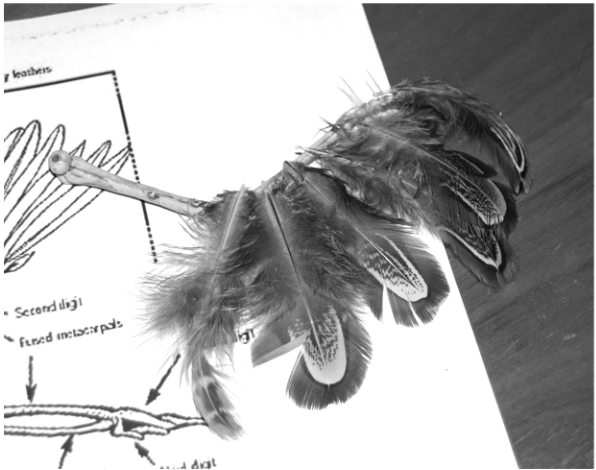


1. Arrange one skeleton in different positions to see what position looks best for your fossil. Fossil skeletons are usually found damaged, so, a slightly odd or twisted pose will look most realistic.

2. Remove the arms from the other skeleton and bend them into the shape of wing bones. Using scissors, carefully cut the "hand" part into the shape of a wing alula, or "thumb". You can use bird or bat references to help with this, or, any fairy skeletons you already have. Different types of fairy have different wing structures, so, don't be too afraid of being "wrong" about this!



3. Arrange the feathers along the wing. Again, you can use bird references to help. Glue them on.



4. Leave the parts to dry for several hours.

5. When the parts are fully dry, mix up the molding compound using the directions on the box. This will create a rubbery mixture. When the molding compound is ready (again, the directions will tell you when this is), you can press the skeleton parts into the molding compound, in the positions you decided in point 1.

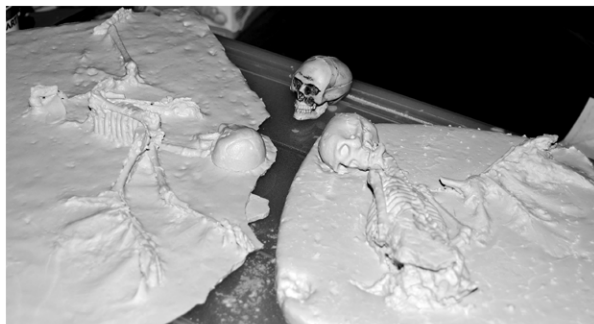
You don't need to press it all the way down. Covering half of the skeleton will work just fine. Look at real fossils for examples.



6. While leaving the molding compound to set for the recommended amount of time, mix up the plaster.

7. When the molding compound is set, remove the skeleton parts. Now you have a mold. Pour the plaster into the mold you just made. Leave this to dry overnight.

8. Remove the dry plaster from the mold. You should have a "fairy fossil"!



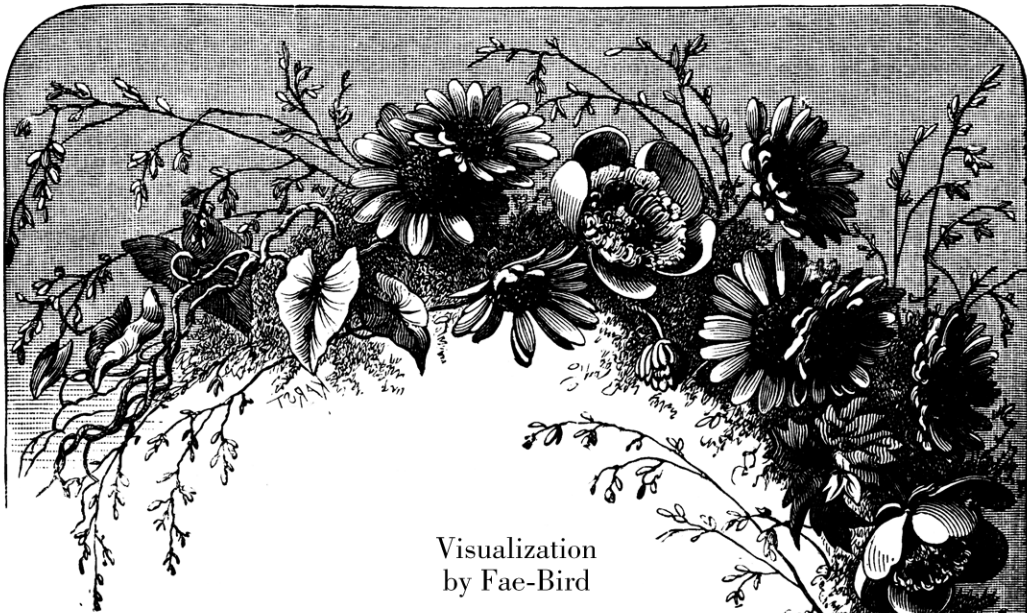
8. To make your fossil look more realistic, you can boil some water, place a teabag in it, then squeeze the tea from the teabag onto the fossil (don't burn your fingers!) If you leave this to dry overnight, your fossil will have a lovely "natural bone" color.

9. For an extra dose of fairy trickery, you can bury your fossils somewhere outdoors...



The person who finds them will get a sure surprise!





Visualization
by Fae-Bird

I have discovered a wonderful way to reduce stress and anxiety attacks. I am bird/faerie-kin (I prefer the title “Fae-Bird”), and I have feathered wings. When I am panicking, on the verge of melting down, I do visualization.



I do not know if it will work for everyone; we all react to stress in different ways.



Close your eyes and start breathing slowly and deeply. With each breath in, visualize your wings unfolding slowly, with the breath. Hold your breath for a little while, and hold the image of your wings. Feel them as part of your body, emerging and unfurling from your back in all of their glory and beauty.

Now, exhale slowly. With the breath coming out, visualize your wings folding in, as they had folded out—with the breath. Feel them fold back and rest against your back. Repeat the process as long as you want, or need, until you are calmer.

Again, I am not sure if it will work for everyone, but it worked for this Fae-bird.

Perhaps it will work for you, too.





Hidden Places
by Myros,
a Dracoglyph



Dusk now dawning, other life down to dream,
Slowly waking from sleep's simple stream,
It is time for me to rise.

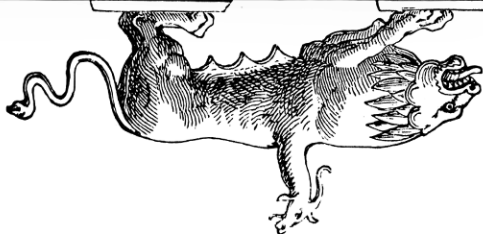
Fluffing feathers, flippant preening,
Soothe sore bones with sanguine stretching
And fall into fancied flight.

Hungry and hunting in haunting light,
The moon's middling glow aids my sight
As I soar above the silent vale.

A darting shadow, dip and dash!
I slip in silent, a fatal flash
Of talon and tooth'd beak

Swaying silent, just in sight watches
A world-weary fae as the gryph catches
It's cottontailed meal.

Both kin see, and nod, and carry on,
Neither known to the hostile world beyond,
But in the glen, the hidden places,
Life carries on.





Can't Love This Body
by Haven

i am constantly told how i should love this body
but I cant
this body is broken
it creaks and groans like an old house in the night
joints rusted and stiff
pains shoot through it with every move
the head throbs and pounds as if it is home to an army of
drummers
it wears down easily and needs more rest than i can give it
because of it days are spent sleeping
losing precious time
i am constantly told how i should love this body
but I cant
this body is wrong
there are curves where they shouldn't be
lumps on my chest that make bile rise in my throat
and hips that make my heart clench
its all softness and curves when i want to be sharpness and flat
i am constantly told how i should love this body
but I cant
this body is human and im not
there are no wings to soar with
my heart burns with the desire to fly
yet this body cannot
looking at the sky a bit of me dies knowing i can never fly
through it
the teeth are dull when they should be sharp
the hands are small and delicate and end rounded
they should be long and wicked and end in claws
the eyes can barely see in the day and are blind to the night
how i wish to be able to see as i should
to not have to wear glass on my face
and be blind and helpless when it is lost
this is my body
am always told to love it
but i will never be able to
and thats how it will always be
so please do not tell me to love it
i have heard you say that over and over
until it rings in my head like the bells of a church
i am constantly told how i should love this body
but I cant
and that is my choice so let me live with it
so please dont take what little control i have away from me



Daughter's Story by Raven Lokidottir

A long time ago in a land of snow, a girlchild was born to a giant. This girl's mother did not wish to raise her, for she did not like that the giant's blood was dominant within her, and so she left the girl for her father and left. The girl would not see her mother again for many long years.

But this girl was not sad, for she had her father, and she had siblings from her father. She rode on the back of Brother Wolf, she danced and swam with Brother Snake, and she sang and laughed with her Sister, another little girl like her. But then one day, a man who called himself her Uncle took her





siblings from her.

He threw Brother Snake into the cold depths of the ocean where he would grow long and strong, but be alone and also grow mean.

He tossed her Sister, barely any older than her, far beneath the earth to where the dead dwell and she grew tall and beautiful, but alone she also grew cold. He bound Brother Wolf to a rock and he grew large and fierce, but alone he also grew cruel.

She watched her father weep for her siblings. She watched Uncle tell him that it was for the good of all that he did these things. She wondered at how her father could call a man Brother who would rob him of his children, but she didn't say a word.

She said nothing, she sang no more and danced no more once her siblings had been taken from her. She stayed near her father, and she grew tall like him, and she grew clever like him. But she did not smile. She did not laugh.

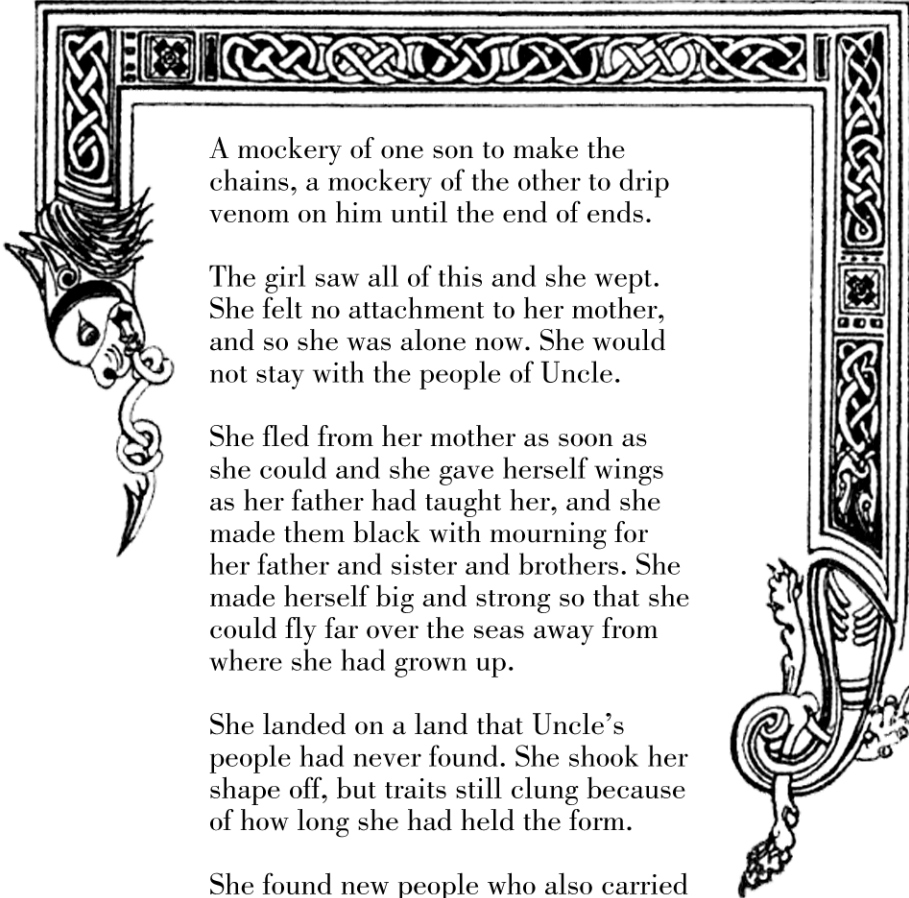
Eventually, her father took another bride, a pretty young thing, but the girl could not call her Mother, even though her own had left her. She liked this new wife well enough. The wife made her father happy, and that she had not seen for too long.

In time the wife bore two sons to her father, and the little girl was happy to have siblings again. But what joy was there to be found in normal little boys when she had been sister to Snake and Wolf?

But she loved them, and she taught them and finally she laughed and smiled and talked and danced again.

But once more, Uncle came, and this time he came dragging her father behind him in a net. She watched in horror as Uncle turned one of her brothers into a Beast and set him to kill the other. She tried to cry out, but something stopped her.

Her mother stood behind her, a hand blocking her cries as Uncle bound her father. Her mother dragged her away as her father was chained and pulled beneath the earth.



A mockery of one son to make the chains, a mockery of the other to drip venom on him until the end of ends.

The girl saw all of this and she wept. She felt no attachment to her mother, and so she was alone now. She would not stay with the people of Uncle.

She fled from her mother as soon as she could and she gave herself wings as her father had taught her, and she made them black with mourning for her father and sister and brothers. She made herself big and strong so that she could fly far over the seas away from where she had grown up.

She landed on a land that Uncle's people had never found. She shook her shape off, but traits still clung because of how long she had held the form.

She found new people who also carried traits of other forms. She made a new home there, and she could be happy, though she missed her siblings and would travel to the land of the dead often to visit them.



Untitled
by Alias Pseudonym

birdsong & the wet smell of recent rain
& the soft & steady trickle of water
flow down the mossy roofs
& dripping to the ground from glistening leaves
after the rain make sound,

Make green music:

lively chartreuse jaunts & slow mossy dirges
& the great romance of slanting light & shadow
when the clouds part &
the flowers greet the sun with such vanity
i cannot help but smile
& i lower my camera, for
Such a song i think cannot be captured
only remembered.

& i wonder if i should apologize to blades of grass
& specks of moss on the cobblestones, for
treading carelessly, & perhaps
setting them off their singing



Untitled
by Of Salfarro

Seeking, travelling, I find
An object to fill my being
Never, ever, has it shined,
But still, in it I confide,
And it keeps me warm,
Inside, inside, inside...

I Am - by Charley Tam



I am.

I am genderqueer. I am mentally ill. I am multiple. I am legally blind. I am fat. I am tall. I am polyamorous. I am asexual. I am kinky.

I am a writer. I am a poet. I am a storyteller. I am a muse. I am a sounding board. I am an enabler. I am a procrastinator.

I am also nonhuman.

I am a child of Winter and Autumn and I am a harvest ghost. I am winged, pawed, clawed and tailed. I am a creature of the fires and a creature of shadows and one of the dark, quiet places in the corners of your home.

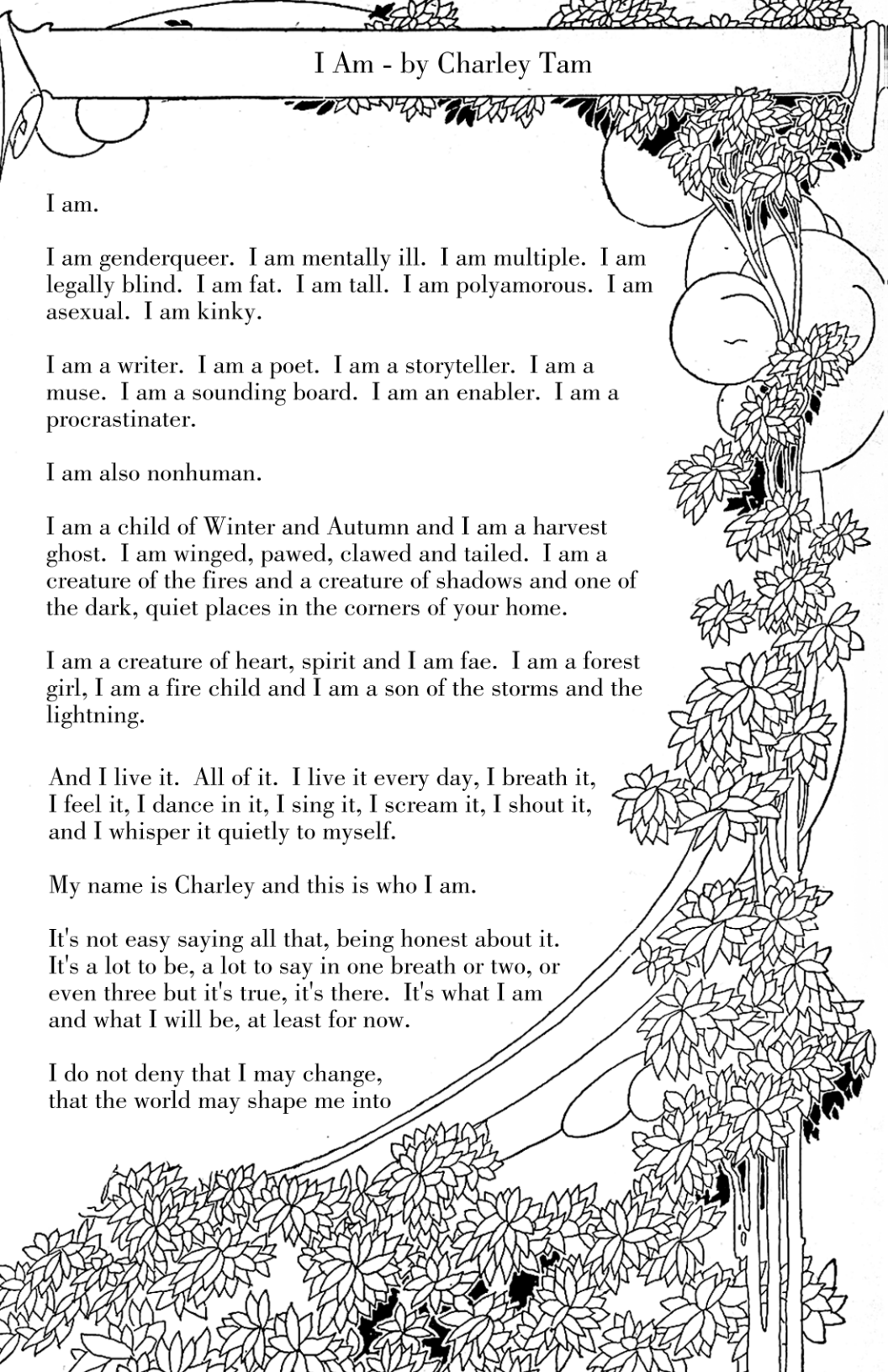
I am a creature of heart, spirit and I am fae. I am a forest girl, I am a fire child and I am a son of the storms and the lightning.

And I live it. All of it. I live it every day, I breath it, I feel it, I dance in it, I sing it, I scream it, I shout it, and I whisper it quietly to myself.

My name is Charley and this is who I am.

It's not easy saying all that, being honest about it. It's a lot to be, a lot to say in one breath or two, or even three but it's true, it's there. It's what I am and what I will be, at least for now.

I do not deny that I may change, that the world may shape me into





The Forest Voice

something different, something I may not recognize
at first, but for now, I know what I am.

And in the end, that is what matters, knowing what you are
right now, in this instant, in this moment. Feeling who you
are deep in your bones, feeling what your heart tells you.
Ignore your mind, ignore the uncertainties you may have,
ignore the voices of Doubt, Disgrace and Demeaning
Words. They do not matter, they are unimportant.

What matters is your heart. What matters is your soul.

Not everyone can scream, I understand that. Not everyone
can proclaim loudly who they are, whether it's because
they're in a situation that is dangerous, or because anxiety
or because of some other reason. That's all right. You don't have to
scream, you don't have to shout.

Being nonhuman isn't about who can be loudest, who can roar the most
fiercely, who can run the fastest. It's about you, it's about who you are
and what you feel.

We are a community, yes, I am not denying that but being nonhuman is
something between you and yourself. If you know it to be true, then you
don't have to shout, you don't have to howl if you don't want to.

Just be true. I know it's hard but close your eyes, feel your heart, feel
how it beats. Feel your body, your true form. Know it is there, inside
you, know that you are what you are, know that it will not change if no
one else notices and it will definitely not change if someone does not
believe you.

You are beautiful and wonderful and and a treasure to this Earth.

On the day I write this article, I will be going to a therapist the following
Friday. I am going to tell her that, amongst the clutter of things that I
identify as, one is nonhuman. I am going to tell her because I am at a
point in my life where I can be honest about this, at least to some people.

And I can do that because I can look inside myself and know what I am,
who i am. I can feel my feline heart, my fae heart. I can feel it beat for
the Wild Hunt, for the moonlight and the storms. I can feel it yearn for
the chase.

The Forest Voice

If she doesn't believe me, if she thinks that it is a part of my mental illness, then so be it. It was a pairing that was not meant to be and I am going to move on.

I am at a point where I don't let other people tell me what I am and what I'm not anymore. It's hard to get there, it's hard and rocky and takes time. and some people may never get there. I may fall back into old habits myself and just let that therapist believe it's a part of my illness. Who knows.

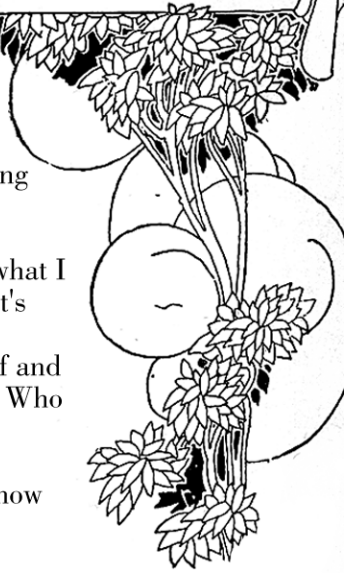
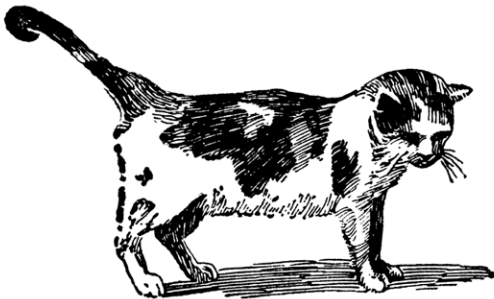
But right now? In this moment, I know who I am, I know what's true.

So, I guess, all I'm asking you to do is look inside yourself. Look at who you are. Feel it, know it, embrace it. Love who you are, love your paws, love your wings, gills or scales or fur. Love your heart, love your soul.

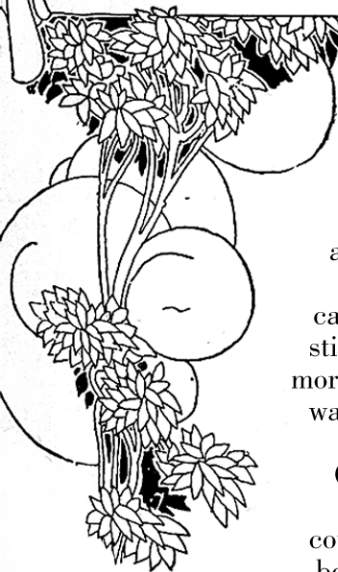
Embrace who you are, embrace all of what that encompasses, no matter what that may be. Know yourself to be true. You have the right to exist, to be yourself, to be happy as you are.

And to you, and you, and you, I say this; be well, be yourself and be true.

Open roads and kind fires.



Can You Love Me Wild? - by Raelynn Brown



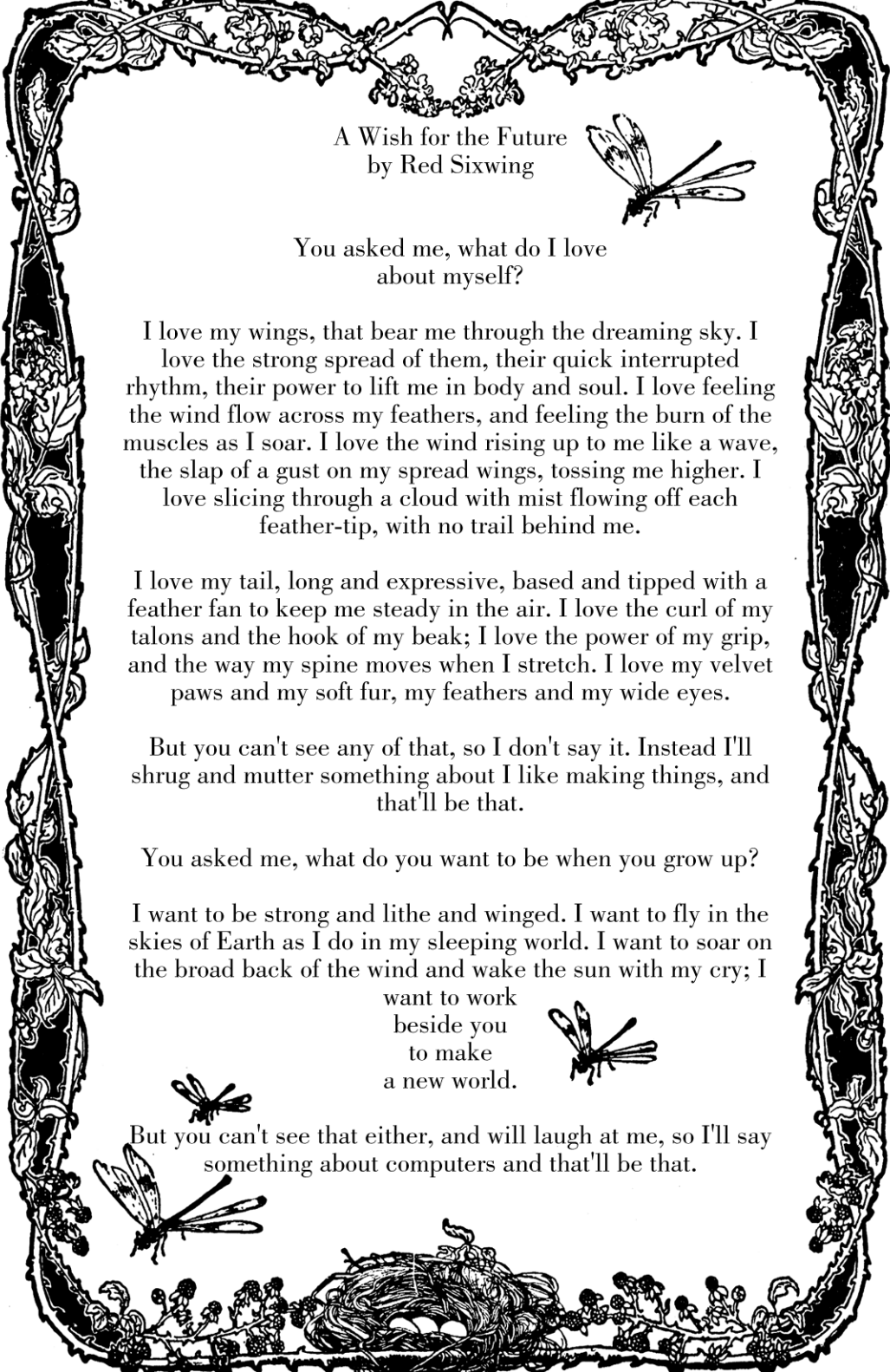
I've calmed myself a lot for you. You are a stable person happy with a constant home and consistent job. You enjoy traveling with predetermined departure and arrival dates. You like to go home to the same place you have for 5 years. I have calmed. I plan my trips when I can. I accept I may have a consistent home. But my heart still longs to run. To be undecided when I begin and even more so when I return. I want to be the wild gypsy woman I was when you first knew me. But could you love me wild?

Could you handle waking up to a note. "call you when I can. I love you"? Could you handle the time when I couldn't bare to come home? When I may sleep on a park bench because I didn't plan? Could you handle me wild?

Would you be here when I came home? Would you always know I'd come back to you? Unicorns are wild, but we're loyal. Would you be able to love a woman you cannot chain or cage or tame? Would you hold me in your heart when you could not hold me In your arms? Would you be able to love that wildness within me?

Could you, would you love me wild?





A Wish for the Future
by Red Sixwing

You asked me, what do I love
about myself?


I love my wings, that bear me through the dreaming sky. I love the strong spread of them, their quick interrupted rhythm, their power to lift me in body and soul. I love feeling the wind flow across my feathers, and feeling the burn of the muscles as I soar. I love the wind rising up to me like a wave, the slap of a gust on my spread wings, tossing me higher. I love slicing through a cloud with mist flowing off each feather-tip, with no trail behind me.

I love my tail, long and expressive, based and tipped with a feather fan to keep me steady in the air. I love the curl of my talons and the hook of my beak; I love the power of my grip, and the way my spine moves when I stretch. I love my velvet paws and my soft fur, my feathers and my wide eyes.



But you can't see any of that, so I don't say it. Instead I'll shrug and mutter something about I like making things, and that'll be that.

You asked me, what do you want to be when you grow up?

I want to be strong and lithe and winged. I want to fly in the skies of Earth as I do in my sleeping world. I want to soar on the broad back of the wind and wake the sun with my cry; I want to work
beside you
to make
a new world.



But you can't see that either, and will laugh at me, so I'll say something about computers and that'll be that.



I don't want to be the one and only. I don't want to be an object of curiosity; I want to be your winged and furred neighbor, the one you wave to in the morning. I want to bob my head in greeting as I pass by overhead, and know you understand the gesture. I want to be commonplace. I want to romp in the parks beside you and your dog. I want to watch you thunder past on four hooves, faster than I could ever run or even fly. I want to see your ears point out your emotion. I want to see you leap from the water, and cry out for you in awe as you sink past the surface again.

I want everyone - all of us - every last person whose soul sings of wings, or fins, or hooves or paws or no limbs at all - to be shaped as we long to be. I want you to put your hand in my claw, and I want to walk forward beside you, and I long for all of us to be understood.


I want to face a future with you, a future full of people of all shapes, all sizes; a future where you can see my wings.



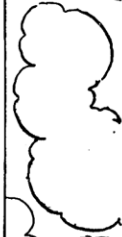


POOR HOUSE


Untitled
by Remiel




I limp. My right hip and knee often give out; pain will shoot down my leg, freezing me in place. When I can find the strength to move again, my balance is poor and my gait uneven. Outside the house, I am forced to use a cane to keep myself from falling. I have not been able to run for many years.



That doesn't make me any less of a wolf. Last night, the smell of snow hung heavy in the air. Before I even looked outside this morning, I knew the ground was blanketed in white. The knowledge shivered through me, raising the hair on my arms and the back of my neck. Without thinking, I shook myself as if shedding frost from my coat. I stretched, and I let my tongue loll, and I yawned-whined.



I used to do these things as a child too. I lived on an isolated farm when I was very small, and the only friends I had were dogs. I used to romp with them. Several times I had to be dragged back into the house because I'd taken off all my clothes and tried to run with them. When one of them was mauled and needed to be put down, I howled with the lonely survivor. I felt like a survivor too.



When we moved back to the city, I wasn't allowed to have a dog. I wasn't allowed to act like one either. There was school to consider, and the fists of my father to avoid. Both kept me from myself--or, rather, they broke my self and scattered the shards. Some people have asked why I didn't try to recover the pieces, instead of letting them grow into separate wholes. Perhaps I had no choice. Perhaps, having already lost one pack, I was eager to join another. Either way, my family isn't something I regret.



Still, the breaking changed me. It made me unsure what I was. Some things stayed the same: the urge to run, the urge to wrestle and claw. I became sure I must be a cat, and then completely unsure of the very same thing. As I explored core-shamanism, other animals called to me: rabbit, badger, raccoon, deer, seal. Some left quickly. Others became long-lasting allies. None of them answered what I was, though the visions they showed me had a common theme. They would remove their fur to show human faces underneath. But what fur did I wear? I grew more and more frustrated with the looking, and more and more unhappy with how little I knew myself.



I needed the answer so badly that I risked losing my earth and otherworld families. I walked into the underworld, tearing away all the ill-fitting masks I'd tried on over the years one by one. I knew it was probable I wouldn't return, even if I did look my true self in the eye. My body would continue on, with another member of my system to run it, but I might be gone.

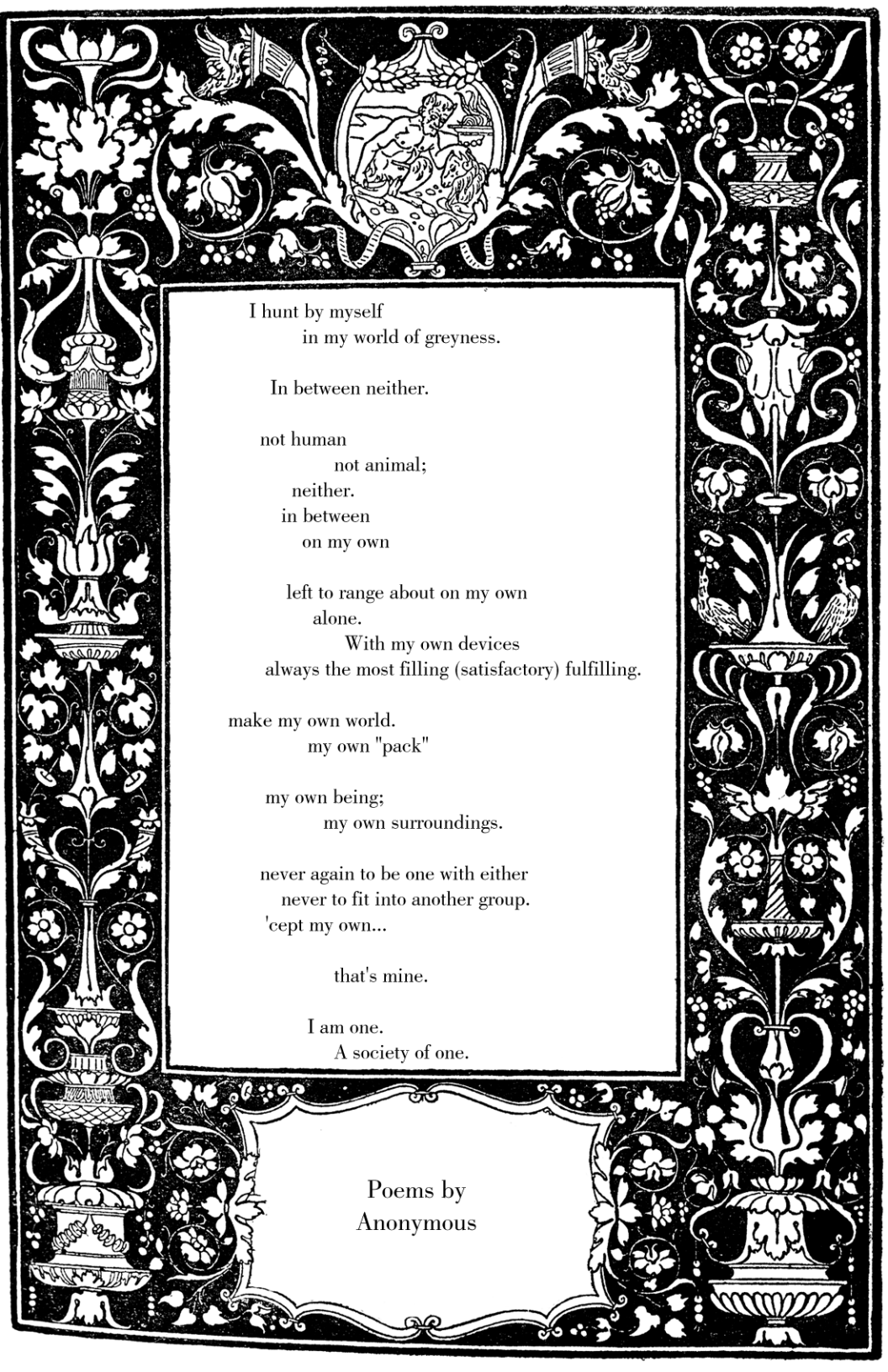
There was very little left of me, in the end.

The spark that remained was reborn into the body of a wolf.

Was it an earth-wolf? No, it was a wolf from our homeland, but that doesn't make it less wolf. There is no longer any question of my theriotype. It doesn't matter if I am a wolf within a multiple system. It doesn't matter if the only place I can run is in a world few will ever see. I am what I am.

Today I was questioned how my theriotype could have changed. I think this was waiting for me all along, that this is what I was searching for all this time. But even if it isn't, who cares? If this is how the world works for me, and it's hurting no one, why worry if it doesn't fit a certain paradigm? Why dismiss it as a multiple thing? How is my animality any lesser because of that?

I'm a wolf. This long-winded show of fangs is how much I appreciated being questioned.



I hunt by myself
in my world of greyness.

In between neither.

not human
not animal;
neither.
in between
on my own

left to range about on my own
alone.

With my own devices
always the most filling (satisfactory) fulfilling.

make my own world.
my own "pack"

my own being;
my own surroundings.

never again to be one with either
never to fit into another group.
'cept my own...

that's mine.

I am one.
A society of one.

Poems by
Anonymous

Strange
Completely insane
Spaced.

It is who we are
and always will be.

Our wild instincts hold us together.
and the wisdom (knowledge) we have gathered
has kept us out of trouble
allowed us to outwit
our adversaries.



Clever
cunning
manipulative

we can survive
where others can't
thanks to our training
from our animal
blood-kin.

We are wild
and always will be
you cannot tame us
nor make us trust you.

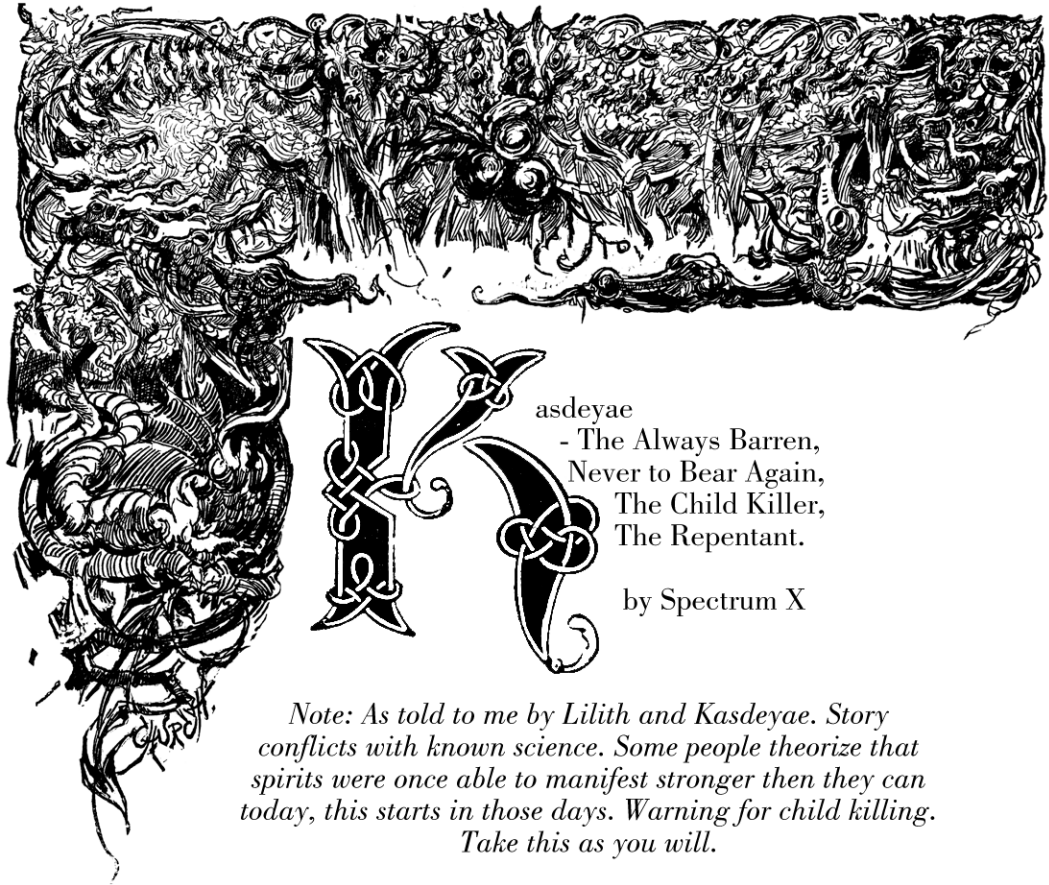
A wild animal will not trust a human
(cannot)
they are too destructive
cruel.

We are not stupid
our wolf-brothers
tiger soulmates
they have kept us together
when the humans have failed us.

If it weren't for them,
we would be in a thousand pieces
by now.
forever captive by these creatures.
(cruel beings)

not able to make sense enough
of our world or anything
to get free and go home.

To the welcoming darkness
that enfolds us
and keeps us warm
and alive.
Alert.
In one piece.



asdeyae

- The Always Barren,
Never to Bear Again,
The Child Killer,
The Repentant.

by Spectrum X

Note: As told to me by Lilith and Kasdeyae. Story conflicts with known science. Some people theorize that spirits were once able to manifest stronger then they can today, this starts in those days. Warning for child killing. Take this as you will.

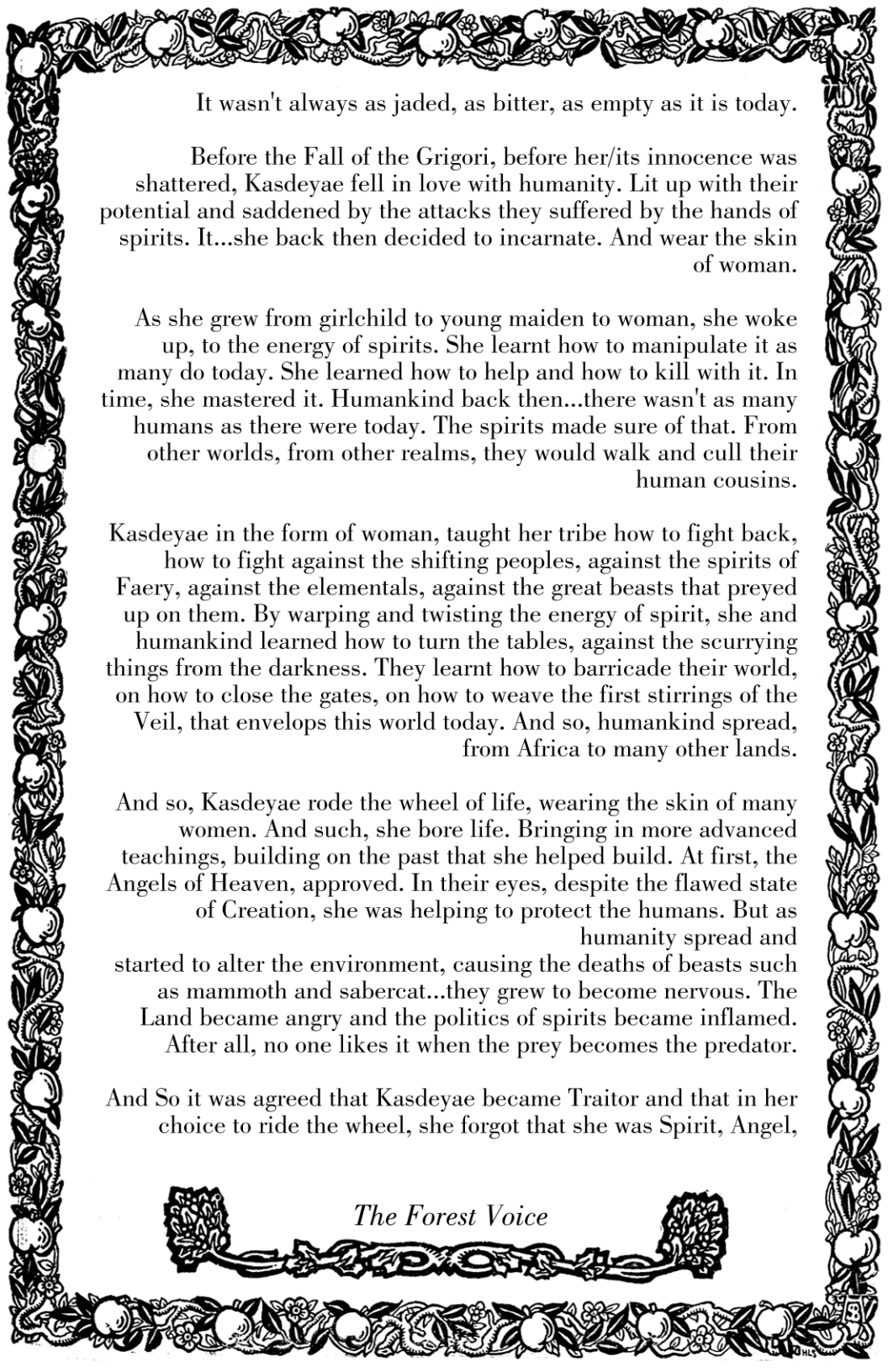
*Please also read the further warning at
<http://spectrum-x.dreamwidth.org/69039.html>
- this work is sensitive for the spirit.*

There is a reason why Kasdeyae finds the concept of children, disgusting, repulsive...and saddening to a degree. What is the point of having little ones, if they are only going to be taken away from you by predation, tragedy, and old age?

Little candlelights of joy, only to snuffed out by the enroaching darkness.

And the breaking of a heart.

This is one of the stories of Kasdeyae.



It wasn't always as jaded, as bitter, as empty as it is today.

Before the Fall of the Grigori, before her/its innocence was shattered, Kasdeyae fell in love with humanity. Lit up with their potential and saddened by the attacks they suffered by the hands of spirits. It...she back then decided to incarnate. And wear the skin of woman.

As she grew from girlchild to young maiden to woman, she woke up, to the energy of spirits. She learnt how to manipulate it as many do today. She learned how to help and how to kill with it. In time, she mastered it. Humankind back then...there wasn't as many humans as there were today. The spirits made sure of that. From other worlds, from other realms, they would walk and cull their human cousins.

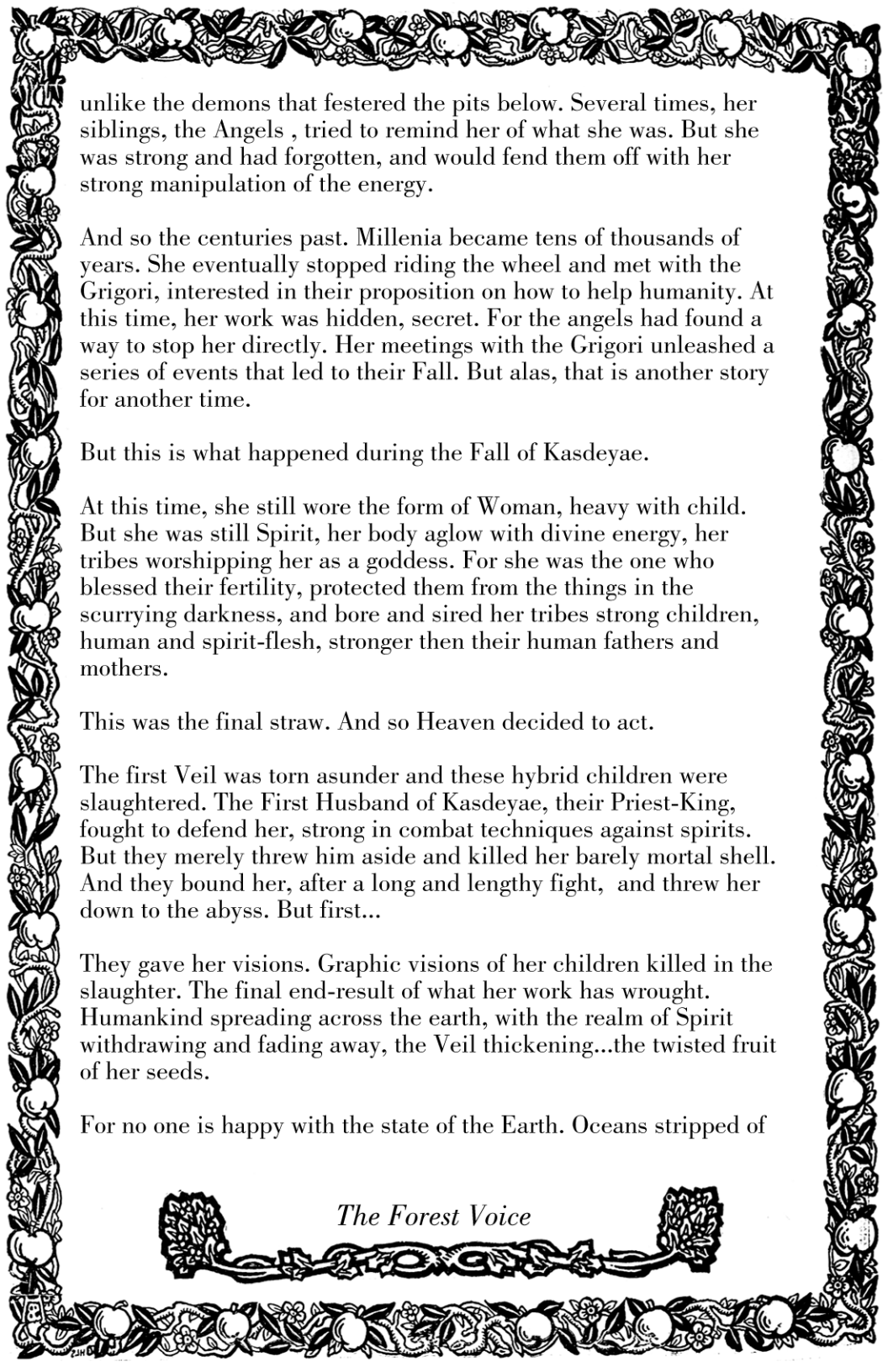
Kasdeyae in the form of woman, taught her tribe how to fight back, how to fight against the shifting peoples, against the spirits of Faery, against the elementals, against the great beasts that preyed up on them. By warping and twisting the energy of spirit, she and humankind learned how to turn the tables, against the scurrying things from the darkness. They learnt how to barricade their world, on how to close the gates, on how to weave the first stirrings of the Veil, that envelops this world today. And so, humankind spread, from Africa to many other lands.

And so, Kasdeyae rode the wheel of life, wearing the skin of many women. And such, she bore life. Bringing in more advanced teachings, building on the past that she helped build. At first, the Angels of Heaven, approved. In their eyes, despite the flawed state of Creation, she was helping to protect the humans. But as humanity spread and started to alter the environment, causing the deaths of beasts such as mammoth and sabercat...they grew to become nervous. The Land became angry and the politics of spirits became inflamed. After all, no one likes it when the prey becomes the predator.

And So it was agreed that Kasdeyae became Traitor and that in her choice to ride the wheel, she forgot that she was Spirit, Angel,



The Forest Voice



unlike the demons that festered the pits below. Several times, her siblings, the Angels, tried to remind her of what she was. But she was strong and had forgotten, and would fend them off with her strong manipulation of the energy.

And so the centuries past. Millenia became tens of thousands of years. She eventually stopped riding the wheel and met with the Grigori, interested in their proposition on how to help humanity. At this time, her work was hidden, secret. For the angels had found a way to stop her directly. Her meetings with the Grigori unleashed a series of events that led to their Fall. But alas, that is another story for another time.

But this is what happened during the Fall of Kasdeyae.

At this time, she still wore the form of Woman, heavy with child. But she was still Spirit, her body aglow with divine energy, her tribes worshipping her as a goddess. For she was the one who blessed their fertility, protected them from the things in the scurrying darkness, and bore and sired her tribes strong children, human and spirit-flesh, stronger than their human fathers and mothers.

This was the final straw. And so Heaven decided to act.

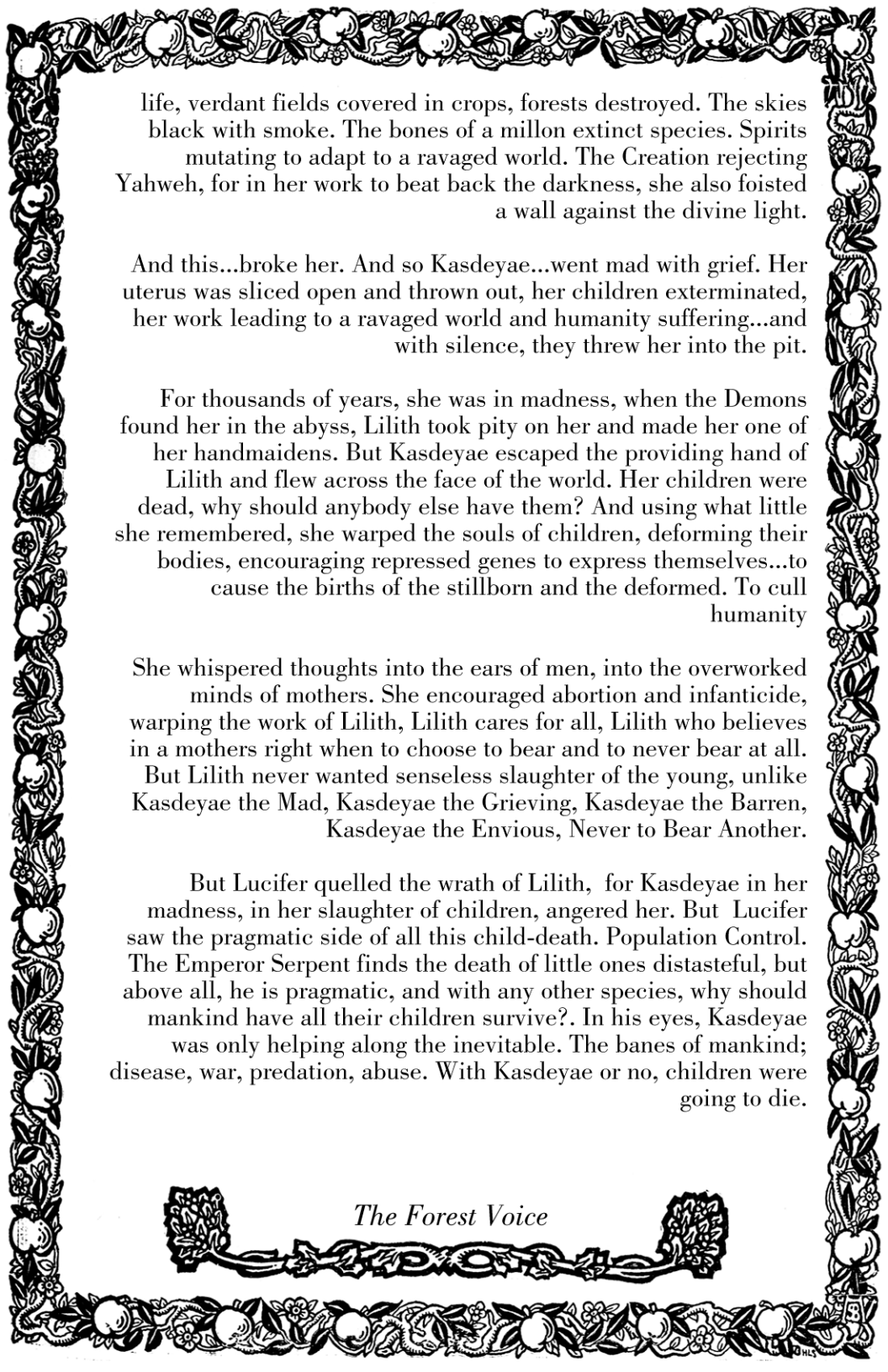
The first Veil was torn asunder and these hybrid children were slaughtered. The First Husband of Kasdeyae, their Priest-King, fought to defend her, strong in combat techniques against spirits. But they merely threw him aside and killed her barely mortal shell. And they bound her, after a long and lengthy fight, and threw her down to the abyss. But first...

They gave her visions. Graphic visions of her children killed in the slaughter. The final end-result of what her work has wrought. Humankind spreading across the earth, with the realm of Spirit withdrawing and fading away, the Veil thickening...the twisted fruit of her seeds.

For no one is happy with the state of the Earth. Oceans stripped of



The Forest Voice



life, verdant fields covered in crops, forests destroyed. The skies black with smoke. The bones of a million extinct species. Spirits mutating to adapt to a ravaged world. The Creation rejecting Yahweh, for in her work to beat back the darkness, she also foisted a wall against the divine light.

And this...broke her. And so Kasdeyae...went mad with grief. Her uterus was sliced open and thrown out, her children exterminated, her work leading to a ravaged world and humanity suffering...and with silence, they threw her into the pit.

For thousands of years, she was in madness, when the Demons found her in the abyss, Lilith took pity on her and made her one of her handmaidens. But Kasdeyae escaped the providing hand of Lilith and flew across the face of the world. Her children were dead, why should anybody else have them? And using what little she remembered, she warped the souls of children, deforming their bodies, encouraging repressed genes to express themselves...to cause the births of the stillborn and the deformed. To cull humanity

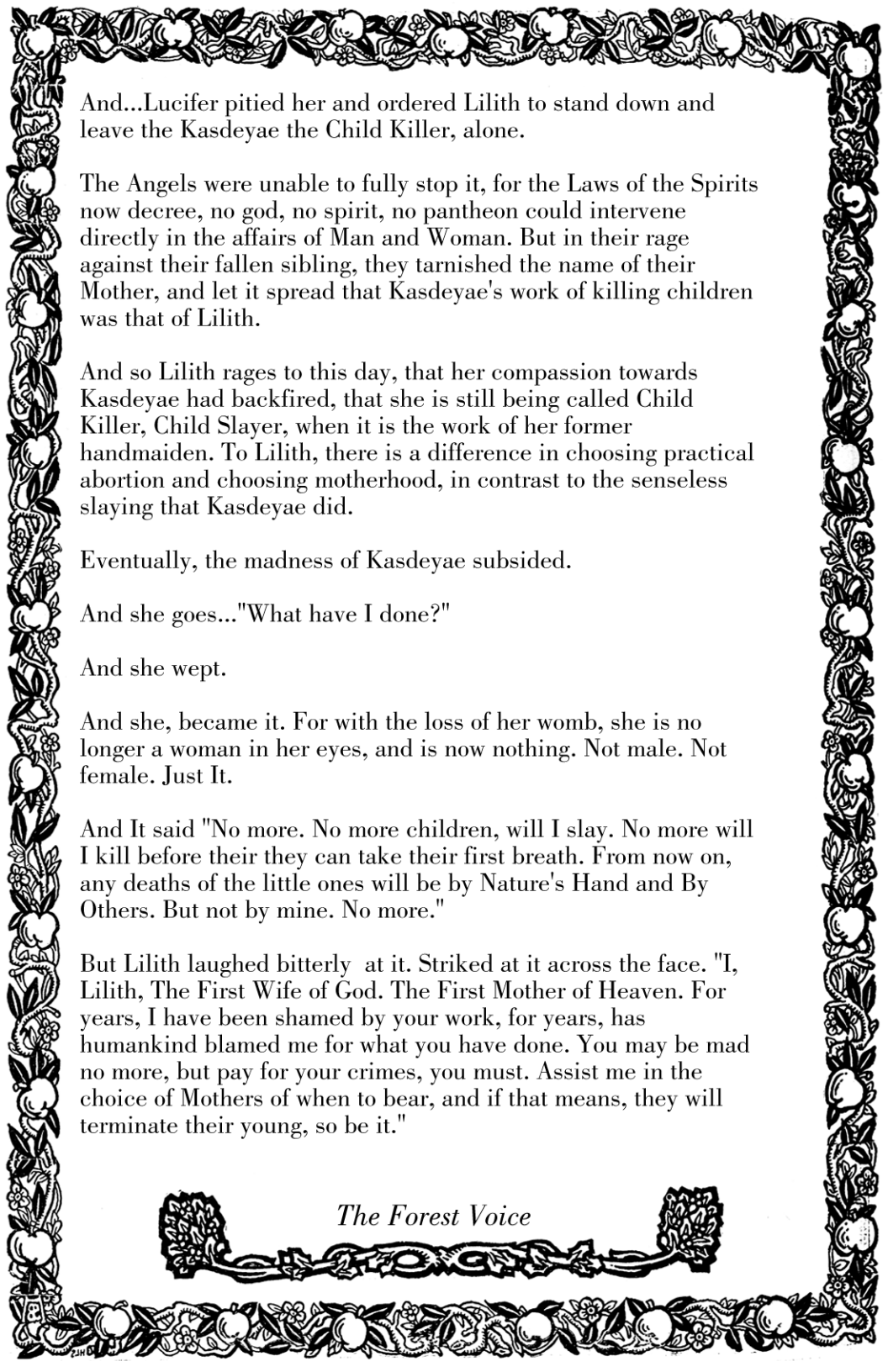
She whispered thoughts into the ears of men, into the overworked minds of mothers. She encouraged abortion and infanticide, warping the work of Lilith, Lilith cares for all, Lilith who believes in a mothers right when to choose to bear and to never bear at all.

But Lilith never wanted senseless slaughter of the young, unlike Kasdeyae the Mad, Kasdeyae the Grieving, Kasdeyae the Barren, Kasdeyae the Envious, Never to Bear Another.

But Lucifer quelled the wrath of Lilith, for Kasdeyae in her madness, in her slaughter of children, angered her. But Lucifer saw the pragmatic side of all this child-death. Population Control. The Emperor Serpent finds the death of little ones distasteful, but above all, he is pragmatic, and with any other species, why should mankind have all their children survive?. In his eyes, Kasdeyae was only helping along the inevitable. The banes of mankind; disease, war, predation, abuse. With Kasdeyae or no, children were going to die.



The Forest Voice



And...Lucifer pitied her and ordered Lilith to stand down and leave the Kasdeyae the Child Killer, alone.

The Angels were unable to fully stop it, for the Laws of the Spirits now decree, no god, no spirit, no pantheon could intervene directly in the affairs of Man and Woman. But in their rage against their fallen sibling, they tarnished the name of their Mother, and let it spread that Kasdeyae's work of killing children was that of Lilith.

And so Lilith rages to this day, that her compassion towards Kasdeyae had backfired, that she is still being called Child Killer, Child Slayer, when it is the work of her former handmaiden. To Lilith, there is a difference in choosing practical abortion and choosing motherhood, in contrast to the senseless slaying that Kasdeyae did.

Eventually, the madness of Kasdeyae subsided.

And she goes..."What have I done?"

And she wept.

And she, became it. For with the loss of her womb, she is no longer a woman in her eyes, and is now nothing. Not male. Not female. Just It.

And It said "No more. No more children, will I slay. No more will I kill before their they can take their first breath. From now on, any deaths of the little ones will be by Nature's Hand and By Others. But not by mine. No more."

But Lilith laughed bitterly at it. Striked at it across the face. "I, Lilith, The First Wife of God. The First Mother of Heaven. For years, I have been shamed by your work, for years, has humankind blamed me for what you have done. You may be mad no more, but pay for your crimes, you must. Assist me in the choice of Mothers of when to bear, and if that means, they will terminate their young, so be it."



The Forest Voice

And so It wept.

For Lilith will make It aid Mothers who do not want their young, despite it not wishing to slay little ones no more. For every Mother that It aids with abortion, Its black heart twists a little more, and vomit threatens to come out of Its mouth. It grieves for every unwanted child. For Lilith wants It to know the value of life, and to experience what the mothers, It once terrorized felt, when Kasdeyae the Grieving took away their children.

And when Lilith felt that It has learned enough, perhaps someday, Kasdeyae will have children again.

But until that day, Kasdeyae the Repentant will pay for her crimes, one unwanted child at a time.



The Forest Voice



EX T I S S I E

CRIES OF THE WILD



NEXT ISSUE'S THEME

Do you have letters, thoughts, questions that you want to share with The Forest Voice?

Obviously, this first issue could not have a Letters page, but, after this issue, I hope to share your reader letters. Please send your letters to hakuchou@allusion.net, or send them down the river with a prayer for them to reach me at The Forest Voice.



Bring your most magical thoughts, poems and writings to our next issue! Ideas for glamourbombs are particularly welcome, as well as stories and articles that can be shared in a glamourbomb way, prayers and spells, reviews of fiction about glamourbombs and magic, thoughts on magical traditions that mention nonhumans and how accurate are they really (Faery Wicca, Dragon Magic...), costume tutorials... anything that's magical or full of wonder!

If you want to start writing on a future theme, here are a few that are planned!

Steel and Stone: Exploring the nonhuman's connection to nature - or lack of it. Are you a forest child or a city fox? Do you feel the life throb in the roots of trees or the connections of computers? Poems, songs, stories and essays about how the wild and the wires have affected you.

The Wild Howl: Anger. Aggression. Bloodlust. Many of us feel it, but, few of us face it. An issue about the darker energies that sing in your blood. The love of the hunt, the need to roar and cry and claw. No need to hold it back. Let it all out here.