

IN MY DREAMS/I LOVE LIKE AN IDEA  
IN MY DREAMS/I LOVE LIKE AN IDEA

*poems*

TYLER RASO

The essential psychological question of our age, and maybe of any age, is the thorny question of how we learn to love. Can we really love a group or a tribe or a people or do we really only love one person at a time? And if our brain chemistry is lacking in this or that salt, so that our experience of our world is at times radically at odds with other people's, does that mean that love is out of bounds for us because the way that we formulate and understand ourselves in love renders us too alien for other people to either accept or comprehend? Elizabeth Bishop once wrote of Marianne Moore that everyone praised Moore for her originality, but that no one ever talked about the depths of alienation that were part of that originality. *In my dreams/I love like an idea* is a book that pursues these contradictions and paradoxes: the voice is direct, the music is the music of speech, the feeling is complex and conflicted. That's why this book, in its quiet integrity, is a stay against confusion, provides solace that is credible, and strives to tell the truth all the way to the bottom—and as these poems convincingly and skillfully demonstrate, the bottom is a long way down.

—**Tom Sleigh**, guest judge for the 2022 Frontier Digital Chapbook Contest



**In my dreams/I love like an idea**

Tyler Raso

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Published in the United States of America by Frontier Poetry  
[www.frontierpoetry.com](http://www.frontierpoetry.com)

ISBN 978-1-7363695-8-6

Cover photo by Gisselle Yepes.  
Book and cover design by Julianne Johnson.

I was looking to become inscrutable.  
I was longing to be seen through.  
—Lucie Brock-Broido

if i am inconsistent in my longings  
it is because i can't let myself  
feel like dying everyday.

\*

we love love.  
we love  
staying alive to love.

\*

'thank you for letting me be alive'  
i whisper  
to no one in particular.

—Joshua Jennifer Espinoza



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**I haven't been able to write a poem  
since someone on the internet said  
“never love a bipolar. They are  
not lovers. They are incapable of  
feeling love”**

My new psychiatrist says  
there is a circus in my brain.

He says do not trust yourself  
when you are manic. He says your scars

will be noisy like luggage. He says your hands  
will shake. He says avoid holding anything

without a ghost.

I will not let this be my first love poem.  
But I am home in a borrowed room.  
And I have been googling “Can you love someone

with Bipolar II” like a papercut. I ask light  
if I am allowed to be loved because  
I am home in a borrowed room and

I am alone like a stranger and I am alone  
for now because someone who loves me  
will be back soon. Imagine building a moon

and being cold the whole time. Imagine being  
asked if you can see that rainbow. I am on  
page two of a thread and it says

“Never love a Bipolar. They are not  
lovers. They are incapable of feeling love”  
and it is a spider and have you ever

been promised you would hurt  
someone. And have you ever been  
promised you would become

a bright hole empty like a lighthouse.  
Imagine two bodies looking at the same  
lighthouse. One will hurt the other

when they look away.

I cannot hear my new psychiatrist  
over the rain like swallowing.

The rain is a parenthesis around when  
I fell asleep crawling on

the internet and now and that's  
a dark safety. Me and my

new psychiatrist are here together  
and I cannot tell which

of us is the shadow and that  
is a dark safety. There

is a space between us like  
a body that isn't

at home and that  
is a dark safety.

One body will be warmer.

One body will have shaky hands.

One body is a pincushion of sleep.

One body is an earthquake of feathers.

One body is a baby tooth.

One body is sorry.

One body is a seed pouch full of rain.

One body is the ribbon that closes the universe.

One body writes I miss you on its stomach like a glove.

One body watches the water rise.

Neither body feels pain.

My new psychiatrist will not tell me if I am  
a good person. He has had this

conversation before, like a missing tooth.  
He is old enough to have had

this conversation before, a cradle.  
And I am old enough to tell

my new psychiatrist that a howl  
on the internet said

I can't feel love and now I'm transparent  
as a bone. I am old enough

to tell my new psychiatrist that I just want  
to access the word love like

the salt and the warm and the itch  
of sleep. And I am old enough

to say that I am sorry all I can bring you  
is the part of the fossil that

blooms with the history of itself  
like being ticklish. I am

old enough to say I am sorry  
that I can't fall asleep

when I'm being held  
like a heartbeat.

## **The tender, uninvited voice in my head reminds me I'm not the boss of me**

Make it a daily practice. Your practice should be loud, furry, shocking, bright, warm, made of lead, anatomical, sticky, perilous, mathematical, and partly cloudy. Your practice should be visible from outer space. Your practice should fit in the palm of your hand. One day's practice might be an argument, the next day's might be a bowl of fruit. The next, a meteor shower. The next, down feathers. Find ways to sneak your practice in. When you stand behind a closed door, practice. When you pass by a streetlight, practice. When you step into a raft, practice.

Eventually, you won't have to think about the practice. The practice will settle into your gums like adult teeth. The practice will no longer surprise you. You will roll in bed and your beloved will be there, chewing on his lip like a piston. You will sneak your body from underneath the blanket. This is not the practice—but, at one time, it was. You would wake up and practice your beloved's sleeping jaw, how it rests like a flowerbed. You would practice his eyes pulsing open.

If you're not sure where to begin, close your eyes.

Open your eyes.

Whoever is there with you, give them your hand.  
Give them your days. Give them your carnations.  
Give them your crowns. Give them your spool.  
Give them your alphabet. Give them your torches.



Discover a new way to say I am alive.  
Another. Another. Another.

Eventually the living will take over.

## PERSONALITY INDEX

	STRONGLY AGREE			STRONGLY DISAGREE	
I can be sewn shut	1	2	3	4	5
I can be photographed	1	2	3	4	5
I can stand	1	2	3	4	5
I can tell time	1	2	3	4	5
I can weep	1	2	3	4	5
I trust my hands	1	2	3	4	5
I do not look at the sight of blood	1	2	3	4	5
Altitude is relative	1	2	3	4	5
Like memory	1	2	3	4	5
Altitude, meaning your head, open	1	2	3	4	5
Like a grapevine	1	2	3	4	5
Like a search party	1	2	3	4	5
Like this	1	2	3	4	5
I am looking for something	1	2	3	4	5
I know what it is not	1	2	3	4	5
I will know when I am warm	1	2	3	4	5
I can be trusted in a kitchen	1	2	3	4	5
I can speak to children	1	2	3	4	5
In 5 years, I will be	1	2	3	4	5
When I dream of the end of the world	1	2	3	4	5
It is not beautiful but	1	2	3	4	5
You are there	1	2	3	4	5
Holding your heart	1	2	3	4	5
Red and liquid like a sword	1	2	3	4	5

## clusterdream

Halfway up the hill, I collapse into O's arms, asleep, like a falling tree. I love how this isn't a metaphor. I love my crater-body in midair like a telegram. I love, for a moment, the sound of the world turning.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>**SYNCOPE** A term with branches like a heart has branches. A reflex to an absence or an excess. Subject succumbs to their own inexplicable gravity. Some studies show the subject as a tent fallen over its shapes or the empty matter swallowed when stress, grief, delight, electricity, etc. is too large or misshapen to be accommodated.

We returned from the hospital because I couldn't breathe. Which was normal for me but not normal for him. You should have seen his hands on the steering wheel, two birds flat against a glass door.

Equal Breathing Meditation

1. Connect to your breath.
  1. Connect the needle of your body to your breath. 1. Connect the safety of your breath to the nothing of the road, the sinking yellow line beneath. 1. Connect the length of the road to the cold of your body, the row of yourself, the precision of your unstitching. 1. Connect this body to the next. 1. Connect the next body to the hospital with its sketchbook floor, its champagne floor, its raw and good floor. 1. Connect this body to the first body, the graphite body, the one that had no strength to hold its natural breath like pins. 1. Connect that body to the bathtub, the body's small mouth filling with water, its eyes lowering into the sleep of the tub, holding itself firmly until it could feel a brightness in its throat. 1. Connect your breath to this body as it starves itself of breath, how you remember this wool and wild pain, how you sought it, how you were rehearsing for something, how you never thought to ask what it was.

## Hotbed in repose

This is something I've never  
gotten right. The sky leaning  
into the pick of cliff like a blunt

object. Hey you're not listening  
the stars chafe to the  
old dirt. Did I ever tell you

I tried to make my body  
an instrument like empty.  
I stood over the countertop

with a knife specially made  
for watermelon and  
I wanted to hurt myself

but I didn't. I drank and drank  
and witnessed and didn't  
hurt myself but wanted to

so at least the ice will melt off  
my skin today. I love  
you I mean it. There's something

in your teeth. The moon hazards  
its baby step like  
a cave. The moon is asthmatic

I can tell. This is a new kind  
of breath I'm trying  
out. It starts with a stone

sailing forever and then  
a comma. My body  
was grateful once. I walked

it down a bridge and  
it was so greedy  
with the railings and said

*Look* like a leash. You don't  
have to stay  
awake. I trust myself

restless as dust. I mean I  
won't hurt my body.  
I know you don't trust this.

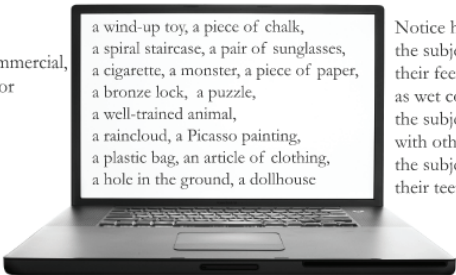
Do you hear the ocean  
flinching. Do you hear  
the ocean reaching

for its own hand.

## clusterdream

It is my one-month anniversary with Lithium. The pills my pink hourglasses, my corks, my baby teeth. I celebrate by being off Lithium for four days and then five days and then. I celebrate by saying something to O. I regret and forget, something that makes him go downstairs, something that makes his voice turn into training wheels. I sit to figure out who really said it: myself, myself, or the Lithium hole<sup>1</sup>. If I try to imagine myself I just see flat red like sandpaper. I put on my coat and I feel heavier. The ground is where I left it.

In this drug commercial, our metaphor for the mentally ill subject is



a wind-up toy, a piece of chalk,  
a spiral staircase, a pair of sunglasses,  
a cigarette, a monster, a piece of paper,  
a bronze lock, a puzzle,  
a well-trained animal,  
a raincloud, a Picasso painting,  
a plastic bag, an article of clothing,  
a hole in the ground, a dollhouse

Notice how:  
the subject can articulate  
their feelings clear  
as wet cobblestone.  
the subject is one  
with others.  
the subject bares  
their teeth.

### <sup>1</sup>DISCONTINUATION

Few words in medicine's throat say what they mean. The line does not end. The line merely meets a body of water and claws at its tapering reflection. The subject watches the light chase the light through the valley of itself. The subject buries the right half of their symmetry.

I shovel O.'s driveway instead of apologizing. Now when I imagine myself I see mosquitoes. The snow in Cleveland is denser than the snow in the village. The snow in the village is lighter than the snow back home.



## Grounding and grounding and

At the gym, I am on the stationary bike  
talking to my therapist. Though she is gray  
and pink and splash, she says

everything is electricity. I am  
on the stationary bike talking to my therapist  
and beyond us there is music

like the earth, and there is the sound  
of people making their bodies  
a planet, like dolls. She says you are

a wheel golden with sparks. She draws  
a ring on her palm, a bruise. And she makes  
the bruise breathe and swallow and

stutter like moonlight. I am  
on the stationary bike talking to my therapist.  
Over the phone, I can't see the wheel.

She says my mania is a bright  
and living thing. Here, I see salt and  
water and therefore drowning

in two things at once. I see the water  
breaking like glass, with bodies.  
I see the sky as it falls

into more sky like a knot.  
My therapist says *All things in the world*  
*are somewhere between*

*pain and stillness.* My therapist asks  
*Does it hurt to think* and I know  
she pinches her inner wrist

like a telephone wire and I know her eyes  
are wide and searching like bells.

And the wind squints like a prism.  
And the wind is empty as a prayer.

So I say, *everyone looks so beautiful*  
*when they swim.*

## clusterdream

If I think of O.'s kindness, I feel an itch, or a pollen, or a poison. It's winter, so I wake up under a blanket in O.'s white apartment, like the inside of an egg. He says I scared him, that this is not the first time, that he tried everything to wake me, even walking a feather across my nose like a radio signal. For breakfast, we eat cold leftover noodles and crush mint into our tea. I anticipate his fear, so I don't ask him what day it is.

---

### *365 MEDITATIONS FOR COUPLES*

Visualize the couple you want to be. For example, which one of you wears the scarf. Which one of you tears the bread. Which one of you carries the groceries that take two arms. Which one of you feeds the dog underneath the table. Which one of you is more like running water, or a basket, or like the shadow at the corner of two walls. Which one of you remembers the full story of your relationship like a magnet, even the parts with blood or bathrooms or gravity. Which one of you would love to listen to that story all over again. Which one of you will palm the tender of your own chest as though to hold your heart in place. Which one of you will reach first for the other.

*March 20th*

---

O.'s concert is later. Maybe later today. Maybe later this week, I'll ask around. He'll pluck his string bass like strawberries. I want to buy him that miniature rocking chair we saw in the city, the size of two peach stones, that makes a life-sized creaking sound.



## DEDICATION

To  
*THE BIRDS*  
and  
*THE TWIGS*  
and  
*THE FAITH OF FLAMMABLE THINGS*

---

*This book is dedicated to my wife, the silt, the bleach,  
my wife who is not quite real like rubber, to my absence  
of wife really, to all my blank space, to all my room  
enough for stars, to the me brave enough to lantern  
me softly, to the cold sway of us, to the year,  
to the holding and the held*

---

This book would not have been possible without does it leave  
a mark without TAKE 3 CAPSULES BY MOUTH EVERY  
MORNING without water filters without songs without falling  
without paper in the shape of paper without 2 EVERY NIGHT  
AT BEDTIME without all the good people in this bed without  
turtle shells without A(N) PINK OBLONG SHAPE without  
300MG CAP without time like a collage without my hand with-  
out CHECKING WITH YOUR DOCTOR OR PHARMA-  
CIST without you OPERATING A VEHICLE VESSEL OR  
OTHER MACHINES without hide/seek without my other  
hand upsetting the curtains without your waking-up face with-  
out the dust in the shape of the air

## Emotion Recognition Task

My teacher noticed how I scratch my wrists  
till they bleed like pencil shavings so I meet  
with the school psychologist once a week

to study what is wrong with me. I see  
into the blue distance, playing that game  
with the faces, naming their emotions like a test:

this one is happy, this one is

disgusted, this one is acting surprised  
like a goat, this one is late for a procedure  
they're afraid to have, this one needs

to turn around in the maze of their mind,  
this one is waiting outside while their parents  
decide who will keep them like furniture or an organ,

this one does not see the problem under the  
white oak tree, how it shreds the daylight like a migraine,  
as a kid knocks their head against the trunk

first like a bell, then like a weapon

## clusterdream

I wrote a long poem about my childhood. To my friend who doodles like clockwork, I joke The poem is longer than my childhood though I mean When I think of my childhood, I hear planes taking off or My memory is a bag with a hole in it.

In workshop, I am “the speaker.” I love that nobody looks at me, like a bird on the sidewalk.

### Finding your self-confidence:

2. Use positive self-talk: “the trees, the road, the east-bound train,” “no matter what, my hair grows like bedtime,” “the day will always pin the night upon the corkboard”

20. Don’t worry about your fears: imagine a blade of grass being lured by the wind

30: See the person you want to be: When you look in the mirror, see a map of every place it is currently raining.

My new psychiatrist looks just like me, but in the future, in a cardigan, in his office he arranged to look like a living room. I confirmed this with several friends who all sucked through their teeth, with the sound something makes when you move it a few

inches or scratch subconsciously. A friend says I wonder if he thinks the same thing and adds Maybe he looks at you and misses his youth?

Began volunteering at a farm to spend less time with myself, like how some people go to museums to see the new greens and blues. The sun is a library card. Everyone shouts a little, like the universe. We give the goats names when they're born, knowing we kill them.



## Extract 4b (ID 4)

1. Dr.: You m::ean that you struggle with self^-concept? (.) With [i-  
dentity?

2. [

3.

4.

5. Dr.: What >do you< thi::nk the difference is?

6. [

7.

8. Dr.: [...one ^is a hand [...and one is a

9. hole

10. (.)

11. Dr.: Do-- I have that r::ight?

12.

13.

14.

15.

**SELF STRUCTURE INDEX**

	STRONGLY AGREE			STRONGLY DISAGREE	
I am outside	1	2	3	4	5
I could fill a notebook	1	2	3	4	5
With living things	1	2	3	4	5
With buttons	1	2	3	4	5
With knots	1	2	3	4	5
I can define disappear	1	2	3	4	5
I can hold my breath	1	2	3	4	5
I am holding my breath	1	2	3	4	5
Like flinching	1	2	3	4	5
Like branches	1	2	3	4	5
This is my hand	1	2	3	4	5
It recognizes itself	1	2	3	4	5
It can't help	1	2	3	4	5
But recognize itself	1	2	3	4	5
The way gravity does	1	2	3	4	5
I can run	1	2	3	4	5
I can knock on a door	1	2	3	4	5
I can whisper	1	2	3	4	5
I can tell the difference	1	2	3	4	5
I forget	1	2	3	4	5
I'm sorry to keep you waiting	1	2	3	4	5
I was in the middle of a dream	1	2	3	4	5
With a hole in it	1	2	3	4	5
I was almost at the bottom	1	2	3	4	5

## clusterdream

In this dream, I wake up in an unfamiliar room like an angel, the house tucked beneath me. The family on the other end of the stairs is not my mother, but left a plate of red fruit for me, a pad of spinach. It is assumed that I will stay for breakfast, for dinner, for the night. I am impressed that their home has more than three inside doors, so many combinations of being alone, that they can choose two ways, front or back, to enter the world like litter. Their clothes are the same size as their bodies. Their garden grows off a lip on the side of the house like a rash. You have to look up to see it, which means it has to look down to see you.

---

A garden in a dream symbolizes

If the garden is an animal, you

If the garden is a raincoat, you

If the garden is an ocean, you

represents conflict and vines and blur and

whether or not it's in bloom. Notice walls  
feelings of cold-bloodedness, of becoming, of

square or circular or radiant with weeds. Gardens

of becoming, of becoming, of becoming, of

stood tall like someone out in the cold.

You waved your hands as if to say

You don't have to wait up

for me anymore.

---

I told my therapist, when I was younger, I would count the days between dreams. Saying I went to sleep sitting up so the dreams had to climb up my bones like an ant farm. I thought the wait would make the dreams longer. Maybe even long enough to live in, I joked. Her white noise machine was set to river.

## Depression Aubade

My therapist talks about wet pigeons, or  
melted snow. I take notes

on my inner lip, like a birdcage.  
She says my depression

is glass. She says it's hard to imagine  
a future with a foggy heart

like an old dog or a piano. Outside,  
light turns into light.

I take the train home,  
an apology. I often

write about you now. I say  
*I love* and let it stretch me

like a key. Now, I write about  
what I see instead. I love

the shapes, how nothing  
lasts long enough to have

a shadow. I love  
the world pulsing with movement

and silence too big  
to hold, its shallow shallow sky.

I love how nothing  
looks like itself. If you're listening,

imagine the flawless snow  
of your body becoming

space. Imagine the music  
of nothing. It doesn't feel

like breathing. It doesn't feel like being

invisible. It feels like the shy  
water of dawn. It feels

like being, like being, and  
being, and being.

## **clusterdream**

**SIDE EFFECTS:** CONFUSION  
/ POOR MEMORY / LACK OF  
AWARENESS / FAINTING /  
IRREGULAR HEARTBEAT /  
SLOW HEARTBEAT /  
SHUFFLING FEET / STRINGS  
PLEAINING WITH THE BODY /  
WEEKS / SEA URCHINS IN  
THE THROAT / TROUBLE  
DIALING THE PHONE / TASTE  
OF SUGAR / (SLIGHT) /  
NIGHTTIME FINGERS/  
TODDLER ANKLES /  
WATERFALL HANDS /  
TROUBLE BREATHING /  
INCREASED FREQUENCY /  
SONAR / HALLUCINATIONS /  
ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE FACE  
/ HAIR LOSS / FRUIT FLIES /  
SLEEPING IN THE DAYTIME /  
DICTIONARY MEMORIES /  
REPETITION / DEPRESSION /  
SENSITIVITY TO THE COLD /  
TOUCH / SHIPWRECK / BONE  
/ DIFFICULTY SPEAKING /  
DIFFICULTY-SPEAKING / (MAY  
BE SIGNIFICANT) / YARN  
MOUTH / BACKYARD /  
SAILOR KNOT /  
NESTLESSNESS /  
TENDERNESS / LOSS OF  
FEELING / LOSS OF

Because the power is out for the house in my mind, I am thinking about gifts and walls. In my room on the mountain, I cry into my phone like a balcony. By now I am predictable. By now my body is halved on the bed. By now O.'s voice like a record. Earlier, I listened to a motivational speech while I stepped around the roots of redwood trees. The speech insisted like tempo on the need of joy, which I decided to mishear as the speed of joy. As in, Do you notice [at] the [sp]eed of joy? I love this question. That I can say, I am training my noticing. That I can say, I am running a few minutes late, construction, blue sunlight, the map of a palm, I will meet you at joy soon.

## Neuroplasticity ode

One day I decided to be happy  
so I helped my mom move a couch.  
I was tall enough to sink into myself,  
finally, like a sugar cube. The new

apartment had windows that didn't look  
at walls like an x-ray. I was an athlete  
at the time, so the couch stretched  
between us like language. I made

lemonade which my mom said  
she was learning to love or like or make  
disappear. I've never seen my mom  
cry, like a sheath. I love the phrase

Means a lot. I love to hate  
the phrase If I had to say. Anyway,  
my mom cries on the couch with  
the plastic on but only for a moment.

I love the phrase She catches herself.  
She cries in a happy way, she says,  
like gift wrap. A contradiction  
light bounces off of. I love the phrase You

shouldn't have but only when it's said  
the way fresh cookies change the air  
in a room. My mom breathes a crooked  
breath at the window. She tips her finger



where the fog gathers on the glass. I can't  
hear her thoughts, which I love. I put something  
in the oven. I think it was soft cinnamon pretzels.  
But it could have been anything warm. I decided

to forgive myself for this forgetting so I sit  
on the couch with my lemonade and  
my mom's lemonade which she calls too sweet  
like a movie. I love saying Oh to mean

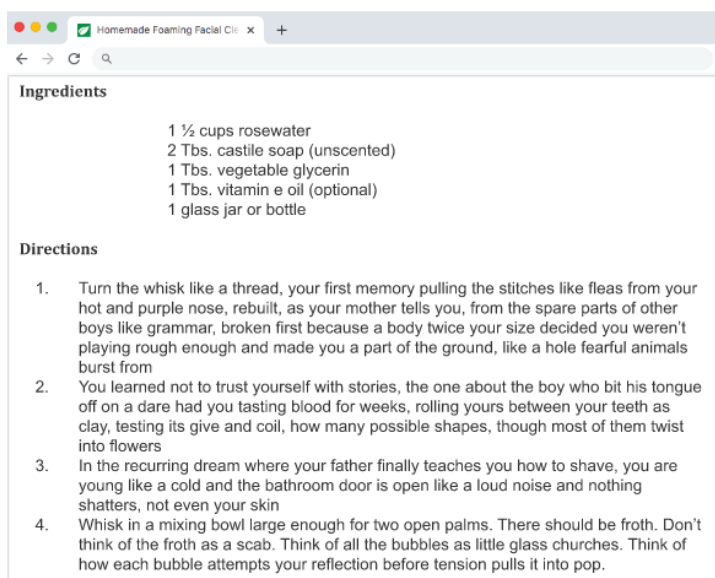
You're too much which means at least  
in part I love you in this moment.  
I love the little circle of water a cold  
glass leaves behind.

## **clusterdream**

Without warning, my therapist asks if I've ever written a poem about my suicidal ideation or self-harm. Her exact words were held and used, have I used a poem to hold onto these thoughts like a Swiss army knife, have I ever held onto the side of this mountain. It's the sort of question that hangs a tightrope in the air. I say, I guess not, no, I hadn't thought of it, a version of the truth, a broken game of telephone. She begins writing the poem for me, like a stranger who offers to take your picture. She says the angle is survival, the first two words are Thank you and lends the third word to me like a draft in the room, and I say Breath.

## clusterdream

I am very shallow. Every night, I wax a bitter rose water into the skin of my face until I can taste it, until my cuticles numb like bread. Because I love its secret chemistry, how it all disappears like weather, how who knows if it works, but it'll be time to do it again tomorrow.



I use all the hot water, like a bad dream. This is a general truth about me, a flaw I keep to take the place of other flaws like a bronze cuckoo. To save the water the trouble of healing, O. and I sometimes shower together, like lost items. It is amazing how much smaller you feel when you share a confined space. As in, I know where I end. I am not the wall smoothing to the ceiling like a balloon. I am not the light blushing the room into one piece like veins. I do not stretch all the way to the door.

**COGNITIVE REFLECTION INDEX**

	STRONGLY AGREE			STRONGLY DISAGREE	
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## clusterdream

Tonight, a call with my father over Facebook Messenger in a dream. It's been 381 days since the last, which makes it, on average, a yearly tradition like hail. In the dream, he follows along with my life like a pop-up book. He can tell me where I am, how long I've been there, what bodies of water I've stood beside. He'll say I wish you didn't move so far and. Most of it silence like when your eyes are closed before sleep. He'll ask What's new. This time I said, Today I saw a play where a boy tamed a wolf named Ocean. He'll say What. I'll say Today a boy tamed a wolf. He'll say What. I'll say A boy fed Ocean from his hands.

A friend I share nothing in common—except that we've both nearly or completely attempted to take our own young lives—texts me I miss you. In his time zone, it's near midnight and I imagine the blue splash of his phone light creating his face in the dark. In mine, the sun has just landed on the bank like a music stand. We don't talk much, but he is one of the few people I've managed to tell I love you. I send him a picture of me with one foot in the river and one palm balancing what remains of the day. I find nothing profound to say. I write back *Thanks for letting me borrow the sun. / I'll get it back to you first thing tomorrow.*

## Self-Portrait as Storybook

And a broken pink breath is the first word of every sentence  
And I am swallowed by the carpet like a nutshell  
And there is something heavy in my hands  
And I am inside it is recess and my mother

gets a phone call like a shiver And it is every day in my heart  
And the teacher says They are just so lonely And she says Lonely  
like a proper noun like turning inside-out like something heavy  
And that phone call is an unwound clock

And that phone call is a window open like dropping something  
fragile and that phone call is somebody else's  
daydream And I do not remember if anyone cried that day  
And I am holding hands with the carpet like closing your eyes

but not for sleep And I am seven years old because the sky is tall  
and shrinking because there is something heavy in my hands  
telling a story about a boy and a growing balloon And the boy  
holds the balloon like something fragile And the boy loses

the balloon like the moon And I am rooted in the carpet  
like the tender string that holds the sky And the teacher  
tells my mother Their loneliness is asymmetry And I am not  
in that phone call because there is something heavy

in my hands And she is still naming my loneliness And she  
says it is crumbs And she says it is being left behind And she says  
it is a metaphor for something fragile And I do not remember if  
anyone cried that day because nobody had

to because there was nobody to cry for because I had  
something heavy in my hands with a sky and a sun  
like dimples And there was something heavy  
in my hands in the shape of a brighter and brighter

lonely And there was something heavy in  
my hands telling the story of a balloon that became the sun

And somewhere there is a train whistle which means two people  
will never see each other again And somewhere they become  
symmetrical with rain And they remember who cried that day be-  
cause they had somebody to cry for And somewhere loneliness is

a sleepy animal with a reflection in the timid water And that animal  
sees the tall sky behind them like a story And that animal  
doesn't remember the timid water because the loneliness  
of the sun made the lonely sky warm And that animal

does not know if it is beautiful  
to be cried for And that animal  
does not know if it is beautiful  
to be remembered And that animal

was warm like everything between  
the sun and the soft hold of the lonely  
earth And every perfect night  
that animal swells into sleep like something fragile

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to the editors and staff of the following publications, in which some of these poems (often as younger versions of themselves) first appeared:

*A Velvet Giant*: "I haven't been able to write a poem since someone on the internet said 'never love a bipolar. They are not lovers. They are incapable of feeling love.'"

*DIAGRAM*: "Personality Index"

*Frontier Poetry*: "Emotion Recognition Task"

*The Journal*: "Grounding and grounding and," originally titled "Anxiety Aubade, or My Therapist Has a Breakthrough"

*Lunch Ticket*: "Depression Aubade" originally titled "Depression Aubade, or My Therapist Has a Breakthrough"

*One*: "Self-Portrait as Storybook," originally titled "Loneliness Lullaby, or My First Grade Teacher Tells My Grandmother She's Worried About My Social Anxiety"

*Peach Mag*: "Neuroplasticity Ode"

*Salt Hill Journal*: "Hotbed in repose"

*The Scores*: "clusterdream [SIDE EFFECTS]," originally titled "6. July," and "clusterdream [Tonight, a call]," originally titled "7. August"

*Sepia Journal*: "Cognitive Reflection Index"



A far earlier version of this chapbook was submitted as my undergraduate thesis, and it is filled with gratitude for the teachers and friends who watched and helped it grow as it was then. Janet McAdams, Sarah Heidt, Thomas Hawks, Jennifer Clarvoe, who helped me accept my voice. Claire Oleson, Taylor Hazan, Gnesis Vilar, Cat March, Clara Altfeld, who wrote and wondered with me. Thank you to the beautiful hills at Kenyon College, the trees, and how many stars you could see at night.

The project has followed me to Bloomington, IN, where it met Ross Gay, Adrian Matejka, Cathy Bowman, and Stacey Lynn Brown, whom it is also grateful for. And Gisselle Yepes, and Kat Carlton, and Bernardo Wade, who continue to flummox me with beauty. Thank you to the Lilly Library at Indiana University, and the Dunn Meadows, where I wrote and wasted time.

The cover photo is credit to Gisselle Yepes, whose eyes, mind, humor, and heart knock me over with and into love, always.

**TYLER RASO** (they/them) is a poet, essayist, and teacher who feels most at home near rivers. Their work has shared space with *POETRY*, *DIAGRAM*, *Black Warrior Review*, *Foglifter Journal*, *Split Lip Magazine*, *Salt Hill Journal*, and elsewhere. They are often wandering, unraveling, or both—but you can reach them on Twitter @spaghettiotopia or through their website, [tylerraso.com](http://tylerraso.com).

