

Wildling and Sprout



PREGNANCY LOSS
ABORTION AND
POSTPARTUM
POETRY
ANTHOLOGY

Marigolde Press

Wildling & Sprout

A Poetry & Prose Anthology
Exploring Pregnancy, Loss, Abortion & Postpartum

Edited by Rebecca Servoss & Roshni Kavate
of Marigolde

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www.wearemarigolde.com

Wildling and Sprout is a collection of poems born out of storytelling and art as an act of resistance. Rebecca and Roshni, founders of Marigolde, started this project in March 2022 and put out the call for submissions in early April. We were inspired to facilitate a community created anthology to support abortion organizations as we sensed laws were going to come up in the future to limit our autonomy.

In May of 2022, a supreme court document was leaked foretelling the eventual overturning of Roe v. Wade, a 50 year precedent protecting abortion rights federally in the US. As we watched reproductive rights continue to erode in the United States, we were determined to do what we consistently do for our patients and clients as nurses and birthworkers; advocate and educate with compassion and non-judgment. In addition to protesting, organizing, and calling our legislators, we wanted to bring a new narrative to the fight for reproductive justice; one that is sustainable and builds fortitude. We also wanted to stay true to the Marigolde Way, which encourages us to center rest, nourishment, softness, ritual, and digestion of our emotions and experiences.

In the spirit of Marigolde's mission to change the ecology of care, we aimed to honor physical and emotional rest while embracing activism and advocacy. It was clear to us that employing creativity, storytelling, and the power of our collective voice achieved this goal. As submissions came in, it was poignantly evident that creating an anthology of poetry and prose exploring the spectrum of pregnancy, birth, loss, abortion and postpartum experiences would help illuminate the thread of grief, sorrow, and joy that connects us in this human experience. Regardless of political or moral stance, or the laws being imposed on birthing people and families, our lived experiences convey an undeniable unity.

This collection of poetry and prose bravely lays bare the pain and grief of pregnancy loss, honestly reflects on the choice to continue a pregnancy or not, explores the ripple effect of anticipation and sorrow in relationships, peers into the caverns of loneliness in loss, and lets the light of hope break through. The themes of transformation, self reflection, awe, heartbreak, and grief carry the reader through the complexity of the reproductive journey. With our writers spanning many countries, cultures, gender expressions, sexualities, and ages; and the point of view coming

from the perception of the birther, partner, and caregiver, our human connection becomes even more palpable in this work.

Wildling and Sprout is dedicated to you, our community. It is because of your bravery and willingness to share your intimate reflections that we have this beautiful community created anthology. One hundred percent of the proceeds of this work will be donated to organizations improving access to abortion care and reproductive rights for BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ individuals.

Welcome to the Wildling and Sprout Reader's Guide,

The intention of this guide is to create a container for the experience you will have as you read through the anthology. As we curated and put together the anthology we experienced a wide range of emotions, and it changed us. We thought a few words on how to engage with this body of work would also enrich your experience.

- This anthology is about the breadth of human experience as it relates to the postpartum, pregnancy, fertility and loss experiences. This can bring up a lot of emotions and may catch us by surprise sometimes. We encourage creating a container for reading through this. Maybe creating periods of time during the day in a comfortable, supportive space, with your favorite drink.
- Take it in small bites, allow time for rest and reflection, maybe journal, paint or record your thoughts.
- Notice how your body and breath are while you read, maybe invite some ease and comfort.
- Make space for digesting. Loss and grief can unearth powerful moments and memories within our body. Find your intuitive practice to flow, move and digest your own experience.

There is enormous power in the spoken word, consider hosting or organizing a collective Poetry reading circle. Take turns reading a section and share your thoughts. Community and connection is a radically powerful way to nurture, support, and build a movement in big and small ways.

You can also write your own poetry, prose, or create art inspired by reading this anthology.

Some questions to reflect on either your own or along with others:

- What moved you the most? Describe any sensations, feelings you experienced?
- How did this add to your understanding of the loss and grief journey?
- Did this spark any memories or stories from your own life?
- What themes stood out for you from reading this anthology?
- How can art and community organizing support activism?
- How does this move you in engaging with the reproductive justice movement in your own life or in your community?

Share your reflections and thoughts with us at
roshni@wearemarigolde.com or [instagram.com/wearemarigolde](https://www.instagram.com/wearemarigolde),
[#wearemarigolde](https://twitter.com/wearemarigolde)

Grief, 2020.

Jasmine Godinez-Gomez

I will carry you so proudly
Like a sacred vessel
Poorly balanced upon my head
Both a ritual so vital
& A chore that never ends

Jasmine Godinez-Gomez
@mirroredheartdoula

Jasmine Godinez-Gomez is a Birthworker, Griefworker, and Designer, based in Long Beach, California. She is the creator of mirroredheart LLC, where she offers Full Spectrum Doula services as well as handcrafted design. Jasmine's work is influenced by her lived experience as a mother and bereaved parent, and is inspired by all things birth, pregnancy, grief, and loss.

Women's March

Revital Heller

On the day of Donald Trump's inauguration,
I found out that I was pregnant.
It had been a hard day. Darkness in the morning,
rain all afternoon, a gnawing sickness
in the pit of my stomach before bed.
When the receptionist chirped "Congratulations!"
I wanted to tell her not to get her hopes up.
Just play it cool. Don't get too excited, lady.
Don't send out announcements.
Don't tell your parents yet.

The next morning, we stood at the kitchen counter,
drinking coffee, imagining a life in which this news is joyful
and uncomplicated. A life in which we take a picture of my belly
every day for 40 weeks and then make a time-lapse video.
The life we lived for about a month, three years ago,
before the bleeding signaled the end of the first pregnancy,
when I assumed that my body was normal.

And then the phone rang, and it was my mother.
They were seven minutes away, cheerful, energized,
ready to march down the streets of downtown Los Angeles.
My mother was giddy,
ready to give Trump and his America a piece of her mind.
The rain had cleared and it was a beautiful, sunny day.

And I wish that I could say that, in those next few hours,
I overcame my worry and felt myself surrounded by such goodwill

and love that I was hopeful again. Surely, there were moments. Standing on a street corner with people streaming around me. Signs that made me laugh out loud. Holding my own sign with my mother, one arm around her shoulders. Old women in pink, fresh and raunchy. Gay teens with rainbow hats. Strollers and wheelchairs and singing and chanting, and all of it, so joyful. A life in which, if you just believe hard enough, you can make things happen.

Revital Heller
@Rev415

Revital lives in Portland (formerly Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, etc etc) with her family.

The Weight My Arms Won't Know

Jasmine Stuverud

The ache.
A simple drop of crimson
Indicating
An emptiness.
A single drop
Mourning
The absence of the life
I won't meet.

My arms cry
Why
My breasts
Weep in confusion
My body
Shakes and quivers
At the quickness
of death
At the suddenness
The permanence
The incomprehensible loss
Of my own longing.

I sit
In wanting
Not wanting,
Calling in
Pushing away,
The ebbs and tides

Of a womanhood
Caught between a cradle
And a crossbow.

This hurting
Is real
Beyond
my own blood.
It is real
As a hearth.

This ache
Is the nose
I won't kiss,
The mouth
I won't feed,
The hand
I won't hold.
This ache
Is the weight
My arms won't know.

Jasmine Stuverud
@manymoonsbirth

Jasmine is an Iranian-American Mama, full-spectrum doula, and artist living in Washington state. Her passions are supporting birthing and parenting people, creating healthy family traditions, and finding creative ways of engaging with the living, breathing, natural world.

Untitled

Hannah Dwyer

I lay in the bathtub, my knees, nipples, and nose like little islands floating above the water. It was warm, and dark, and I could hear my heart beating. The gentle pressure of the water held my eyes closed and my body swayed in the subtle currents. My thoughts, which had been frantically looping, began to dissipate in the steam, and eventually there was nothing left other than sensation — warm, wet, dark, heart beating.

Suddenly, I was not just myself but also the fetus inside me. Also, I was the fetus that I used to be inside my mother. Also, I was my mother, both the version of her that held me and the version of her that floated around in the warm wet darkness of my grandmother. And I was my grandma too, and her mom...

My consciousness expanded to animate the spark of life that had been thrust forth through all the generations that led to me — which now glowed inside me.

I loved my little spark in a way I had previously been incapable of loving. Their presence brought me into contact with all the ancestors who had once done the life-creating alchemy that I was now beginning to do. By adding another link in the chain, my relationship to the whole had shifted in some indescribable and yet deeply consequential way.

I floated in the warm wet dark — loving, grateful, feeling like I could never be lonely again. This ecstasy, of being part of a love so powerful, spanning millennia, continents, dimensions, began to slip away as I registered the experience. I wondered where my body was, if I was in it, and there it was again. There I was again, a girl in the bath on a Sunday afternoon with an abortion scheduled for Tuesday.

Hannah Dwyer
@hannah__hyams

Hannah Dwyer (she/her) lives on Sinixt, Syilx, and Ktunaxa land and labours towards reproductive sovereignty in her work as a farmer/food system advocate and as a doula and sexual/reproductive health educator. She wants nothing more than for all people and communities to have what they need to live and make life on their own terms. She loves tending the Earth so it can nourish the people and caring for people so they can steward the Earth.

Surrender

Alycia Two Bears

There is no door
to call 'open'
There is no breaking
A fast
There is no cry out
To support and switch
There is you
Baby
And
Ceremony
.....Birth
 Intertwines
 Death.....

Alycia Two Bears
@Alycia_two_bears
@your.moon.woman

Mixed blooded Iskwew. Mother of 5 Storms. Birth Worker. Poet. Yogi. Two Spirit.

A Letter to my Marigold

Katie Ness

My Darling,

Looking back is like staring at fragments of a movie, flash pictures in variable sequences, images with no meaning to anyone but us; fragmented— a crush of doctors, a lagoon of agony— a cutting room narrative. I remember walking barefoot one day, with cardamom tea, writing poetry and listening to Lana Del Rey's song 'Happiness is a Butterfly'. It was 10am on an early spring morning, a few months after surviving the ectopic pregnancy. I remember telling you that a clairvoyant once told me she saw a little death in my aura— our mouths smiled but our eyes spoke the language of grief. We knew what her prophecy now meant. As months went by I wrote lists, scripts and scribbled prose; notes scattered across the coffee table, I'm trying to make sense of it all and erase the brutal memories that haunt me. I had no one to talk to, so I spoke to the paper. I desired dignity, I desired to regain control in my crumbled world and angry lunar rush. But mostly I yearned for connection. I was a listless wanderer orbiting my dance with death. I was so lonely wading through the tide of a thousand tomorrows, frothing through every horror— Yet people kept telling me to move on, *you* kept telling me to move on. I want to put my body into words. I want my severed fallopian tube in the sentences. The bloodstains in the paragraphs. I want our dying star on your tongue. Our

story of pain, flesh-death and medical neglect. I want your story of almost losing me. I'm here! I'm really here, quite close to you! Singing a solitary hymn. I do not have the enormous strong heart of a humpback whale, I can not sing this alone, this aching is an obscure vast wilderness. But if we play catch and cast heartbreak between hands, we can share the weight of it and I will feel brave, no matter the wreckage.

With love,
Your Sweetheart

Katie Ness

@katie_wild_yogi

Katie is a writer, yoga teacher, women's circle facilitator and cacaoista living in London. As an initiated priestess, she leads womb healing ceremonies, rituals and rites. She also specialises in pre/postnatal ayurveda. Her poetry and prose is published in a variety of anthologies such as Solstice Literary, Beyond the Veil Press, Poetry Undressed, Wandering Autumn, Mulberry Literary and others. Katie's poetry chapbook Aphrodite Fever Dream will be available soon. She is an ectopic pregnancy survivor.

Untitled

Lex

How are you?

“I’m—“

That’s great

And how about baby?

“Developmentally on track”

No not that, are they sleeping?

“Yes, lots.”

8 hours a night?

Are they silent on a lousy flight?

You shouldn’t change your diet, adults are better than that.

Why do they cry so much (when you eat that)?

And how about weaning? It must be soon.

How dare you let them watch cartoons?

Oh just give them the whole cupcake.

Why don’t they eat veggies for goodness sake?

A year old and not walking yet?

Here’s some advice you’ll use I bet—

“Leave me alone!

Or at least actually help me...

the dishes need done and all of the laundry.

Diapers need changing and groceries need bought but first plan the

meals and budget to shop. So much on my

plate and your questions are trivial, all I need is a healthy hot meal.”

Lex

@curlsanddirt

Mothering myself and my daughters

The time is never now when you say never.

Magpie Ulysses

Everyone you were pregnant with before is pregnant again on social media.

When they tell you, their glee coaxes you quiet.
you refrain from mentioning the recent miscarriage
every time you do mention it
people are
sorry.

no body wants to talk about that
no body even asks if YOU are sorry or fine

so you leave out your initial intention to witch it from your body
to enact your right to end a mass of cells that will one day consume your
every one.

you focus on the story of physical pain and the ER visit from hell
the science of it didn't leave you sad,
at the time
but now all the siblings are going to arrive in 6 months
and you hadn't really thought through
what it might be like
your child, the perpetual third wheel.

You remember that first time
how you
wanted to punch it out of your body from the beginning, gut yourself of
your delicious "mistake"
took 5000mg of vitamin C everyday
until you arrived in a hospital in Alberta

heavily medicated
bleeding and barfing for a week after, tucked away in a safe basement
The next one
the end of your first love
how you would relocate with a cat and a car with a hole rusted through
the floorboard.
how you told the person you sold it to that the door will fall off before the
engine ever dies. How you lied to your
ex about how much money you sold it for and kept the extra \$100 and
spent it on groceries.
it was poverty that led to this decision, and the next.

how you went on tour two days after you were in the clinic with the grown
up lesbians regaling you with the
stories of commercial drive in the 90's; THE DAY JOE HOSED THE DYKES
DOWN, they called it; laughed while you laughed,
while a family prayed next to your curtain for jesus to save the soul of this
woman, this mass of cells "stolen"
from her body... How you simply just said
"come back to me, when it is time".

How you swore, never again.

The time is never now when you say never.

But you knew it wasn't right, this time ended up high on morphine, having
a miscarriage that your body refused to recognize, sitting in a chair in the
ER waiting area watching the food network next to some gruff guy who
put a
nail gun through his hand at work, in pain, scrolling everyone's upcoming
second child birth announcements,
hoping for once to not darken the room, hoping you won't say the weird
stuff, hoping you won't whisper

“Come back to me”
too loudly.

Magpie Ulysses
@Magsdeelight

Writer, Rabble Rouser, fancy talker; Magpie began performing at the age of 17 to save her life. She has performed across North America and is a veteran of the national poetry slam community in Canada where she was a member of two national champion Vancouver poetry slam teams. She was named a Poet of Honour at the Canadian festival Of Spoken Word in the Fall of 2012. A bit of a witch, a nature freak and an activist at heart, Magpie is known for her visceral, often surrealist writings that extend from the everyday human experience into the depths of natural and inanimate worlds. Magpie has spent much of the past decade heavily involved in the arts while living in and around rural BC and Southern Ontario. Having spent the past few years raising a new human and past many years caring for her grandmother through Alzheimer’s disease, she has become increasingly interested in questions surrounding genetic memory, place, body, grief, aging and how we choose to tell our own stories.

The earth provides

Kelsey Klip

Abort the mission
Not the vision
Held close to our bosoms
Our choices have yet risen.
Maimed by shame and capitalistic gains,
Abort the notion
That abortions are only for
People who don't want babes.
So why make something illegal
When parsley grows at our feet?

Mugwort, cohosh, pennyroyal

The earth provides

Papaya, Queen Anne's lace

Everything that we need

Mugwort, cohosh, pennyroyal, papaya, Queen Anne's lace

Mugwort, cohosh, pennyroyal, papaya, Queen Anne's lace

Stevie Nicks, Whoopi,
And our favorite pope picture ripping queen.
All statistics, including me.

Kelsey Klip
@klipspeaks

Kelsey Klip (Siknikt, Mi'kma'ki) comes from a long line of ancestors who've had something to say. She uses this as fuel for her creative process and work as a performance artist. As a mother, activist, and birthworker, to share beauty and connection through spoken word and song is her balm and gift. From organizing Nelson's Poetry Slam to performing at numerous feminist and art festivals across so-called Canada, she makes her presence known.

Untitled

Kyra Montemayor Kelley

Stains on my bedspread
Remind me of
Where you're not
And bring me back around
To where I am
Here

In this tiny slice
Of house
That belongs to nobody
The smoke alarm
Screams at nothing
And I ignore the doorbell
Twice
She isn't here

You are gone
And I am left
Alone
But not lonely
For in this small section
Of no one's somewhere
I belong
To the sky
To the train's whistle in the distance
I belong
To my bathrobe
And all its stains
That don't belong to me

You are on my bedspread
In my eyes

In my bones
I breathed you
In and out
Of existence
I'm sorry
I never said thank you
For bringing me back
From the dead

Thank you for my belonging
For myself
My love
And my bed

Kyra Montemayor Kelley
@kyramontekelley

Kyra Montemayor Kelley (she/they) is a theatre practitioner and parent-artist from Akron, Ohio. With experience ranging from the creative to the administrative and educational, Kyra prioritizes her work roles based on the needs of her community. Kyra trained in performance, voice, and dance at the Baldwin Wallace Conservatory of Music and Kent State University. She holds a B.A. in Theatre Arts and is committed to a life of self-directed study and creative exploration.

Untitled

Patrick Kosiewicz

In the uterine midnight
tiny feet walked on soft,
warm walls of the mother-dome.

Hands played games
with birds of amniotic fluid.

He floated over the abyss,
belly attached to a glowing, nourishing rope.

He entered the world
clad in blood and sludge,
screaming at the light.

Air filled the trees in his chest,
little fists rose up swearing vengeance.

I have prophecies for this child.

He will be written about since it was foretold by a mountain monk that his
father will live
his life with pen in hand.

I have prophecies for this child.

He will see 400 seasons
seven million birds
and 938 billion stars.

He will
hold his first round stone
at age two standing in a cold creek.

sit among people and wonder
why they laugh at pain.

not write with ink
but with plasma.

learn from the creators
and be a creator himself.

know the destroyers
and be against them his whole life.

He will hear the stories of his ancestors
who roamed the ancient rocks of Aleppo
fought in the purple hills of the Caucasus
and wrote poetry
in the lacquered libraries of Choson.

He will speak the divine language of his mother
have an alliance with the black-haired people
and offer peace to the bearded ones
and pale anarchists alike.

He will learn from his brother only
what brothers can teach each other.

He will learn reading, writing, and fighting from his father
and will know war.

The seeds of compassion planted in him by his mother will bloom when
he becomes a boy, and then a man, and
then an elder.

He was born
in dark times
in a city of illusions
but his name means
Light

and he is real.

I watched him as he was born
and he will see me as I die.

Patrick Kosiewicz
@patrickkosiewicz

Patrick Kosiewicz is the author of *The Geoglyph*, a book-length poem on Life on Earth, and *How Many Suns Burn Over Babel Where Poets Die*, a novel about war.

♥ Dearest Piwite (Newborn) ♥

Tagwanibisan

A love letter is 9 months
And several years of planning.
Perhaps you were a surprise!
A love letter is fingers and toes, in whatever form you decide.
Wiggles and grunts, a soother to munch; Cellphone prose and postpartum
woes.
A love letter is sleepless nights and leaking breasts and poptarts at 9am.
A love letter is we, together as three,
My love letter is You,
From -Me.

Tagwanibisan
@Creators womb

Mother, birthworker, and seasonal mushroom forager extraordinaire. An
off reserve member of the Algonquin nation of Kitigan Zibi, Tagwanibisan
enjoys rural bush living and satellite internet. Kitchen witch and amateur
shower Mezzo.

**I'm Composting my Soul Right now: An unfinished something by
MaryGrace**

MaryGrace DiMaria

When people ask me how I'm doing I tell them I'm composting my soul. So much has died, the weather's getting cooler, and I'm watching parts of myself decomposing. When I stand apart from it and look at it - I see myself like a tree and I'm standing over this big pile of leaves on the ground and watching more come off of me every day. I look down and think how do I deal with all of this? How do I get these back on me? How can I pick up all of this when I'm feeling so exhausted? And the wind keeps blowing them out of my arms as I try to pick them up and more leaves are blowing off of me every single day. Another day and the pile keeps getting bigger.

Eventually I pick up a shovel and start turning my pile. I do it everyday and eventually I see that after a few rains and once the worms come the leaves decompose together and the pile gets squished and smaller and easier to turn. After a few more months it looks like some mix of the dirt that's already there and the leaves and eventually there's snow and there's nothing more to do for now. Spring comes and new life sprouts and I can do something with that again. More turning, hands in the soil, hopefully new life is coming.

MaryGrace DiMaria
@marygracedeco

MaryGrace works in the worker justice movement and is a Licensed Social Worker that specializes in grief and loss. Much of her attention has gone towards the intersection of grief and movement work/organizing and she wholeheartedly believes in the catharsis and power that comes when communities use collective grief to fight for change. MaryGrace has experienced two pregnancy losses and is hoping to grow and sustain life soon.

Talon

Rebecca Servoss

involution
begins with a sob,
womb clutching
the emptiness.

an ache
from my throat
to my perineum.

hands digging into the core
of my Self,
blood under my fingernails.

your spirit,
tiny, and huge—
granting me
rites of passage.

the memory of
your heart inside me,
your hands, your eyes

some kind of medicine
fluttering
in the in between.

fierce little bird.

my love for you
has intertwined some
eternal remedy
Into my days,

planting untold seeds
in the rich soil
of your departure.

Rebecca Servoss
@remediesforresilience

Rebecca is a birthworker, postpartum & NICU nurse, writer, and founder of Marigolde. She lives in New Mexico with her husband & three children.

In Our Bodies

Bethany Cagen

The bleeding began on a Monday
By Sunday it was over
My mind went offline
I knew that it was over, before it was over

Visceral emotions from a cave deep inside erupted in the form of sobs
Tears for hours, or maybe it was minutes

Pain and cramps
I laid on the floor, moaning and moving
Grateful for the knowing to follow the impulses of my body

Sympathetic looks from the doctors
My partner rushing in while I lay on the living room floor in pain
There are no words to offer solace to a grief beyond language

Several days went by

Then, a plop in the toilet and she is released
Should I look?
Other women say they wanted to look (and to touch)
Surprise overcame me; I was too much in shock to look
A big plop in the water and it was (mostly) over - how strange.

The body's evidence of life come and gone
Biology simplifies it to a sac of blood - cells and blood and tissue, that's all

My mother went through two of these losses
And another who was more grown

Unspoken grief for souls who weren't ready for this world
Or we weren't ready to receive them

The mind creates meaning to understand
But who really knows?
I don't know.

But, the body knows and remembers
This intimacy of life and death, so close to each other
In our bodies

Bethany Cagan
@colorofmotion

Bethany Cagan is a somatic therapist, traveler and nature lover based in Providence, Rhode Island. She loves moving her body through hiking, yoga and dance, and feeling the sun on her face after a long New England winter.

Untitled

Stacey Ramsower

after days adrift I find myself having washed up on some unknown shore
doubled over in disbelief

I have been instructed to rest, to be gentle with myself
this, while my self surges electricity through my deep center
and I am left holding bloody tendrils of what I wished for in my hands
blood comes in strong, unpredictable waves

blood moon

high tide

there is nowhere to go but where she takes me

I stay low, open, and wailing through each contraction of ending and loss

miscarriage

like I misspoke

or

mistook this gift as mine

I can't help but feel I've made a mistake

misconstrued the meaning of my body's signals

leapt from a ledge where no net would ever appear

as each slippery tendril falls from me I surrender a little more

to the power of my own inner sea

to churn and to carry

to consume and cleanse itself

to fathom depths beyond comprehension

to know oneself is to be sucked under

Stacey Ramsower
@sacredbody_staceyramsower

Stacey Ramsower is a Somatic Sex Educator, Ayurvedic doula, and Holistic Pelvic Care practitioner. She specializes in fertility, loss, postpartum, and intimacy. Stacey has two children and lives to dance.

you're not around to know that it's happened

Danielle Richardson

Warhol didn't believe in death—
because you're not around to know that it's happened

the temperamental nature of each moment
like watching an infant grow
feeding to feeding
each diaper changed
and morning passed too quickly
stretching and learning and pooping
again and again
until—

life doesn't stop until it does
but by then
you're not around to know that it's happened

Danielle Richardson
@TroggleD

Danielle Richardson is a queer spoken word poet, Canadian national poetry slam champion, independent theatre creator, and community organizer. A graduate of the University of Saskatchewan MFA in Writing program, her writing can be found in *untethered*, *oratorealis*, *Folklore*, and *Poetry All Over the Floor*. Richardson, with three collaborators, published *Prairie Girl Collective* with Party Trick Press which was also released as an audio album with American Radio Cassette. She lives with her spouse, child, and cat, in Saskatoon.

Bringing ancestors through

Manuel González

The screaming had stopped
all I could do was stand in awe
the pushing and
the blood
her struggle
her beauty
and her power
with her body
her spirit and
all her might
she brought an ancestor through
on a river of blood
and now...

the storm had passed
and we met
10 fingers 10 toes
a delicate little Being of
Alma Y Sangre
spreading sunshine.
my soul.
and in that moment
of quiet and reverence
I could feel the strings of my heart being pulled
maybe it was divine inspiration
maybe it was the first time I could actually hear
The Whispers of my ancestors
because I knew what to do

and I could feel it in my DNA
genetic memory giving me direction
the greatest gift I could give my jita
Was a connection
without my first lesson
it was time to take the test
but what comes next
I had to ask a nurse to give me a package
containing the umbilical and placenta
the place where for nine months
with magic and mystery
became the manifestation
the place where orishas and spirits
ancestors and Elementals
would visit their old friend
this Spirit child
mijita Sarita
the sunshine that chases away my Shadows
and I knew immediately
that I had to take that package
to a place that brought me
much Solace and inspiration
where I met my ancestors
and found that inner silence
if just for a moment
it is where I battled the wind
and talked to the spirit of the river
created my own ceremonies and rituals
I would have visions
and read book that contained wisdom
sometimes when I needed a good place to cry
I would at least get to go right there off Atrisco
The Bosque in the center of burque

2

it was a cold January morning
the sky was grey and overcast
I had to be fast because
I was picking up a check
for some poetry I did for lulac
and I had to get back
to the house to pick up a shovel
and hurry up and get back to the hospital
the trees were bald
and the Bosque was asleep
The wind was crisp
and I could smell someone burning Pinon
to warm their families
I could see my breath
breathing hard
surrounded by dreaming cottonwood trees
I started looking for the perfect spot
but it was Winter
and everything was dead
so I followed the trails
until I found it
it was secluded
but close enough to visit
I put down my shovel
and the package
and I greeted the river
my old friend
I called upon
the spirits of my ancestors
the four Directions

and the spirits of the Bosque
and the river
I asked for their permission
and their blessings
then I gave thanks and offerings
then I began to dig
and I dug deep enough
so the coyotes wouldn't try to dig it up
and I emptied out that plastic basket
into the soil
With prayer and meditation
I made a dedication
asking for the river to give mijita
guidance and protection
I asked our ancestors
to give her a connection
to her history
I asked the four directions
to make sure she's never lost
I asked the river
to give her an adventurous and courageous spirit
and I asked the Bosque
to provide for her a place
to seek Solace and solitude
The Cottonwood has old stories
the wind will carry her song
the soil will nourish her roots
the water will take her dreams
to the oceans of possibilities
with ritual and ceremony
I burn sage and then copal
then I replaced the soil
packed it down as hard as I could

and then I stepped on it
stepping turned to dance
and then dance turned to prayer
and I couldn't wait to go
and hold
and hug
and kiss
and cry
with this beautiful soul
with Wild Hair going in every direction
she is love
she is Hope
she is the best part of her mother
and me
and I'm ready
to give my heart
my sweat
my breath
to my magical mariposa
Sarita Sol González

Manuel González
@xicanopoet

Manuel González is a performance poet who began his career in the poetry slam. He has represented Albuquerque many times on a national level as a member of the Albuquerque poetry slam team. Manuel has appeared on the PBS show, *Colores*, in "My word is my power." He was one of the founding members of the poetry troupe *The Angry Brown Poets*. Manuel is now Albuquerque Poet Laureate Emeritus, and he is poet in residence at the Native American Community Academy.

Over-Shadowed

Brittany Carmona-Holt

I try to remind
re-wind, re-mind
redo my mind, remind
myself that without shadows
light means nothing.
It's a camera taught lesson that I embrace
for work, but can't wrap
my mind around
for birth.
The flutters and kicks should
be enough proof, proof enough
but I still quick
walk to the bathroom to check for blood.
My partner still
refrains —
And tears still surface

like the chest clenching
I thought I was over.
Even that fast, strong
heartbeat gets overshadowed
by this new realization
that now, this time,
there is more to lose.
And with all it takes,
all the things that have to go right,
losing seems so much
more plausible
than keeping.

Brittany Carmona-Holt
@brittanythebirthwitch

("Overshadowed" was originally published on Instagram 2/11/2017 when I was pregnant with my son after miscarriage)

Brittany Carmona-Holt aka "The Birth Witch," (she/her) is a bisexual, mother, partner, poet, Tarot reader, full spectrum doula, photographer, birth assistant to a community midwife, facilitator for a community based doula training program, and reproductive justice advocate with ADHD. She is the author of Tarot for Pregnancy: A Companion for Radical, Magical Birthing Folks.

Conversations with God

Mercedes Holtry

Part 1. Faith

In the Emergency Room
the nurse asks,
“How are you feeling?”

Angry
Devastated
Disappointed
Shame
Blood
Guilt
Confusion
Heart break
Depressed
Alone
Scared
Numb
Fear
Unseen
Punished
Broken

I feel like,
My dreams of swing sets and Christmas cookies
flushed down a toilet

Asking myself all the necessary questions
over and over again
“How could prayer not work?”
“What did I do wrong?”
“Is my body broken?”

“Will I be able to try again?”
“What if I fail again?”
“Will I ever be a mother?”
“Why can’t I be a mother now?”

And answering them
“I guess I have to let go”
“You win God, I’ll stop fighting it”
“I trust you God, even though I am angry”
“I’m sorry for being angry with you”
“Please forgive me”
“Give me my baby back when I’m ready, please?”
“I’m sorry”
“I’m sorry”
“I’m sorry”
“I know it’s not my fault”
“Regardless”
“I’m still so very sorry”

But the only words that come out are
“I’m okay.”

And the nurse nods,
She leaves me alone
with the fluorescent lights
of the hospital room.
Awaiting the results
of blood work and ultrasounds,
I finally allow myself to cry

The nurse knows I told a lie.
I’m definitely not okay, But I will be...

Part 2. Grief

There is no grief
Like the grief the womb feels

after it couldn't perform its job
So the womb apologizes like a flood

The Doctor says,

“Miscarriages are actually very common.”

“1 in 3 women have had a miscarriage.”

Like that's suppose to make you feel better

But what your brain recognizes as fact
And your body feels is truth
Couldn't be more different

When the bleeding begins
You will ask God
To forgive you for every discretion
If he hasn't already

You will pray
You will cry
You will yell
You will wonder
If this was something you deserved
And you will cry more

Then you will cup your womb from the outside
You will take a deep breath
And you tell the seed inside you
“If you must go, then I guess you must go my love”
But if you stay, I promise I will help you grow”

You exhale
You look to the sky with agony
With every last bit of surrender you have left in your body
And you tell God
“Okay, I'll let go now”

Part 3. Hope

I will plant a tree in my mind
In your everlasting memory
I will watch you grow
I will see your leaves turn red in Fall
I will watch them bloom again in spring
I will see you smile green in May
I will witness the thick of your trunk as the years go by
cherish the shade you bring me as you get older
I will feel the breeze in June on the first day of Summer
And I will know you are with me, always
So I will plant a tree knowing...
If not inside me, then who better than Mother Earth
To help you grow
Just grow my love...
I just want to see you grow.

Mercedes Holtry
@lapoeta_cedez

Mercedes Holtry is a poet, writer, mentor, and Chicana feminist who focuses on bringing out her roots, experiences and lessons learned through her poetry in hopes that they embrace her people and other artists around her.

Untitled

Ella Hampson

you will come again when the timing is right,
but that time isn't now,
isn't zero degree nights
and the two of us-
still feeling like children ourselves-
curled up in a twin bed
in the back of a tiny van
tea candles collected on a shelf
for what little warmth they give off,
tiny lights, like the tiny light of you.
but not now,
not now when we forget to drink water
and shower once a week
in laundromats and rv parks
and take dips in ice-lined rivers.
not now,
not now when we try to climb 14,000 foot peaks
in the dead of winter,
not now when we sleep in parking lots
and down bumpy dirt roads,
and fight over how many books is too many
to keep in our tiny van.
your timing isn't now,
so I prayed to herbs I harvested,
made teas and tinctures,
and meditated on release as I waited
patiently for the cramps to begin.
thank you for knowing that your time will come,
it just isn't now,
isn't in this moment of my life,
thank you.

I love you.
I will see you, meet you,
I will feel your tiny light again,
when the time is now.

Ella Hampson
@ellebelle39

I am an herbalist and naturalist traveling with my partner in a tiny van through North America/Turtle Island. As I grow my herbal knowledge, I continuously become more interested and empowered by herbal use as a form of colonial resistance and way to connect our bodies to the land. I have become especially passionate about using herbs around pregnancy, miscarriage and abortion.

Untitled

Dara Wawatie-Chabot

I wanted you, and then I became angry. Where was he?

I will always remember the way your love gripped my heart the moment I knew.

Nidanis, kisakin tedigo.

In the dark, I lay with you. We are separate but still one.

My heart aches for a love that I thought I lost, but I found you.

Here I am, abandoned.. Here you are, in my company and care.

Your dependence makes my love so tender.

His absence makes my heart surrender to the darkness again.. and again and again and again until...

When will it be too much?

Awake in the night again, we need to escape once more.

Why have I put you through this my little one? Your love gets me through the darkest days.

Here we are. Three of us and two birds.

I am so blessed but we are so privileged.

I thank Creator every night for our protection and care;

I pray for the extension of this love to all of humanity, to heal the cracks, wounds, darkness and evils.

Leave us to raise our children in peace...

To live our lives freely and to choose our happiness, comfort and love.

Kitci migwetc kinawik.

Dara Wawatie-Chabot
@Waawaate97

Dara is Algonquin Anishinabe from Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg and Algonquins of Barrier Lake Quebec. They have two children and are working towards becoming a doula. They are considering becoming a midwife eventually, but is working within grassroots advocacy and involvement in different social justice movements.

Missed Miscarriage

Rebecca Haley-Park

“I feel like death,” I think, and then
remember it is
because I have
death inside me
Still

Rebecca Haley-Park

@beccahaleypark

Rebecca Haley-Park lives with her wife and son on the North Shore of
Massachusetts.

Untitled

Harriet Lowri Roberts

Lonely in the body where I am holding two,
you
Multiplying as we speak and
me

Mumbling, worrying my world away
What to say?
And how to make a choice?

Mine alone, but in a duo
How am I to follow,
intuition or peer guidance?
Not a plan, a ruddy nuisance

And yet, it brings to the surface something,
different from desire
A fear to go against the direction of nature
To prevent, perhaps, the path that was drawn for me
And for you - my collection of cells

What a word termination
How to do it without determination?
for this, or that
two differing lives

To do what I am designed, but,
just not now

Maybe the next one,
once I have crowned
into the woman I am to become,
without this one.

How would I know such a dream to be true?
What would happen if I let you ensue?
Inside me, growing for months and months
How we would change together?
A bond
forever.

What about the people who have done it too?
Experienced the same and become anew

And what of the man I made you with?
Is he ours forever,

will we be a unit?

Will he resent me for my choice,
if you are within it?

Do I feel supported?

Do I feel solo?

How long do I have before you are too burrowed?

For me to know my fate,
to know my trauma.

My maybe son

My probably not daughter.

Harriet Lowri Roberts
@wewomb @harrietroberts___

Dancer, doula, menstrual educator and hands-on therapist. I am dedicated to the body, and regaining our relationship to community through intimate support. This poem was written in the depths of my personal experience with abortion.

Untitled

Erin Harris

I looked out my window on a cold, rainy December day and saw the bending branches of our grapevine.

The vine that just a few months before had been lush with leaves, and heavy with the fruit it bears

was now bare in its winter slumber; the weight of the fruit showing more clearly through its drooping limbs; its leaves shed like my hair after my baby dropped from me.

The fourth season is one of dormancy. When normal functions are suspended to allow the vine to breathe, prepare, rest.

While it may not be as vibrant or youthful as its seasonal counterparts, winter's role is to prepare for life once more.

The fourth trimester is the life-giver's winter. Wrap them in a blanket and allow them to slow down and be void – temporarily – of external activity. Let them breathe, prepare, rest.

Train their vines, limbs, and emotions to a support system to keep them steady as their new body learns to carry itself once more.

It's time to remember the beauty of winter and embrace what is happening beneath its cold

exterior.

When spring comes, I will welcome the green grape clusters growing once more, just as I welcomed the cluster feeds that helped nurture my milk and babe.

I will leave the fourth trimester, my winter, with gratitude for the time it allowed me to become grounded; to reawaken in the spring where I will grow in confidence, color, and life.

I looked out my window on a cold, rainy December day and I saw... me.

Erin Harris
@erin.nursingmamas

Erin Harris is a mom of two, a wife, and a certified lactation educator with two Masters Degrees in Communication Studies and Health Communication. Her area of expertise is parent-child communication in the nursing relationship. Erin nursed Avery for 4 ½ years, but Luca had other plans and weaned at 4 months, making Erin a pumping and supplementing mama. Her passion is helping extended nursing moms set boundaries and helping them gently wean while keeping that close bond intact.

Rose and Pomegranate

Roshni Kavate

Momentary sparks of life.
Your spirits and cells
bathing in my blood.

I will remember the sight
of seeing my body and heart
propel into a vortex of darkness.

Incapacitated, yet wildly awake.
My primal body craving the touch of knowing.
The undulation of warm water.

In a half daze I bought a pumpkin,
I made an altar of persimmon and pomegranate.
Slathered chocolate on candied orange studded Panettone.
Watching the flame roar as it swallowed the cold room.

The plump body soaked in ghee,
soaking the morning mountain sun rays.
The tears fortified and now evaporated.

The creamy beeswax candle,
tall and gleaming,
now a pile of craggy cratered mess.

Angelina and Fermina
praying to the spirits
with basil, roses and rue.

I bathed in jasmine and marigold waters.
Sat over the hot earth wondering who you were.
I look around for you both in the crowd.

And I see you everywhere.

In the freshly cracked open fragrance
of a cardamom pod.
Dangling in the mango tree.
The shimmering shell in the ocean.

The creamy soft sand that swallows
the weight of my grief.

Here, invisible,
bursting with life,
knowing of many lifetimes.

Where will we all meet again?

Roshni Kavate
@cardamomandkavate

Roshni Kavate is an Artist, Healer, Activist and the founder of Marigolde. Roshni's art is dedicated to reclaiming nourishing practices rooted in ancestral wisdom for collective liberation. She believes grief is a portal to wholeness.

Untitled

Mercedez Holtry

I think of passion turning into action when I think of birth
How the womb passionately harvests a seed
Until it's time to push out what you've grown into the world
The same way the earth pushes out the crops and flowers and the trees
from its soil
I often wonder if it's the same threshold of pain
If Mother Earth endures birth simultaneously all over her body all the time
Think of the action "to push"
A verb meaning to move something in the opposite direction of yourself
Birth gives everywhere understand the hard but undeniable truth of
detachment
I pushed the love and light of my life that I spent a hard 9 months growing
and I pushed for an hour and 32
minutes
Spent 36 hours in labor
She is every measurement of passion I contain in my entire body
I've birthed a lot of beautiful combinations of words onto the paper
But she is by far the best poem I've ever written.
See, us artists love using the metaphor of birth when we talk about
pushing out the emotions we have kept
dwelling in the cavity of our hearts
We push pen to paper
And paintbrush to canvas
And spray paint to walls
And music into microphones
And movement onto floors
And we say "I just birthed a masterpiece"
Which is to say "I just created something magical with my own body"
And Ain't that a beautiful calling?
To be creator
I often wonder if God feels the same perplexity
To make something and be in awe of it all the time
Think of the action "to create"

A verb meaning to make something with and from your own special ability to do so

I think of passion turning into action and

I think of mothers

I think of God

I think of creation

I think of birth

I think of pain

I think of pushing

I think of Art

I think of bodies and the sweat that rises to the surface of our brows

I think of the dancer

And the painter

And the muralist

And the singer

And the poet

And my daughter

And all the words I don't have to explain how much I love her

Because she came from me

Inside of me

Like the poems I scribble onto the page

Because I love to write with a passion so deep

It has become who I am

I think about who I am

and I think about the embodiment of passion into action

And I see my mothers face

She doesn't have the words like I do

But if she was a poet, I know I'd be her favorite poem too

Maybe what I'm trying to say is

We humans have so much to give

And it starts with what we can grow inside of us

Think of the action "to grow"

A verb meaning to evolve

To become larger

So big we cannot afford to carry the weight

So we have no choice but to push

To give birth

To the things we really love


To the beauty we are destined to create.

Mercedez Holtry
@lapoeta_cedez

Mercedez Holtry is a poet, writer, mentor, and Chicana feminist who focuses on bringing out her roots, experiences and lessons learned through her poetry in hopes that they embrace her people and other artists around her.

The background of the page is an abstract watercolor wash. It consists of several overlapping, soft-edged shapes in various shades of pink, rose, and light red. The colors are blended together, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall effect is gentle and artistic.

Reflections



Wildling and Sprout is the inaugural publication by Marigolde Press. Marigolde is a nurse and birthworker founded platform for grief and connection. At Marigolde, we grieve boldly, love tenderly, and celebrate the blooming, visceral transformation that unfolds in all birthing people and their families. We hold, celebrate and honor the spectrum of life's experiences.



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