

7 years of
being almost
ready

Liz Clarke





"7 years of being almost ready" is a collection of poetry featured during my Poetry of the Day (POTD) release in May of 2018, on my platform Spoken Visions. These poems, many of which were previously unreleased, are archived from the time I started to write poetry 7 years ago. They represent the journey I've had as a writer, a poet and a young creator. I first took on this project for the sake of creating and releasing content but it soon became a testament to my progress while also highlighting my setbacks. I had hidden these poems in my notes for so many years, hoping a time would come where I would feel good or talented enough to release them. Recognizing this as a habit that needed to be broken, I decided to take on this project of sharing one poem every day for 31 days. It was a difficult challenge considering my diminished commitment to the project, resulting in incomplete illustrations throughout and even missing a day of posting. Despite it all, I was finally able to put these pieces into one document. This is not meant to be a chapbook, in any sense; it is simply a collection of a body of my work that was — in hindsight — always ready to be shared.

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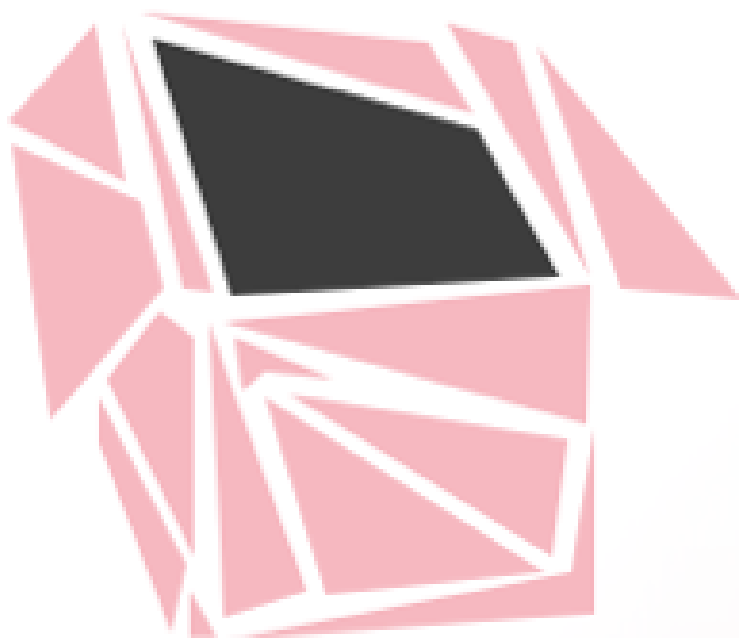
Who will raise me
& weave me into
this hustling city
Where prosperity lives
but has not
invited me

The view where I live
isn't so high
& doesn't look over
a skyline that
welcomes me home
Yet,
I find some way to see
skyscrapers on my
'other side' of the grass



I laugh at progress
because it depends on me
When I look back
at progress
it haunts me
It whispers success
but still yells at me
like I've harmed it

I've got my
hopes & dreams
in boxes
That I can't think
about unpacking
They sit in the corners
of this house
to taunt
my inner passions
I want to move them
to the attic
But, they weigh
too heavily
...on me



Too many social justice
trendsetters
are picking up
the hours for causes
without the commitment
to stay involved
They vacation
from responsibilities
but are somehow
still given power
While those
on the frontline
get
no
time off



How long will a child
be able to stay pure
in a world that believes
evil will always be a victor
& peace
is a lost cause

I once read
"A funny thing happens when
you tell kids they matter,
they believe you"
But, I can't help but remember
every time
I was told the opposite
& how I let the taste linger
for so long
that even sweetness
tasted bitter
So when you told me
that I mattered
It didn't matter
because my
thick skin was tattered
but that never stopped
the thick bone jokes
from escaping
the lips
of
so called
grown folk

Split hearts
& conventional thoughts
kept together
in a locked box
Top hats
& magic tricks
forcing chemical imbalances
Yet, their hypnosis
force comotose,
make us seasoned
& depressed
Still just a reflex
of our hearts
playing defense
& losing

I've never been in love
In any type of love
Not even that
born from the womb
sacrifice all you've ever lived for
type of love
That wake up everyday
& need for me to be the
only one you think about
type of love
I'm in a third wheel relationship
with myself
I've been broken up with
by my own heart
He's tired of pumping for me
I'm okay with being alone
but he's not



Lyricism

has been touched by our blood

staining the works of our art

& drips from

mouths of the starved

Our music is repentance

written out of loss

broken parts

slowed starts

& faults

that make stars pause

Our words that keep us

reminiscing but never keep us

stuck in the same position

Our uncles couldn't raise us
It was never up to them
Their blood was too distant
& they had their own children
who I always hoped
weren't waiting too long
I didn't want them thinking
he was never coming back to them

Papa's got a brand new excuse

Now this is a story

all about how children

get left behind as infants

How children can't

trace back their resemblances

& family trees are leafless

& trunks aren't strong enough

to hold all of these

seedless children

I grew up without her permission

While she was latched

to the feeling of awe,

watching my first steps

I soon began to run

Too fast for her to chase

Grew too big for her to carry

Friendship Commandment #1

Thou shalt never abandon

I always tried to be

the first to leave

But most times

you got there quicker

I'm jealous of the girl he's with
They're probably sitting over coffee talking
... politics
He's probably jokingly calling her his wife
Having heated debates
about the names of future kids
He's probably planning out the details
of his life
& she's probably
on his mind
while he designs the blueprints
I'm not jealous because
I had him or lost him
& became a formal ex
I'm jealous
because the girl he's probably with
doesn't think she's his next ex

Trees Without Sons

"I would kill a million trees to protect your future"

Is what they promised their children

Who now desperately need to breathe

They are now grown up

Looking for a way

to avoid death

Forgetting who committed

treason first

A speck of sin
Testing inches of my blemishes
Festering flocks of crows
Remembering fellowships for satan hints
A native demonstration against the patron
of the wicked ends
Take a stand for the amends
of a nation's wings
Flee the scene
No traces of humanity
An enemy
to earthly seeds
Steal an eve, a tree
& re-incarnate
Eden's epic lost
for world peace

If you lived through my famine
Nourishment wouldn't be enough
Supply me with more than you think
you've given up
None of it was ever yours

My dreams are poor
Broke from the wage warred
on single mothers
With dreams for their kids
that they can't afford

Black is a hostage to the coffin

Costing mamas

what she has never

willingly offered

For you to slaughter

what she alone can foster

You want her baby?

That'll cost ya

I wonder if she hears it in my voice
Can she sense my distress miles away
Even when I neglect her questions
& redirect her attention
When I underplay my emotions
& distance myself from affection
Does my voice shake
Can she feel the tremble in my hands
over the phone
& reach out to hold me
Only to realize
she's alone
But it scares her more to think that
I'm just as lonely

Therapy

Sound thoughts

for a sound mind

But sir, I think sound off

Just get a sound sleep

for a sound mind

He promises me

that when the time's up

that I'll sound fine

The devil wears prada
And he struts with his karma
Ease drops in your prayers
Sneaks into your homes
but doesn't set the alarms off

You have witnessed
the very reformation
of your own brokenness
Been tempted to run back
to your shackles
but choose instead
to let bygones be bygones
& let time pass like tides
& let betrayal serve its purpose

You belong at my side
Like a traditional dish
our ancestors paired
Carried on
from generation to generation

I stole a rose for a queen
But I wish I stole it for me
I wish I had the guts
to show me I loved me first

Grow
& never stop
Pass milestones like strangers
But wave to them
& show Canadian favour
to yourself
when you fall

Black girl magic

They don't write me

into their fairytales

Even though I cast all this

black girl magic

My existence

is just a wicked spell

Cursed in a pigment

that to them resembles darkness

Black magic.

I will never be
a veteran
for the cause
cause the war
never stops
for an artist

Longevity

I've been persuaded to say my last words
before graves have even called me home
I've tried to build kingdoms without the King,
castles without a foundation
and chase visions I have not been granted access to see
I have tried to speed after time
like he's stolen my child for ransom
I've sped against the weight of
being too early for today
and I won't even try and slow down
This is the same plague
our youth have embraced
of skipping childhood first
in hopes that later on they will
get the chance to play
That's the thing about longevity
it spans as long as
it's tolls are paid

I have met myself only in mirrors
Not sure if today I'll meet
The person who speaks to me most
in the night when daytime
threatens to take my drive
I find I have to remind myself
that I am still young to finally fall asleep
My old age mocks me,
knocks in my heads,
weighs like fragile pounds on my vision
I can't keep my eyes shut
when rest asks for me
I still envy
numb nerves
blank canvas'
and blurry desert eagles
distanced in skies away from surfaces
that only know boundaries

I do not want to be able to scout lavish possessions
but not the wilting hearts in my friends
Be able to count expenses but not seeds I have planted
What have I not given meaning to
that deserves to be
crowned in jewels and stained gold
Instead of poverty's cuffs taunting me
in generational garments and emblems made out to my maiden
My mother knows only to pass on her past to her children
It serves as my constant reminder
to devalue
cherished trusts in villages
and renounce my own will to build
my legacy
from mounds of dust

READY.

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