



# Poetry Chapbook 2022

## **Babies' Babel**

*Panic on the peninsula!  
Watch out! For they are coming!  
City sunken! City sunken!*

Softlight.

After acarids arise from the ashes of ashlar —  
and noble notions become novelties,  
With soot shadows blinding buildings that remain.  
Their tops, reserved for remembrance.  
Reverence for a world long lost.  
A sun, so bright, so brilliant,  
Skies that once cried crystals 'round this time,  
Mama used to make mocha 'round this time,  
I was so rowdy 'round this time.  
Someday, maybe sometime 'round Sunday,  
I'll see myself up top that tower,  
And see if the stories are true for me.  
On the 12th story, where I heard the light ain't so soft,  
the mothers, the ministers, the killers, the sinners,  
can see past the past, a further future.  
Fostered foundations, foreign familiars,  
the presence past the precipice,  
the genesis of our renascence,  
the embassy of infinity,  
could cause consciousness to crack.  
Just to see what we lost come back.  
Is it worth it to see what was lost come back?  
Last month was the last month,  
I was with my mama.  
I picture a place where we both save face,  
holding back tears meant to be shed like snakeskin,  
upon seeing each other once again.  
The world isn't worth the worry.  
I'll see myself out anyday.  
Maybe someday, sometime 'round Sunday.  
I'll see if that sun I used to know,  
shines brighter on its day.

Softlight.

*Panic on the peninsula!  
Watch out! For they are coming!  
City sunken! City sunken!*

## **Push Forward**

*Push Forward,*

*don't go within dark shadows*

*Don't bring your soul to gallows.*

*Always push forward.*

*Your always happy, sad, angry, lost,*

*and human. Look onward.*

*Don't burrow low, it will cost.*

*Launch up far in a galaxy of stars.*

*Don't look down, look up.*

*Push forward by faith,*

*by God or no God.*

*You will your own path.*

*As day and night,*

*You'll always fall,*

*but can always pick back up.*

## **Free Write in the Shadow of Our Times**

you danced like a sparkler and smiled like the sun,  
but your flame soon burnt out and I was left with the ashes of what remained.  
to remember what was and to see what could have been,  
was a blissful memory in the burned up field of the past.  
so long my friend, this is a goodbye. may these feelings be put to rest.

*La Isla del Encanto* by Omar Sosa

Se desapareció el sol, y la luna dijo hola.  
En mi corazón escrito en bolígrafo mis sueños,  
Cuando en mis ojos cerrados veo las olas,  
De mi mente ya no soy el dueño.

I am a vessel for your rhythm and melody,  
Through you my music flows.  
In this phase of my Latino rhapsody,  
Where I've discovered beauty grows.

Yo soy el hijo de la Isla del Encanto,  
La sangre Boricua corriendo en mi fuerte.  
Quiero mantenerme al tanto,  
Ya pronto podre verte.

A love letter to my Island I have written.  
For many chapters lie ahead, a story for now unwritten.

## ***Look into his eyes***

Look into his eyes

You will see the vulnerable in him

The truths that overshadow his present

The past which has shaped his being

The brown in it tells where he comes from

But you deny....

Look into his eyes

You see a tall, suited boy

Content, Happy, forward

Could be true, could be misunderstood or mis-judged

He tries to succeed, condemns his failure

Makes these big plans to grip his future

And then *life* happens

Shatters his dreams, peace and quakes his soul

NOW trapped in his own head, getting away from his goal

The goal of being happy, surrounded, and in peace

Questioning leads him to..... overthink

It goes for months

It scratches, suffocates, and tries to kill him

In an unknown place to ask for help

In a place where judgment is a coping mechanism

In a place where no room to make mistakes

In a place where few people passed through his eyes

In a place where people forgot to look in the DARK of the brown this time

Everyone..... misunderstood

Because no one..... looked into his eyes

Music

Her life and everyone else's,  
goes through ups and downs  
everyone needs something to escape the pain it brings.

Music!

Music feeds the soul, feeds into your emotions, makes you happy,  
makes you cry.

It takes you to places without you having to travel.

She listens to music when shes sad,  
she listens to music when she wants to be happy.

Music brings her peace.

Music!

Music helps her through the stages of life.

It is not a specific song,  
but the music itself is the song of life.

# My Starlight

Love met in April  
Our paths converge in darkness  
In shadow, a light

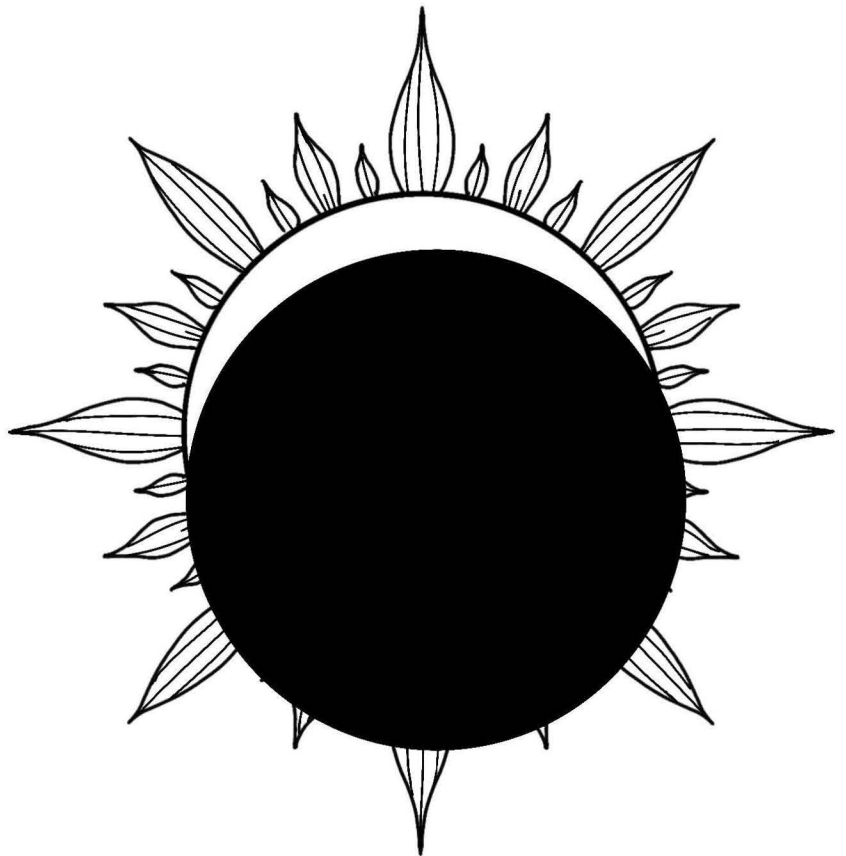
You are my starlight  
Fringe crafted of auburn red  
Crafted from stardust

Chasing like children  
Love, far from ordinary  
Not just a phase

They glimpse our aura  
Your starlight meets silver glow  
Then youth recedes us

We diverge, again  
To meet at another time  
Our love precedes us

Love died in April  
When your light had disappeared  
I will wait for you





I'm reminded of my father's thin frame as it squeezes past my knuckle.

I'm reminded of his intellect and charm as it fits tight on my finger.

I'm reminded that cremains can't don wedding bands as I wear it.

Long since have the black suits retired. Long since has the church emptied.

All that remains is the small gold thing on my finger, and a big question:

what now?

*Rough Soul*

harsh words hide you in  
old rings.  
ballpoint nibs  
balance your worlds.

*η καρδιά σου  
από πέτρα*

comparing my spirit  
to your rough soul.

*-Vasso*

## The Hearth

The original hearth is the mother's womb

A place where you receive soft, soothing love

Sitting, incubating.

The flames of life twist themselves around you

Then it becomes her arms, as she holds you close to her breast

With adoring, lively eyes

Love radiating from her skin

It is your father's strong, weatherworn hands holding yours as you take your first steps

You slip, he catches you in the first unknowing game of the "trust fall"

Pretending to be asleep so he carries you to your bed

It is the laughter of friends, the tearful and the unknowing goodbyes as the tire swing swings for you for the last time

The Hearth is the kind twinkle inside your eyes

The Hearth is the bond shared between friends

Because you know what they say

Wherever you have friends, that's your country

Where you receive love, that's your home

(Last two lines are a famous Tibetan saying)

Crisp winds cradle perfumed memories across chilled azure skies

Slumbering ivory blooms hide betwixt the folds of glossy emerald leaves -

Shimmering waltzes of crystalline flakes swirl beneath these proud ancient boughs

And I take pause within this solitary cathedral

Within serenity's embrace

-Alone-

## Whin I Grwo Up

Whin I grwo up I would lik to b an astronaut  
Sittin with stars siping appal juis all day  
I wood b a vary good astronaut  
Wood listin hard to spas and tail folks what moons say

My hulmit wood b pink  
My suit wood hav bolts of lightning on its back  
I wood own a robot call "Tim"  
And it wood look banana yullo  
Floating siluntly through mils of black

Alins r to slow for our ship  
But can join if thay bring cak  
Will do my har with saturn-dust  
And play goosball on planit Gack

Momma says my condition is not imporving  
And that thair iz no whar alz to go  
But I think shi dozant undarstand  
I brith in sicrat patturns  
I spik a langgiug only I know

Tim and I laf as satalights r past  
Hand in hand as suns swallow us hol  
Boost and scoot to tha suns thick roots  
Cut out its hart as blak as coal

I am tird now and wood lik to stop  
Cant tail if its nighttim or aftarnoon  
But whin I grwo up I think I will b an astronaut  
Whin I grwo up I know I will b an astronaut  
In fact ill blast off soon

I see it from Below in technicolor  
A Vibrancy only youth can give  
In cold tile and loud crashes  
In sweet sugar and broken glass  
In the way my mother says my full name  
I see it from below and remember how large it all was

I see it from Between in grey rushed mornings  
A nausea felt between each lung  
In granola bars and quick "I love yous" peppered between timers and closing doors  
In the way my sister would wave goodbye every morning  
I see it from between and heave a sigh of relief

I see it from Above in the shadow of night  
A the quiet closing of a lid  
In late night snacks and countertop conversations  
In the way I'd curl up in the floor and trace grout  
In the way I'd blast music meant to crack me open  
I see it from Above and trace the lines of where I've been put back together

I see it from the End in sweetened salty haze  
A softness only age can acquire  
In the way you can ball your fist but not in anger  
In the squeeze given before you let go  
In the sound of my family saying goodbye  
I see it from the End and know that every version of me is baked in the walls

And I may always come home.

## found on old printer paper in the basement of an old house

m.y me.m.or.i.s d.ka.y t. m.ld

when i was young  
you pou.red gasoline on m.y life  
and set i.t aflame.

bla.ck mo..ld gr.ows on the wall of that old ho.use  
just like this o.ne now  
a.nd the .ne tha.t ca.me b.ef.ore.

wh.en will you learn to st.op??  
when wil.l y.u lea.rn that  
everything you say  
brin.gs m.e further do.wn???

there wi.ll be no e.nd for m.e until y.u're de.d  
and underground  
r.tt.ng lik.e t.he m.l.d  
.n th.e wa.ll..s  
.f a h.use

. coul.dn't d.are c.al.l h.me.

y.ou k.lled m. w.th.ut kn.owing  
y.u se.r.d hate i.n.to .y he.rt.  
y.. d.d th.t wh.le know.ng  
. was n.thing ... c.uld ever l.v..

. remember the st.irs ..u  
th.rew me d.wn.  
t.e bl..k m.o..ld .n t..e w.a..s  
.f th.t .ld h..se.  
.he c.llder d.ys  
.n .. r..m al...ne,  
r.ain dri.p.ping fr.. ..e c..il.ng  
.n .ur n.w h..s..e.

..d ev.r. t.me.  
... s.y y.u w.n..t m. dead  
e.e.n t..ou.h a..l . d. .s bl..d a.d bl..d  
. st.il w.n't di. u.n.il ..u.r.. u.n.er.gr.und  
fu..zy w..h m..d l.ik. t..e w...ls .o.f ... h.ous..e .... was never home.



**found in a waterlogged notebook on the side of the road, transcribed**

*my memories decay to mold*

*when i was young  
you poured gasoline on my life  
and set it aflame.*

*black mold grows on the wall of that old house  
just like this one now  
and the one that came before.*

*when will you learn to stop??  
when will you learn that  
everything you say  
brings me further down???*

*there will be no end for me until you're dead  
and underground  
rotting like the mold  
on the walls  
of a house*

*i couldn't dare call home.*

*you killed me without knowing  
you seared hate into my heart.  
you did that while knowing  
i was nothing you could ever love.*

*i remember the stairs you  
threw me down.  
the black mold on the walls  
of that old house.  
the colder days  
in my room alone,  
rain dripping from the ceiling  
in our new house.*

*and every time  
you say you want me dead  
even though all i do is bleed and bleed  
i still won't die until you're underground  
fuzzy with mold like the walls of the house that was never home.*