

Voices of participants from the
Eyedentity: Words & InSights weekly
writing workshops guided by author,
podcaster, writing coach, **Janna Lopez**

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www.jannalopez.com



A Collection of Words & InSights

Eyedentity



Resilient, like the Redwoods...

Interesting how, by now, September 2020, many have come to ask themselves, over and over again, what does it mean to be resilient? We're talking emotional resilience, spiritual resilience, financial resilience, mental resilience, and perhaps the hardest, resilience for hope. I recently went to the redwoods and decided that's how I want to be: resilient like a redwood. graceful, wise, enduring.

Not gonna lie; it's a struggle. Things are happening in the world—strange, surreal, unimaginable events and circumstances—that make it difficult to find words. Yet that's what I seek to create each week during the online writing workshops I offer. Connecting ourselves through words.

People fear writing. We're afraid of our voices, afraid of being wrong, afraid of making mistakes, afraid of not saying enough, afraid of being seen—even to ourselves. I've come to intimately understand this fear, as after having recently completed my first book, "Me, My Selfie & Eye" I struggled if what I had to say was worth anything.

Week after week, courageous souls show up for themselves via Zoom to explore the many facets of Eyedentity, grief, and belonging. Some come because they're interested in writing more often, others want to dip their toe into the writing water, while others aren't sure what they need, but give me, my class, and writing, a try. Through designated prompts and loving support, I lead, they allow, spilling hearts through words. Some prompts people have 5 minutes to respond; The idea is to create a structured space for emotional reaction, not mental analysis, so inner words may spill onto the page. Thus, the work may appear raw, unedited, or unpolished and that is as intended. Participants explore a swath of deep emotion. Every week someone has a tremendous breakthrough or discovery. I'm blown away by the talent, quality, and expression that is birthed.

A crucial part of writing is being heard. Being seen. I teach that people need to hear and see their own voices in the world, their words contribute to our human experience and have value—that's part of the writing process, which ultimately, is a sojourn of Self discovery.

Thank the members of my group enough for the honor of being your guide. You've shown up for your Self! This is an honor to witness! xoxo - Janna Lopez.

For info on classes or Eyedentity writing coaching, visit www.jannalopez.com.

Prompt: Art

By Angela Tipton

The brush strokes a burnt orange arc
across the canvas,
provoking joy with a bit of pain.
Slashing black lines contrast,
making the colors stand out.
Emotions flow out through the
multi-colored swirls and lines,
the image second place
to the art
of creation.

Frenzied movements,
vision bursting out,
becoming reality.

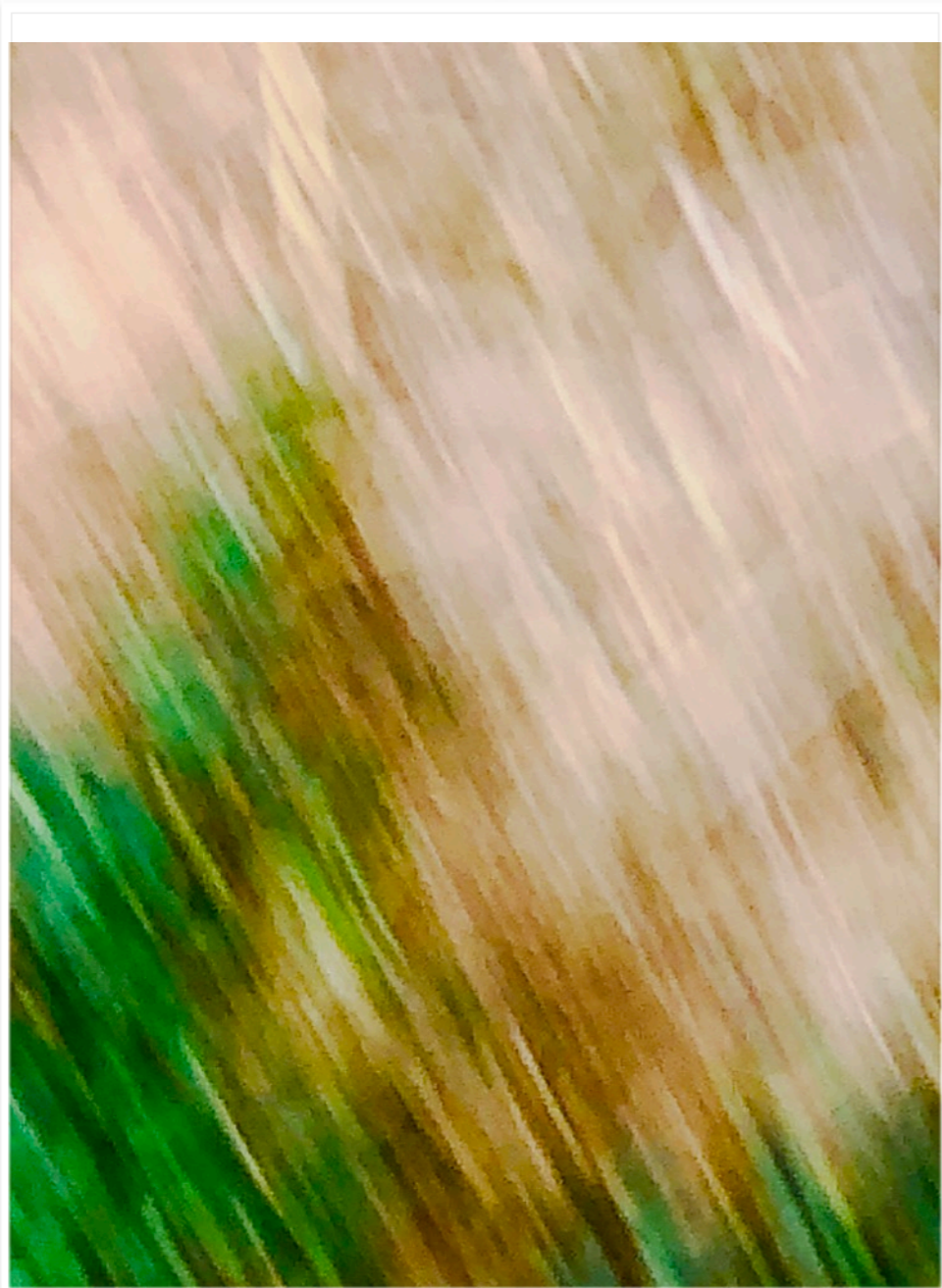
A living moment
captured on a still frame,
loud in its silence.

As it reaches down deep into your soul.
Into their soul, touching the deep dark
recesses that knows no words,
but still understands and translates
the image, the colors,
the vibrations into hope.

Into despair.

Into joy and pain.

Into the experience of the human journey.



Prompt: Bravery

By Fara Gold McLaughlin

Monsters come in many forms
They slither silently
They shape shift from angels to demons
They smile with sinister glee
With sharp shining fangs
Seized upon their prey
I prayed to you Mother
The day the Monster trapped me
Caught within his embrace
No hug of comfort or love
I learned the day the Monster
Found me
No snake or African Lion would ever
Scare me
I learned men are weak
When they take a child
I learned to look at all men as primitive beasts
Unable to control their monstrous impulses to steal
I learned their clutches crush spirits of children
Like me
Like a ripe fleshy grape is crushed
Beneath the heel in the vineyard
I am this juicy ripe grape
I will not shrivel into a raisin
All of my fear and sorrow
Are now flowing out of me
As my tears of lost innocence
Transform in my defended Pen
My tears
Soften these walls
This cask of self I call me
All that I was is now fermenting within the safety of
my mind
Tapped by my Pen
A rare vintage

A broken child
A transformed woman
Aged to perfection
Seeing my Monster with eyes in
the back of my head
Questioning why me
Seeing my beauty on the vine
Happy in the sunshine
Gasping
Memory of being
Plucked
My Sacrifice
My Innocence
My Joy
My Trust
Breaking my silence
Now
My Pen is my Sword
My Mind Sees
My Spirit Feels
My Body Hears
This voice can now say
NO!
Taste me today
Complex notes of Pepper and Plum
Sweetened with Age
I am a limited vintage
Discoloration seeping through the grain of the wood
on my cask
I know if I turn to vinegar
I will be spilled as worthless
Back to the earth to enrich the peat
The Monster did not destroy
Me
I was transformed



Beyond the Crush
Beyond the Unimaginable
Many crushed here with me too
Joined together in the bitterness of us
Sorrowful varietal
We swim together
In the darkness
Macerating
Into something new



Prompt: Moon Image

By Ty Hitzemann

A dry blood beast, keeper of physical persuasion in both man and earth - 24/7.

Millions of years, millions of millennia. Most people have little to no idea of the real power and sway over their destiny Mr moon controls. good intention and deeds magnify. All else is nothing but misfortune and error.

Many chuckle at the idea of the full moon stirring the proverbial human stew. Belief vs fact vs myth and the mystical. Most have no doubt if they're suddenly reminded of his effect upon the most powerful constant force on earth. The oceans. Seas are both the ultimate solution as it is a destroyer of sort - if pushed beyond its given tasks, which are countless already. Its all figured out proficiently.

Balancer and bouncer. Giver of food, cleanliness and weather. She is not there to take requests, nor allow measly man to nip at her heels. Our job is to foster and take care of our own existence. To control ourselves, and we fall horribly short of that.

If we do that, then Mr moon and his tumultuous lady will allow us to carefully dance with them on their terms. Then we receive what we deserve thru respect and gratitude.

By Lorainn Karnes

Beauty in the mystery

In Shadow

and in Light

Beauty in the hidden

depths of all beings

Some shine brightly

Others hidden away

So many unknown

with so much to say

All speak loudly

in one way

or another

A voice to be heard

but, perhaps, not today

Waxing or Waning

All is the Way

By Paula Greenstein

Half moon reflective on a rich blue sky, once known as a Colorado Day, from a friend of mine. So clear in her half naked self sitting quietly, alone, reflective, alive, insightful with just a hint of a smile. Shadowed part willing to be undone in the days and nights to come. Her face bursting silently through her shadow self following behind. Appease no one! Show yourself in the light of the day!

Prompt: Bravery

By Crystal Chanel

So Janna says to go into the abyss.

My abyss is the story of a little girl molested by an American in an urban ghetto in these Great United States. The 80s had things to brave. Traps of drugs, poverty and abuse from within. It was easy to self destruct or at minimum stand still.

I learned to protect the cookie while being abused. Being more alert at home became was my personal strategy. I learned to protect my mother. She had 2 kids, two fathers and the abuse was an indication that this last one would not be the last one. She was looking for love.

I was looking to elevate. I had to be different, smart, guarded and hopeful. I gathered my tools. found them within: prayer and writing affirmations.

Maybe a rich relative would find me and fill in the gaps. I kept this daydream on rotation. It was my own dad that came around with guilt money. Thank you Jesus! He covered costs for me to be an exchange student, travel Germany, and complete college applications 2 years later. He believed in me. That doubled my faith.

But I knew I was in the abyss, leveling up, studying german, away from my family, away from Americans and out of my abusive urban enclave. I ended up in the army looking for college money. All I had to do was protect the country, you know fellow Americans. I figured I could pretend for a while.

They called it bravery. They thanked me for my service at events. And helped me get a house and health insurance. Guess I was brave enough to try something different... Whereas generations before me could not...

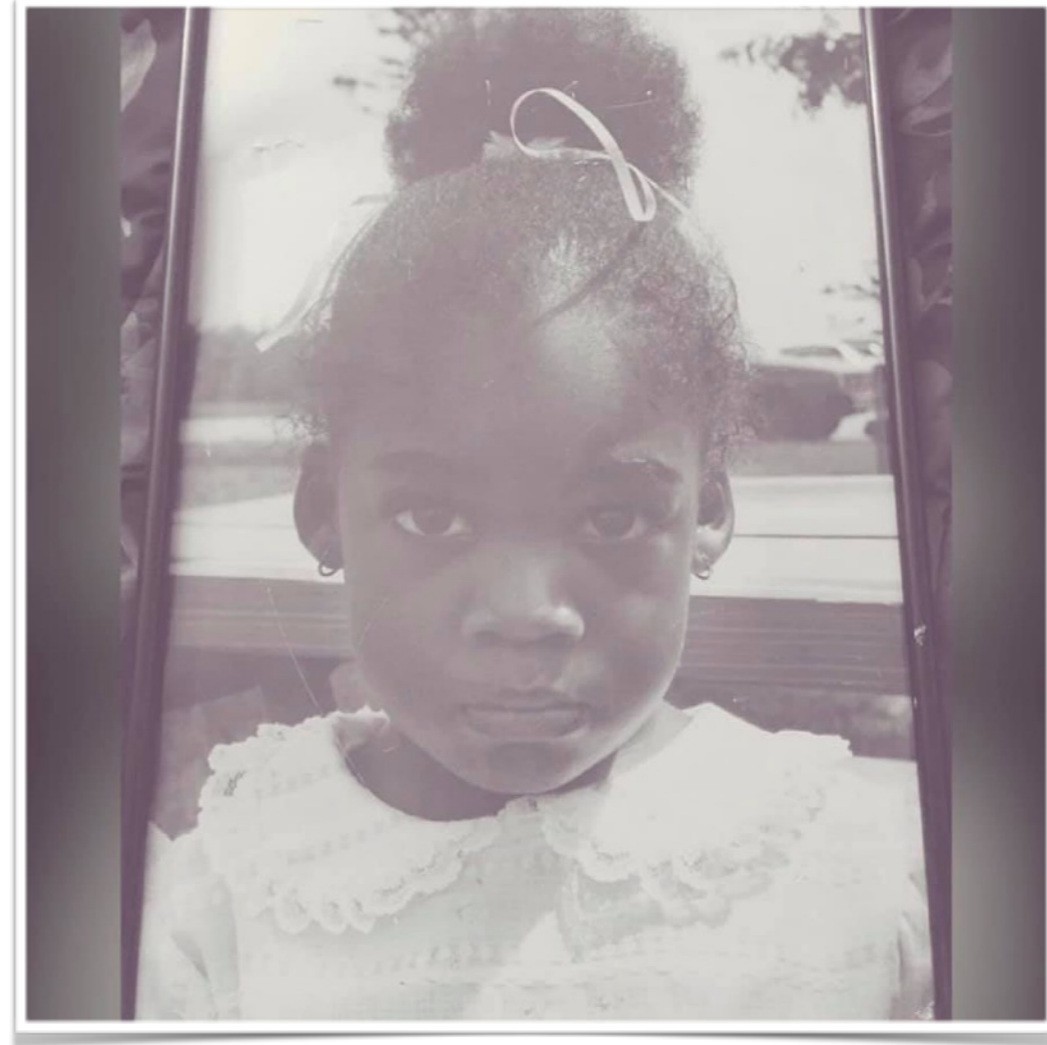
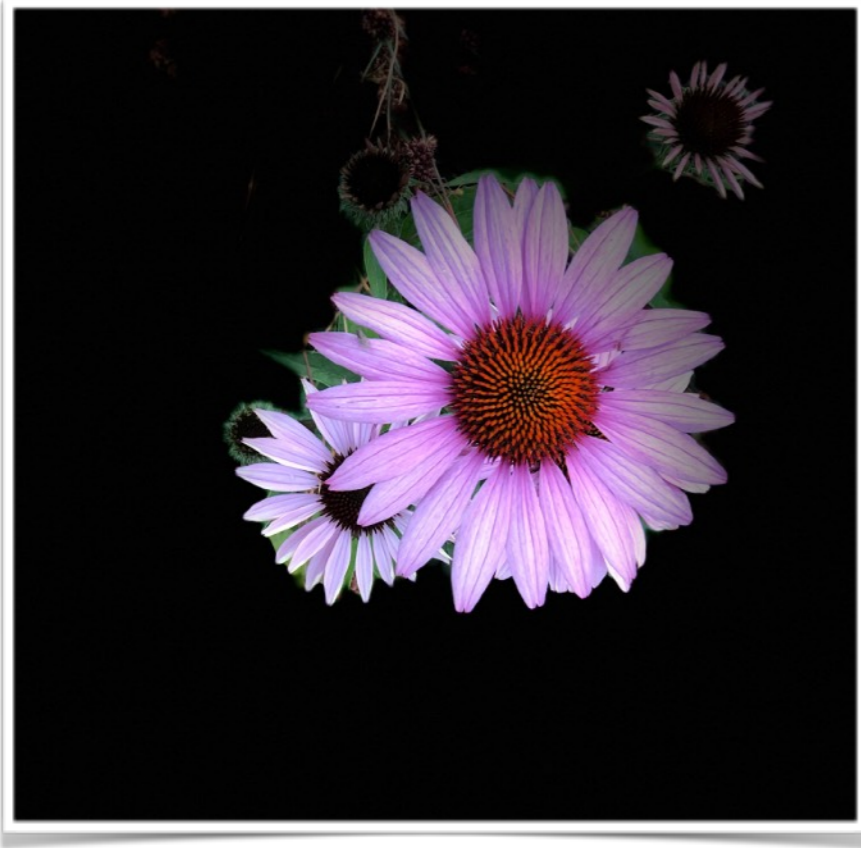


Photo provided by Crystal Chanel



Prompt: Freedom

By Shannon Milliman

Freedom in writing is not editing before you form. It is not worrying about what mom will think. It is not worrying about how Ben will perceive me. It is not having the goal in mind at the end to share it for the accolades and awe of the readers. Freedom is punctuation as tap dance. It is repetition as a plie, as a curtsey and a fall and a skinned knee instead of a bow. It is blood with no bandage. It is a desperate wilderness scout ravaging through her backpack searching for gauze but there is none so she rips off her led zeppelin 89 tshirt to stop the wound but it will not stop. Shock sets in and there is no pain, just numb and the writing zips and zaps like lightning and you should be scared because your feet are in water. So you pray because you don't know what else to do. And when you should be focusing on banding the hole you feel hollow and empty and full and thirsty but you have no water so you try to think about other things but the blood keeps flooding. Pressure. Apply it. Absolve it. Pressure is how you end this. But there is something about this raw state of being that you don't want to end. A birth. Your body was meant for this but it feels like it was not. It makes you primal and alive but near death and you notice and you rake out whatever it is you notice and you add another wrap of the drum from the Led zeppelin sleeve. It is turning into a red balloon. Is that what it means interpreted? Stop thinking about what it means, what it is symbolic of. Freedom is all the ancestors demanding you bleed their blood, your blood and make it a river with niacin, iron, potassium that will enrich your children. It will deplete them, too. They will feel the faint, weakness you experience. They will doubt your love for them. What they thought was a tender good night kiss was resentment in being a mother and not an actress. They will see you wish you never married young. And they will bleed. And then it is required of them to stream red in order to find numb freedom. The freedom doesn't free. It binds.

Prompt: Write a Letter to Your 13-year-old Crush

By Mary McCargar

East Coast Crush

Pelican – cool name for John Lennon glassed, long-haired, groovy dude

We spun in donuts on the country backroads

and slept on the floor of the SDS offices during the 1968 Peace March in D.C.

Never even kissed, but found you again in the Haight Ashbury Haze

only to Rock on to another long-haired dude

Happy Hippie Days – so Far Gone – so Free

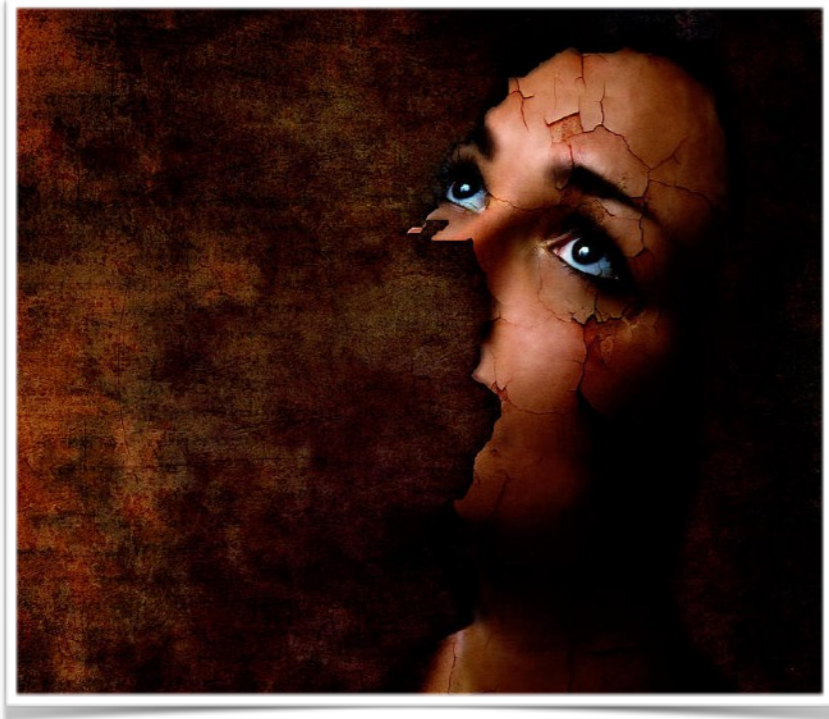


Image Prompt:

By Judge Kemp

I'm Fractured. Bit by bit parts of me chip away, fall to the ground, and blow in the wind. My soul has been battered by the constant attacks breaking the walls of resistance protecting my heart. I lift my head and gaze towards the light, into the heavens, in hopes that someone or something will ease my woes. I am speechless and saddened by the destruction that surrounds me. My body and mind are no longer whole.



Prompt: What is the Shape of Real Love?

By Leighann Barrie

An amorphous blob that stretches, bends, and twists; enveloping those around and returning to its original shape, just bigger.

Real love is a shared appreciation of the inner dark and light of our souls.

Real love is a glance, then a smile, then the words 'I love you so much!' inspired by nothing more than the two of us sitting, holding hands, and watching birds flit through the backyard.

Real love is being able to laugh loudly at the oddities of our day.

Real love is a safe space to openly cry without excuse.

Real love is not having to take ourselves so seriously and enjoying the simple moments.

Real love is being accepted for your authentic self and not the persona you project to others.

Real love is a comforting and genuine embrace that you never want to end.

Real love is knowing you were forgiven the moment you were hurtful but still saying 'I'm sorry'.

Real love is leaving love notes in random places to be unexpectedly found later.

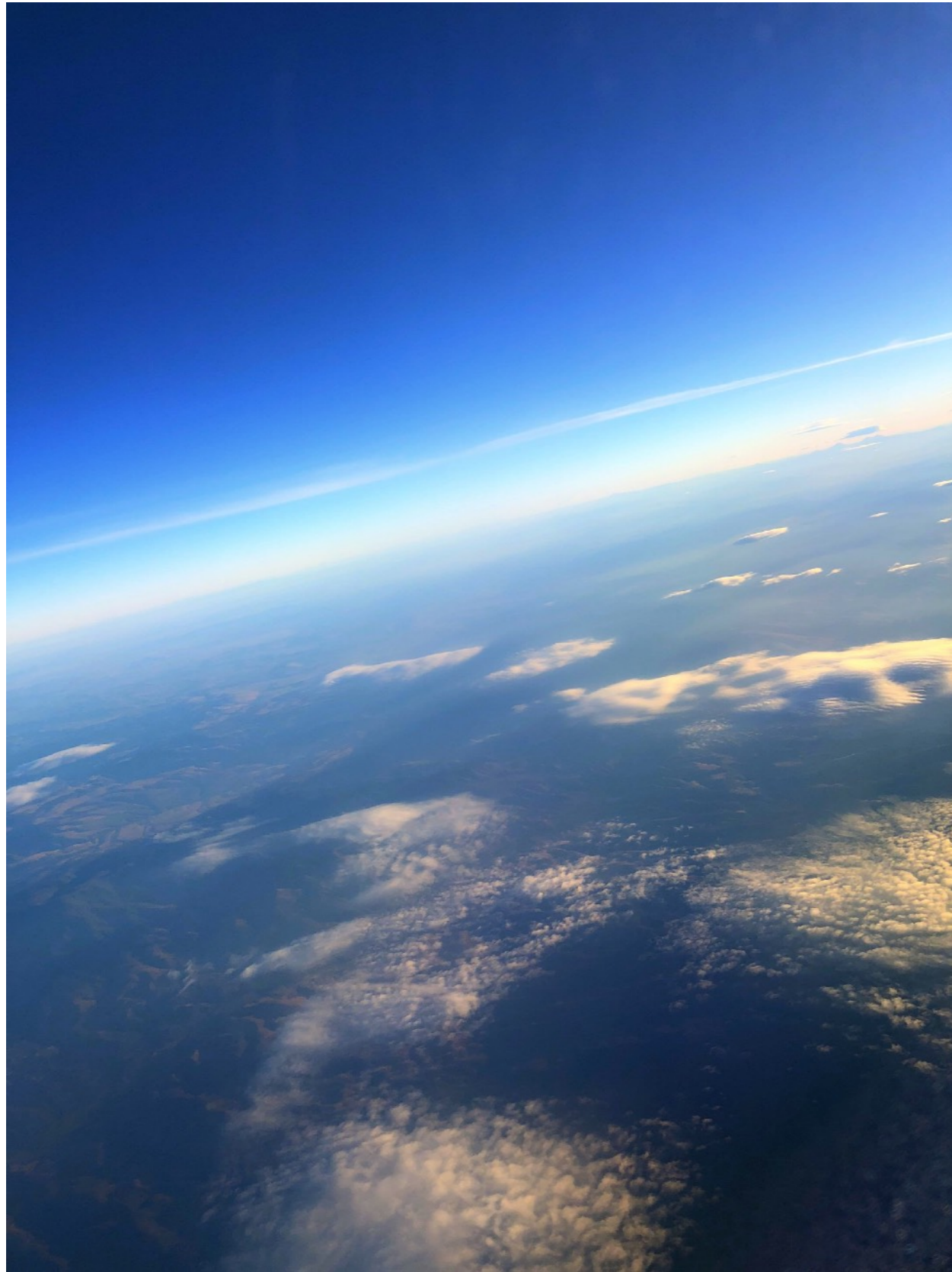


Image Prompt:

By Julie Beck Joachims

Sad eyes, turn the other way,
I don't want to see you cry.

The pixie cut and victorian lace were at odds with each other, but together, fashioned a glam that our Georgie Girl wore like a bad habit. She smelled like excitement, Shalimar and White Shoulders perfuming the wild air while she danced til dawn, laughing under streetlights, sharing a clove cigarette with a new friend. She favored French cigarettes, in bright bubble gum colors, with the gold foil tips. Those she shared only with her special ones- gold foil, for old friends. She marched through life armed only with mascara and the pearls of wisdom that fell from her lips. She gathered the pearls as they fell, to string together like a daisy chain, to forget them not. She exuded a boho-chic, careless, cool grace, that faded with age, like the writing on an invitation to a party in a past life. Saucer eyes, what color are they anyway? Wide always, with anticipation of her next nighttime interlude, but she remembered it was already a memory, as she crocheted the best bits and pieces together to save the dream, forever and ever, Amen. Now, her face is paper thin, and those huge eyes carry the sadness of kisses not stolen, and the madness of wasted moonlight. The Shalimar has faded, leaving not one scented note, and gold dust is just...dust, unless the sunbeams toss it to the pixies. Remembrance hangs in the air like the pixie dust, like a subtle hint of clove, like the pearls, from her white shoulders.



Prompt: *A Ledge...*

By Janna Lopez

you know how people talk about
falling off the ledge
i've thought the ledge
a cloud above
I perch
a platform
a lie of safety
an elusive curtain
shading distance
between known and unknown
but here's the thing—
you know how people talk about
falling off the ledge
the fear
the question
then what?
how deep?
how far?
what do breaking bones sound like as
they contact concrete?
what if the bottom is a cauldron of fire?
or jagged teeth of famished sharks?
you know how people talk about
falling off the ledge
fissure leaks through
my fractured heart
reject buoyancy
—and here's the thing:
the thing that scares me
the ledge always seems ahead
mysterious
an impending abyss toes may touch
breath siphoned
imagined sinking
nothingness rushing by
racing pulsing
wishes of
watercolors bleeding in a puddle of
tears
unrealized dreams
regret or disappointment?
which ledge is more punishing?
people talk about
falling off the ledge
it occurred
as a death sadness enfolds me

maybe I've already tipped
i'm flailing
it's too late
i'm sinking
f a l l i n g
flying into nothingness
h e l p l e s s
with a flawed heart
not equipped for emergency landing
a paper airplane
once made by 6 year old hands
consumed by flames
sparked by unrequited self annihilation
people talk about the ledge
abstraction's convenient
until you realize
a fallacy
is blown up
in a force of violent purple wind
'cause you've already leapt
here's the thing:
a glimpse into truth
a drop off the edge
already passed
you're mid air
with fragile bones
soon to explode into
a plume of enamel confetti
upon intersection
upon impact
upon the giant deliberate
middle finger confronting your face
that spits
FUCK YOU
once reality
catches denial
people talk about the ledge
let the lies of arms swim
cold wind waiting to kiss heat
or concrete
or sharks
'cause that's the thing about the ledge
the ominous line
a cosmic punchline
that I wouldn't know
ahead or behind
i'm no longer sure
maybe
through tears of
jet steam rage
beyond echoes of
ironic cackling
i'm already falling