

A Gold-Lined Barrel

Dani Ogawa

I've got a rusty hammer and chisel in my hands
trying to carve out the night my picture was permanently painted,
scraping a barrel lined with gold at a depth only I can reach.
the kind they'd pay hundreds to forge tokens of love
for wrapping bony fingers.
My eyes are pinched as my fingernails crack
to pick away a piece of you.
I might melt the flakes I chipped away and make a chime,
so when the wind passes it will remind me how you whispered
gorgeous.
I would sprinkle it in my coffee,
so I may drink it and fill my veins with the smell of your collar.
Maybe I'll dust it on my cheeks,
so when they complement my shine
I can tell myself it's because you kissed me there.
I could slice open my chest,
and stuff the scrapes of it into my lungs so when I breathe
I can remember when you were over *me*, breathing,
And when I'm bleeding out from where I cut myself open,
I can weave glowing string and sew myself back into one piece
and know that you are the one holding me together.

But

I swear I've been digging for years now,
And yet you're stuck in that barrel
in the back of that old house
in the middle of that field
in that one town I pass
on the highway going home at sunset.

Dani Ogawa is a creative writer and poet currently studying English at the University of North Dakota. She will graduate in the spring of 2024 with her bachelor's in English, in addition to a minor in communications and certificates in creative writing and writing, editing, & publishing. When she is not writing stories, you can find her nose in a book at a local coffee shop, listening to Taylor Swift, or teaching dance. Dani is from Grand Forks, ND.