



CONVERSATIONS IN VERSE

POETRY WORKSHOP CHAPBOOK



englist



TABLE OF CONTENTS

01 INTRO

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02 PROMPTS

03 LAURA ZÖSCHG

- Things for which I hold my breath
- Let's Talk About Debt

04 SUMINONIOI

- (untitled)
- Sprout

05 PATRICIJA ŠKOF

- Things for which I hold my breath
- Yoga is Back

07

**DOMINIK
LENARČIČ**

- Betrayed Again
- Loneliness
- I Don't Know
- Your
- Breath

09

NIKA GRADIŠEK

- I keep dreaming about streams

10

NADJA JUKIČ

- Things for which I hold my breath
- Return Confirmation

INTRO

"Conversations in Verse" is a one-of-its-kind chapbook, containing poems written via an online poetry workshop on 30 March 2021. The workshop was hosted by ENgLIST, English Students' Newspaper at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Poetry, in its core, is a malleable thing. It is very easy to find poems we can connect with as individuals, but rather difficult to find our own poetic voice. However, taking chunks out of poems we read and then applying these chunks to an original text can give birth to the deepest, most thoughtful, most powerful poetry.

This workshop showed just that - how malleable and pliant poetry is to whomever dares to hold it in their hands. The participants first led a long discussion on what poetry means to them, what it looks like, and what it makes them feel. It is certainly the truth that meaningful conversations bring forth a slew of ideas, for this is what happened afterward - the participants were asked to take a prompt (or write via their own inspiration) from a set of three prompts, and use it as guidance in their writing. There were only 8 minutes available to them - in two writing sessions with different prompts.

This chapbook will first provide these prompts, so that you, the reader, can participate post-factum, if you wish to do so. The main spectacle of this chapbook are the poems the participants wrote in the span of two hours - most of which was just conversation in verse.

Ariela Herček
Chief Poetry Editor
ENgLIST

PROMPTS

WRITE AN ODE TO SOMETHING UNCONVENTIONAL
@apatheticroommate / #apatheticprompts

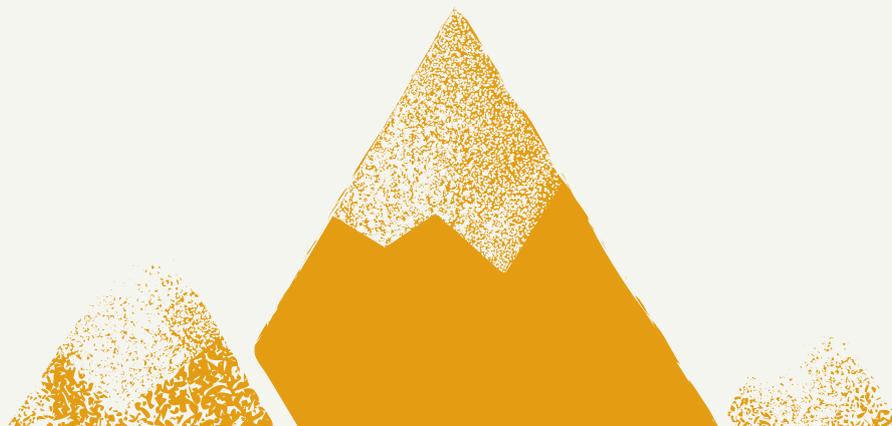
I KEEP DREAMING ABOUT _____
@arielahpoe3 / #arielahprompts

LIST POEM: THINGS FOR WHICH I HOLD MY BREATH
after Skyler Saunders @skyler.celeste.poetry

THE SUBJECT LINE OF THE LAST EMAIL YOU RECEIVED IS THE TITLE OF YOUR POEM
@poemsbyshibs / #promptsbyshibs

WRITE AN AUTOPSY POEM (AFTER DONTE COLLINS)
What would they find if they cut you open? Or what would they find during an autopsy of someone you love? Someone you don't love?
@amykaypoetry / #amykayaugustprompts

WRITE ABOUT GROWING OR BURSTING OR BLOOMING
@tristamateer



Things for which I hold my breath

after Skyler Saunders

Complete silence.

Clouds, thick and grey-blue, hanging from the sky and showing that something's coming.

The slightest green on the branches of trees.

The cold breeze of evening.

The sound of waves of the sea clashing with rocks.

Buildings soaked in red glow at sunset.

Let's Talk About Debt

Let's talk about that little thing I still owe you.

An apology. An explanation that doesn't leave out words.

The words that are hurtful.

The syllables that would burst your heart.

I did not want to hurt you back then.

And I guess I don't want to hurt you now.

I pay my debt by living with not being able to forgive myself.

With a sting in the stomach every time I think about it.

I hope that is enough for you, being in the unknowing.



(untitled)

i keep dreaming about
wearing my face, then-
putting it down and wearing another,
then-
you, wearing a face that is not yours, then-
you, wearing my face, then-
me, with my face again, but a freckle is missing
and so on, and on
until i forget what i even looked like

Sprout

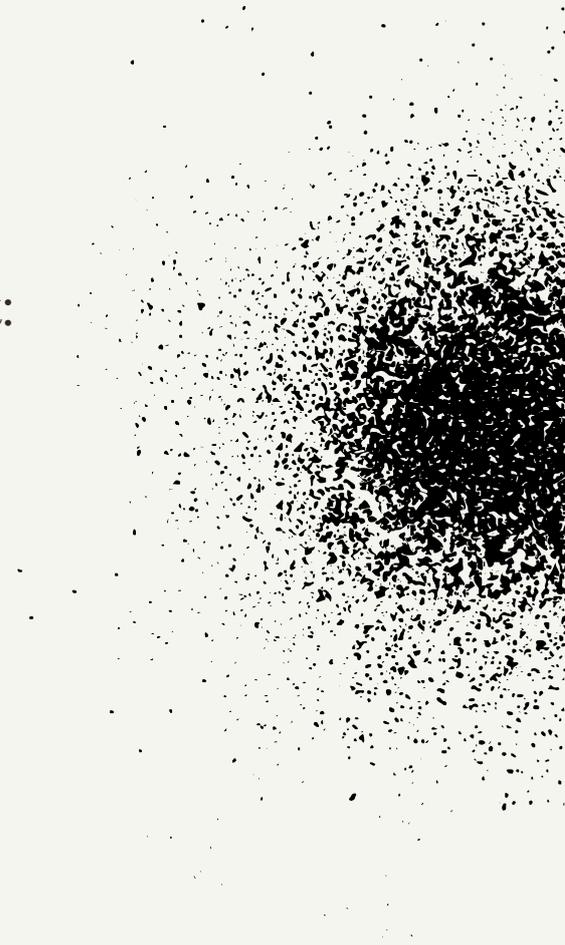
the first vine pushes against your rib and peeks out
but you gently turn it back inwards
so it curls around itself again
it is not yet its time
but maybe tomorrow
you could let it see the sun for a while at least
before you coil it back
and close it behind your bones

Things for which I hold my breath

The words are melting,
I can hear your attitude.
The attitude is changing,
but I still hear your youth.
The time is uncertain
and the days are getting shorter,
so hold your breath
for the things that are worth doing that:

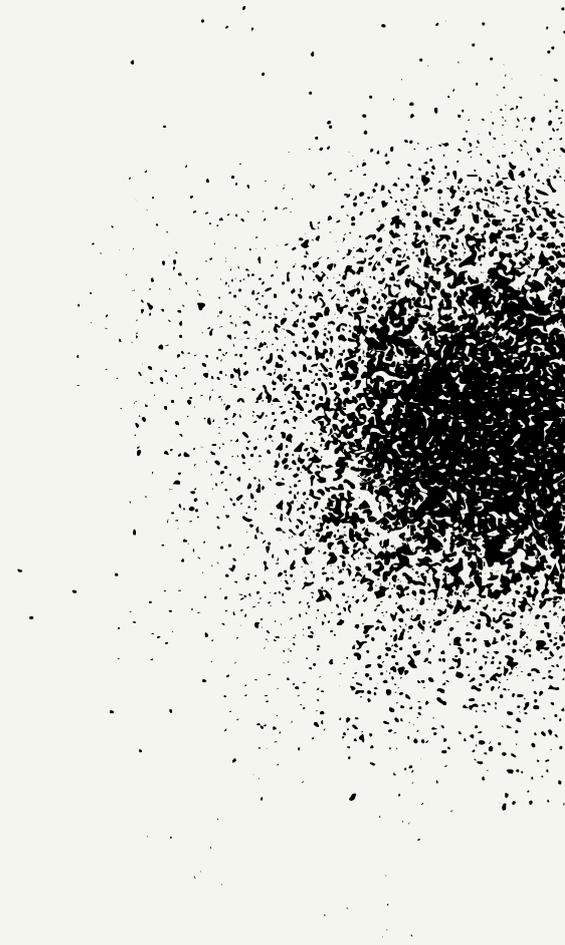
- the views
- big trees
- unforgettable landscapes
- a lovely melody
- an honest smile
- an honest laugh
- richness of sounds
- colors and the light
- your voice and your vision

and when the words are melting.



YOGA IS BACK

"Yoga is back"
and I will take my breath,
I will stretch my legs,
extend the arms and hands.
I will hold a child
as the next door dog is watching,
he will rest his head
and the sun will rise
and I will take my breath.
Namaste.



BETRAYED AGAIN

The sadomasochistic heart
enjoys the French kisses
of knives,
given
by the disembodied smiling heads.

LONELINESS

Things I like about you:

1. You exist.

...

Honestly, that's enough for me.

untitled

I keep dreaming about fish.
Is it because I long for serenity
and inner peace
or is it because I lack mercury?

I DON'T KNOW

BREATH
after Skyler Saunders

Things I hold my breath for:

Happiness.

Love.

Butterflies.

Warmth.

Spring.

Summer.

Sunshine.

Beaches.

Friends.

Kisses.

First aid.

Mouth.

Lungs.

Brain.

Air...

hurrh

passes out due to oxygen depletion

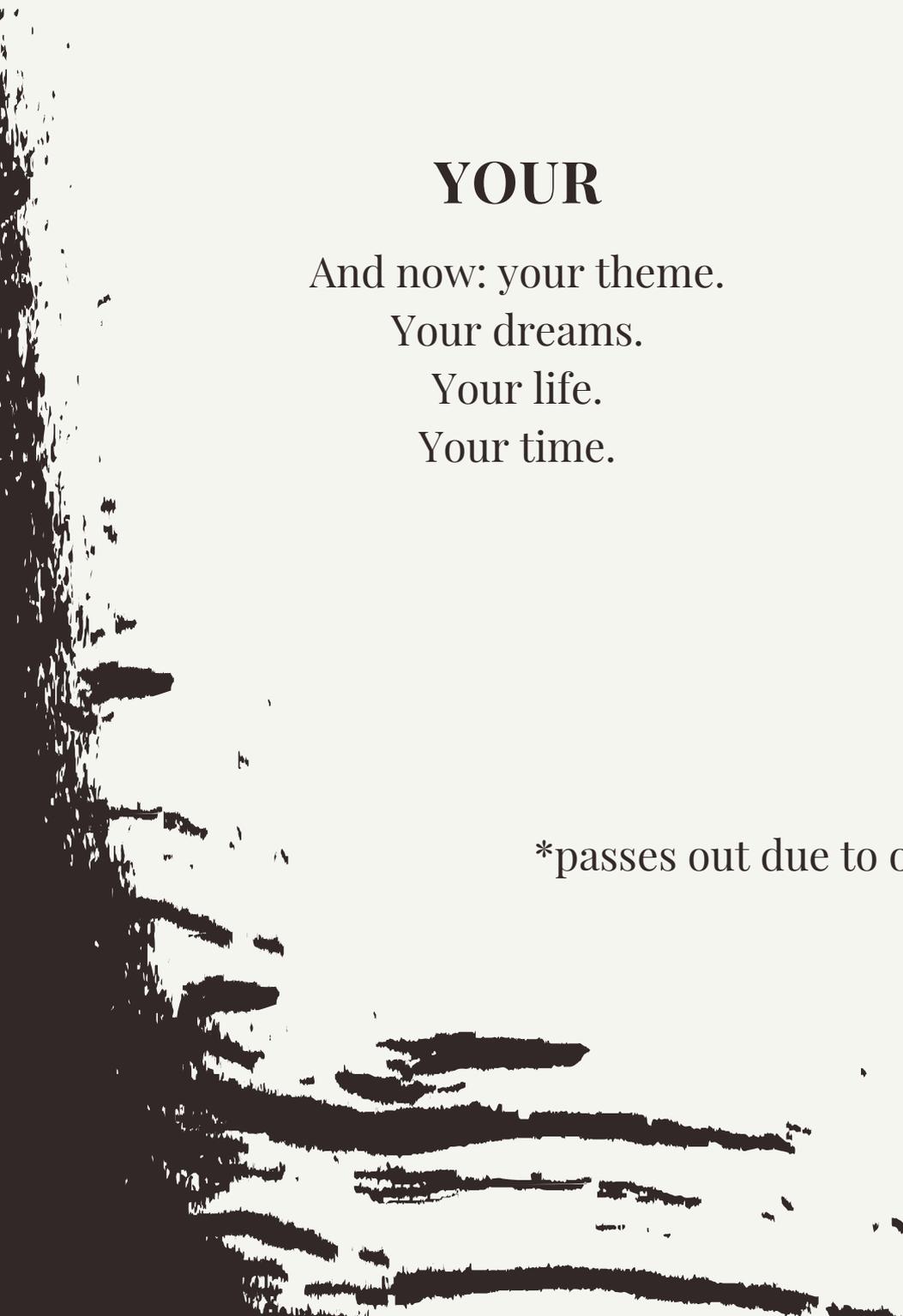
YOUR

And now: your theme.

Your dreams.

Your life.

Your time.

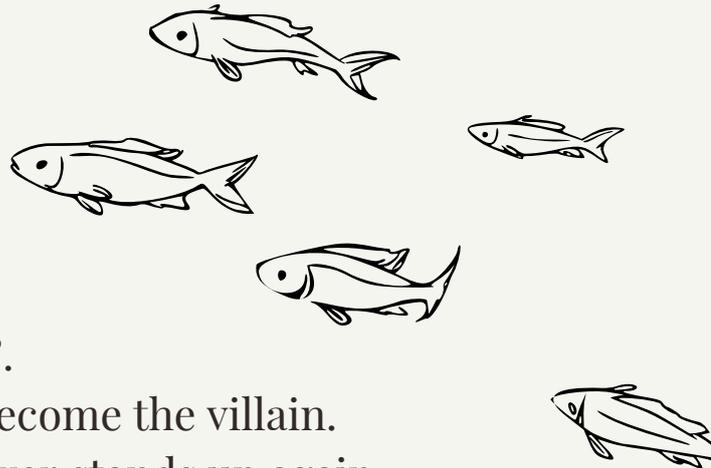
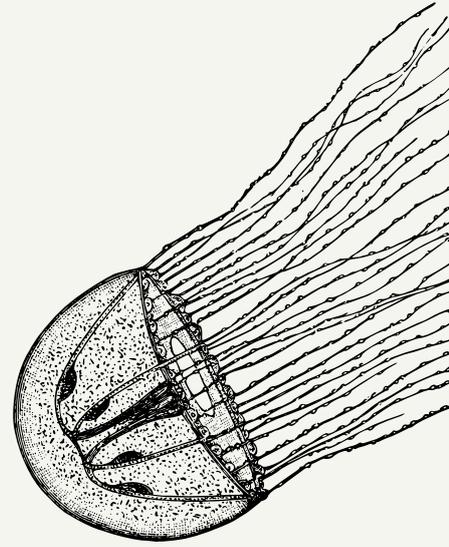


I KEEP DREAMING ABOUT STREAMS

I keep dreaming about streams
 when I should be dreaming about oceans,
 I wake up to a room in a house with
 unwashed dishes and dusty houseplants
 and think,
 this will do,
 when all the while
 I'm locking my doors in the evening,
 closing the windows tightly,
 listening to white noise on replay
 so I don't hear the breathing,
 the screaming,
 the howling
 of the world outside.

They said, "you'll grow conservative".
 One either dies or sees themselves become the villain.
 One sinks, accepts, sits down and never stands up again,
 waters the flowers and grows deaf.

I cannot grow backwards
 when I don't even have feathers instead of fingertips yet.
 I cannot grow backwards
 when I'm still waiting
 to forget to lock the door one night,
 waiting to be shaken by the shoulders
 once the world breaks in,
 waiting until I cannot dream anymore,
 until I can only say Welcome.



THINGS FOR WHICH I HOLD MY BREATH

- lakes
- rivers
- seas
- ponds
- pools
- creeks
- springs
- brooks

But in general, I don't like drowning



RETURN CONFIRMATION

Dear Sir or Madam,
we received your parcel in the post.
here's your money back.
we bet you wish you could return
every bad experience this way. Free returns,
compensation guaranteed.
well suck it up. Life is not an online store.
with best regards.
P.S. Stop simply trying on and sending back our clothes.

