

Diana Raab

I WANT TO WRITE A POEM TO CELEBRATE

My body as it enters its seventh decade-
has all the scars, wrinkles, age spots
and lobes non-existent in my twenties.
I don't care about face-lifted celebrities
or those who did lipo and butt enhancements,
voluntary changes to what was given,
but rather, I want to celebrate how
I've moved with life's flow
and did what was needed.
I have artificial breasts, but so would you
if breast cancer got you in your forties
and sixties, and still felt sexy.
They're the only fake
thing about me, done for my mental health,
a nation-wide problem
where people sport fake smiles
and blistered tans from tanning machines,
unlike the radiation forced upon me
by my third cancer diagnosis yesterday.
Come on. Give someone a break.
I just want to celebrate another day of living
rather than witnessing my body wearing another trauma.

KINDRED SPIRITS

On the small porch
beneath her bedroom window,
where she took her life,
my grandmother and I
used to sit for hours watching passersby.

She taught me
the art of people-watching,
inspiring the writer in me.

Now, decades later, I sit
on my own porch and see
how narratives form life's tapestries.

I never got a chance to thank grandma
for her gifts: teaching me to type,
and her nurturing while my parents
worked long hours in their retail store.

No chance to express gratitude
for her teachings:
like how to look pretty wherever I went,
even when putting the garbage out,

and to not burn any bridges,
to write my thoughts in a journal,
and to smile when sad,
to be with those who inspire,
and to listen to my heart.

But, in the end, I did get to thank her,
as last week during my pandemic
similar to hers
back early in the twentieth century,

she returned outside my writing studio
as a fluttering hummingbird
to offer more wisdoms and guide me
during my lost moments.

Oh, how I wish she can hear me sing
this song of love
like she sang to me
on my childhood porch.

MESSAGE TO MY BODY

It took a long time
for me to say this

but I do appreciate you—
you have tested me

ever since my first push
into this world. Born less than
five pounds, tonsillectomy
at seven, childhood trauma
of being unloved, lived in body

manifested by,
incompetent cervix
leaving me on bedrest
for three pregnancies
then three cesareans,
three bouts of cancer:

First breast, then blood.

Over and over again
you tested me and I've
pulled through.

My will to survive
will nurture me,
as I refuse to be the victim,
but rather invite the light right in.

SATURNED

Your planet encircles mine
once a year
when you call
to the phone I once held
and which now sits
in the dark at the back
of my old underwear drawer
in the empty bedroom
where you stayed
on that night you whispered
how I was no longer the fantasy
of all your unmet dreams.