

### Chokehold

I'm staring at your hickey  
And trying to define innocence  
But all I see is that ugly purple bruise  
Above your collar bone.  
I hope it hurts when you touch it.  
You thought it was because it felt good  
The truth is it was all I could do  
To keep myself from strangling you.  
But oh Achilles, I know you well,  
And with the sweetest of smiles I'm sure,  
Someday it will be you on your back  
Gasping for breath that you do not deserve.  
I'm staring at that stupid hickey,  
The one you wear like a gold goddamn chain.  
And I'm thinking about the day you'll be wearing  
Matching bruises all around your neck  
From my pretty little fingers.

### To Become Undone

They always said blue was my color,  
But I prefer to drive late at night  
In the inky black of the witching hours.  
Where the lines blur together,  
And the clock on the dashboard  
Ticks like a time bomb.  
"Rid yourself of demons," the devil told me,  
And the second hand sped up.  
I thought about the evil hanging there,  
Like stars in my soup.  
When the angel in my backseat whispered  
"Don't think, just be thoughtful,"  
So I let the night creep inside,  
And my thoughts fell miles behind  
On this empty highway.  
Leaving me,  
A wax girl melting under the gaze of God,  
Unwinding the wheels in my watch.

### The Exorcism

They're getting close now  
To the light at the center of you  
Which I have tried to shroud  
In self doubt and insecurities.  
My fortress has fallen.  
My lies have unraveled.  
Smoke and mirrors are not enough  
To keep you mine.  
You don't need my hand  
On your back guiding you.  
You don't need my traps  
Or my diversions,  
My twisted stories.  
You are free of me.  
Your darker half  
Burnt up in your own light.  
You are wicked no longer.

### Small

The horizon is aflame  
With blue fire burning behind the treeline,  
The last remnants of the day fading softly.  
The glitter of stars shimmers down onto me  
And I breathe.  
The air heavy with the perfume of  
Fresh cut grass and salt air.  
And right now is like a page  
From a favorite childhood book.  
The story embedded in me with magic.  
I listen to the creaky of swing set  
And the slow whoosh of traffic into Jamestown.  
Overhead, satellites and airplanes blink by  
Only to be outdone by a shooting star  
Streaking out over the water.  
Like a child I stand in awe.  
Wylnken, Blynken and Nod.

### Angel Stern

Spun in from the universe  
The world aglow,  
Not a thing to my name  
Save for a smile  
With no reason or rationality.  
I pass the time,  
Grabbing at ropes of light,  
Climbing to higher elevations.  
Encircled by pinpricks of color,  
We are chaos at its finest.  
Polaris winks from the center  
Of the night sky  
Daring me to think of a wish.  
Morning light creeps quietly  
And as the night begins to fade  
I reach up and slip the  
Guide star into my pocket  
So I am never lost.



by Erica Knowles

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**Origami Poetry Project**

**Either Side of Midnight**  
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