

Poetry Series

Nika McGuin
- poems -

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Nika McGuin(12/01/89 - present)

'I don't think I can ever stop writing poetry now that I've started. It's as therapeutic for me as it is enjoyable! ' ~Nika

Ello~ I'm Nika McGuin. I feel like I was born a poet, but it is only recently that I am tapping into it(though rest assured, I feel like becoming a great poet is a life-long ordeal.)

I attempted poetry in middle school but back then I didn't know that poetry was so much more than rhyming. Not to mention my handwriting was so bad nobody could understand it anyway(lol) . Eventually I gave up because it seemed like I wasn't very good at it.

Near the end of 2013 I took a modern poetry class out of curiosity and it has changed my perspective of poetry completely. Now I seek to write poetry as a lifelong hobby.

At the moment, I enjoy a lot of creative freedom with my poetry. The language may blur between Early modern English(Shakespearean) and modern English(I've always been fascinated by Early Modern English.) I haven't had any classical training in poetry writing, but in a way I like that. I don't feel like I'm being bossed around by the words or by structure(though I do give great consideration to both.) Hopefully as I continue on I'll improve. Until then, please read, rate, and comment on my poetry ^^

{el Capullo}

It's invisible
stagnant, yet changing
all along - inside

It's invisible
but I know,
you won't believe it
until, at last you see it

Until, it leaves you
taking off in an aircraft
a radiant being metamorphosed,
changed, & visible.

Nika McGuin

8 A.M.

8 a.m.

the room is dim,
as she drags herself, half-awake
out of bed... a slow bumbling
ensues in an attempt to grab her robe

Draped in velvety bordeaux
her feet softly shuffle towards the windows
she opens the blinds and life,
floods in... lush and green
taking hold of the room

Her robe drags the ground quietly
as she sits on a stool near her windows
outside a carnation tree is clustered with native birds
casting their songs into the wind

She yawns, and smiles a sleepy smile:
yet another spring day has begun!

Nika McGuin

A Flower In The Charlotine Times

She lay there
like a wilted flower
unrecognizable, as the person I'd known

The woman I knew,
was a beautiful flower
full of charm, full of sass,
but most of all - full of heart

* * * * *

Nine months of weekly visits
warm embraces and stories shared
in the charlotine times
'but joy is brief, as summer's fun'
and malleable memory, is all that remains

An old voicemail, the gifts you gave me
I'll cherish them - and hoard them
the way you hoarded so many things
I only wish, I'd kept more of them
I only wish, I'd called more

If I had known
the end was so near
I would have...

Now I only wish, you
were still here

To Momo Charlotte with love,
May you R.I.P.
~ Your granddaughter

Nika McGuin

A Single Memory

All day, Ssanyu had wanted to go
Swimming with the other kids who's
Mothers let them run about unbridled

*

Annette, a single mother, was so overprotective of her only child
Ssanyu could only pace one block, 25% farther than two years before,
Monotonously etching a pattern, up and down the hiemal sidewalk

*

All the other kids screeched past him on bicycles
Smiling and chortling, as he played alone: friends, were erratic fronds
Midnight came and Ssanyu had not yet gone, would he ever?

*

At last the day came, he'd arranged for his long awaited adventure
Skipping and frolicking he blazed five blocks, or more! until, a
Morbidity affrayed Annette drove up to claim him, tears escaping her

*

All the same
Ssanyu savored the
Memory, of brief freedom

Nika McGuin

A Small Girl

A small girl walks past
shrinking inwardly
becoming smaller with every glance
as she races down hallways.
The sound of wheels trails behind her
in her mad dash to escape eyes;
eyes that judge, eyes that bore into her
nit-picking every aspect of her body-
all in silence, all in mystery,
and in thoughts unknown.

Nika McGuin

Absence At Home

Hush! Stupid memories
Hush! I don't need you
to remind me
of what used to be
or how it used to be
when I got home,
what used to await me,
who no longer does

I needn't you,
the lingering absence
or the insistent silence

it's hard enough forgetting
it's harder still, remembering

Nika McGuin

Addict

Uncontrollably crying
because of the life you've lead
you're an addict, dad
its the fact I've pushed
to the back of my mind for 24 years
I had never questioned
as to what your drug of choice was

If I had, you might have answered
Heroin, the infamous golden poison
that once injected, crushes
lives, hearts, and ultimately souls
the powdery white villain, that like a noose
leaves bodies strangled, utterly trapped
yet savagely, refuses to loosen its grip

And I would've replied
I'm sorry, and I didn't know
sorry I never let my love for you show
sorry I called you a sperm donor
(though you really were)
and sorry I forgot your phone number
(though you also forgot mine)

Its all so clear now
Through the foggy haze of anger
I just couldn't see how
your soul had been through the wringer
and that you didn't mean to
drag everyone with you

~Nika

Nika McGuin

Adiós: My Backyard Stars

I: Proto-star

My backyard stars
shine brightly tonight
they know that soon
I'll pack my bags for Mexico
they won't be seeing me
and even I don't know
for how long

For the longest time
they watched my struggle
as every window opened
in my prison-like bedroom
got instantly shut closed

And the stars sighed
the farthest off sighs
as I walked on for miles
or so it seemed, and arrived
right back where I'd started
a room with blinds shut tight

recently, every night they've beamed
as I sped towards old dreams -
nearly forgotten dreams - on wheels
as dark as the midnight skies
the desolation of yesterday
drawn into a giant black hole
and gone

II: Supernova

My backyard stars
we met at the age of five
only now to say goodbye at that of twenty-five
or rather adiós, and at that they do sigh
but their hot little hearts still shine
both in fear and hope for me

and I feel the same, tenfold

For I know not what awaits me,
'cept for homesickness and possible loneliness
but my Sagittarius-esque hope has always
been stronger than any mundane fears
those can't and won't keep me from
what I've wanted for countless years

'entonces, adiós mis estrellitas del patio trasero,
nos vemos en otra vida'

Nika McGuin

Affinity Amongst Binary Stars

Authentic affinity
is natural, intuitive even:
It's laughing on a whim
when they've said something, so "them, "
so fitting to their nature
unaware of their amusing behavior
thus, in not intending to be
they surpass comedy central TV
you catch yourself laughing,
because you love how they are
how they set you orbiting
about them, like a binary star

Nika McGuin

Afro Hair 101

Growing my coils has been a journey
chopping off chemically treated strands
in my mother's bathroom mirror
an ill use for craft scissors
merely an inch hair left
looking at pictures
I saw myself in the images
of fierce female African warriors
we shared the same haircut
the same brown skin and full lips

As my hair grew in
frizz-prone little spirals
reaching my shoulders now
so did my love of
my outer shell
in a way I never expected

But truly loving oneself
is much more about what grows
inside of ourselves
the war rages on
between naturals and relaxed
know-it-all naturals making
accusations of self-hatred
and outraged relaxed sisters
proclaiming "hash-tag: Team Relaxed! "
a beautiful race divided
by something as common as hair
they don't understand the new awakening
that is called forth after stripping
oneself of artificial beauty standards
and seeing yourself for the first time
bare, African, truly beautifully
and fearfully made

Still the naturals don't understand
loving yourself on the outside
isn't enough to live on

Loving yourself is accepting
all of your flaws and shortcomings
loving yourself is admiring
your personality, your gestures,
even your obnoxiously loud sneezes
are all part of who you are

Human beings are a working progress
as we grow older it takes time
it takes trials, failures, and successes
it takes age to truly know ourselves completely
at that stage of life we are most beautiful and confident

Becoming the master of your own hair
is just like that, a slow learning process
and one of the most rewarding lessons

~Nika

Nika McGuin

Alone's Companion

He was a lonely child, Alone
much like an tightly coiled,
overwound wristwatch that no longer ran
so uptight, and uncomfortable around people

Only alone was he ever relaxed
and yet he was never quite content
because alone is never truly alone
loneliness, his constant companion
steadily sweeping away serenity
and leaving complacency in its wake

Nika McGuin

Amoretto Questionnaire

I've never been in love, all arrows have failed to land
so there's probably alot about it, I don't quite understand
hence, I've compiled this questionnaire
anent all the hopeless romantics out there:

how is it, one can become so enamored
within the stretch of a month or so?
and when such ephemeral flings do end
snapping as would a flimsy rubber band
some are beside themselves with grief?

how and why is it, that love birds forsake the flock?
momma & pop, lifelong friends, all but abandoned at the dock
yet wholeheartedly sailing off with the, 'new kid on the block'
am I unkind, to think such shipment is but a load of crock?

why is it, that base, sappy cliches
become the things you find yourself athirst to hear?
such timeworn prattles, that to an outsider like myself
are oft discerned as cheap, penny a pop, poppycock!

mayhaps, someday I'll add whirr to the swarming love poem sea
and declare, 'alas, they got me! '
but currently, I only blind folk see

Nika McGuin

An Immortal~

Dewy Hebert
ardent youth
seemingly bright future...
but life's golden thread
is both fragile & short

Heroes Park in Thibodaux, Louisiana
stationed across from a bustling Dollar General Store
passed up frequently by drivers rushing about
& I too hadn't noticed it

Upon my first visit
I parked in the grassy lot
near the tiny fence door
which acts as an entrance
to this all but vacant park

It seemed that at one point,
the park had been its city's pride
they'd installed a baseball diamond & stadium,
a tiny triangular jogger's trail
surrounded with tall solar powered lights,
and the heroes monument itself:

Four marble pillars
etched, but not deeply enough
WWI, WWII, Korean, Vietnam,
& the boys who just wanted
to be remembered

And indeed at the bottom
of the monument, it read
'We Remember'

But it simply isn't true
poor Dewy Hebert's name
- among many others -
had faded & was barely legible
in WWII he fought & died

but do you really think,
he is remembered for that?

No, we are all too greedy,
so says Hazel Grace,
it is the fault in our stars -
wanting to be remembered
when we already are

By the people who truly knew & loved us
is it really not enough?

That form of remembrance -
being famous, a war hero, an inventor -
is so likened to finely etched marble,
it fades easily with the passing of time

But being remembered by loved-ones
and those we touch in our short lives
- however fleeting it may seem -
is an eternal thing
that makes us
immortal

Dewey Hebert,
you are immortal
but not because
of how you died
instead because
of how you lived

Nika McGuin

Antithesis Island, It's Thursday Again

Same island
different history
it's really something else
how we can have the same homeland
yet experience it so differently
you always complain about the recession
but me and my people don't even feel the change
we've always been on the poorer side
so to us, it's just an ordinary Thursday

Nika McGuin

Apart

the birthday of an affectionless
father, we are apart

and the sister-like cousin from whom
I am growing apart

to hear news of you - good
or bad - because we are apart

my emotions are mixed
and stirred
like confetti cake batter

I who pushed you both away
as you simultaneously pushed me
feel the doormat-like urges resurge
the impulse to dial your numbers
fades as quickly as it came

I still know
your natures
and why we
tend to clash
it pains me
we are apart
still, it must be

Nika McGuin

Assembling The Puzzle

The sounds of home greet me
the trickling sound of the fish tank
my mother's eccentric cackling
and my step father's loud voice
a voice that gets ignored all the same
and the discordant ticking of clocks
even the pace of time is slowed here

They say home is a place
where people take note of your absence
Its when you forget your own face
and what you look like doesn't matter
because you are kin, a tiny component
of one great warm existence,
but a crucial piece all the same

Home is something I take with me when I leave
it's a concrete part of my being
in reality, I have several homes
with a number of different families,
all of which have pieced me together
and to this day we're still collaborating
working to complete a jumbo puzzle of homes
that interlock, meshing together our lives

Nika McGuin

At Home

When a woman leaves her home
she leaves everything she was
customs, family, friends, lovers
all left in her wake
but she knows she can always
begin again, she is who she is
at her core, wherever she is

But when a girl leaves her home
she doesn't know what she's leaving
or what she'll find when she gets there
but she is desperately hoping to find:
independence, friendship, love, & herself

You see, the girl hasn't been able
to find these things in the safety
of her home, thus the transition
from girl to woman was never made

She must exit the sheltered cradle of lace
and enter this terribly beautiful world
knowing nothing of it; to be mystified,
terrified, enraptured, and found therein
then & only then can the girl become a woman,
and the woman, her own home

Nika McGuin

Await

If you really think
that I don't care
despite all the time
and memory
that has flown between
the two of us
then you really are
as dumb as they say

actually I'm dying
to know if you're okay
I am bound, to silently
wait until our two souls
can meet once more
in sublime harmony
until then I can only pray
that God spares life, time,
and change to us both

your dry wave
my feigned hurry
this is all that remains
of our meetings

yet inside we both know
this kind of bond
does not easily loosen
we are family, a
God given fate
that is why
I'll wait

So please, shake off
your anger and resentment
we both know, It is empty
like my soul without yours

~Nika

Beautiful Dream

Apricity, like warm
fingers on a cold day
like yours in mine
chasing away the ghosts
of loneliness, still
to this day I can't say
that I know you
for you are the man
of my dreams, or rather
the man in my dreams

Last night I saw you
I dreamt up our romantic
encounter, how you discovered
me that fair day - ten years ago somewhere
in dreamland - our beautiful wedding
and our imaginary friends
my whole life with you really

Then at once, I woke up
but I wasn't disappointed
all along I knew
It was only a dream
a beautiful dream
of who you might be

~Nika

Nika McGuin

Because Of Maya Angelou

There's a reason why
the morning sky
was dreary and gray

There's a reason why
the clouds and I began to cry
and the blue sky
released a heavy sigh

There's also a reason why
resplendent beings like Maya Angelou die
I'll never know the answer, I don't even try
but that it disheartens me deeply, I can't deny

Nika McGuin

Birds Of Paradise

near a hidden nest
acrobatic birds are propped airily
on the mortar of brick walls
perfectly unaware of their talent
and as quickly as they are scoped
they've vanished
into the trees,
the hidden nests,
an unseen shangri-la
living hidden lives
singing with hidden meaning

Nika McGuin

Black Bird & The Glass Trapezoid

My lovely new workplace
has a glass trapezoid as its entrance
It protrudes into the room
bringing in the outside
as new clients wander in
they resemble little toy dolls
in shiny glass packaging
their little eyes, filled with wonder

There's also a black pigeon
he comes by every morning, and boldly
waddles into the trapezoid doorway
squawking loudly and imprudently
sometimes even pecking at the glass door;
its a perplexing ritual to behold

Still, I cant help but wonder if this bird
was perhaps human in another life
maybe this lavish office was once his humble abode
or that of his past lover, thus he comes back every morning
in search of some lingering trace of his beloved
afterwards he leaves as swiftly - and as noisily -
as when he alighted here

Nika McGuin

Blood-Bound

I know you well
recorded all the times you fell
out of grace, before my very face
still there's space, in my heart for you a place

Am I a glutton for pain and disappointment, possibly
I am a realist, yet seek your company
others may deem it foolish, that I forgive
but only one blood-bound father does God give

wallowing in my own futile bitterness
would only cast this wretched soul into blackness
for I know there is a reason - there has to be
why God bound two spirits, as lonely as we

Nika McGuin

Candida, Gonna Eat Ya

Mankind has spent ages
searching for alien life
Well, they finally found it
mushroom formations in space

Mushrooms aren't exclusive to earth
In fact they are quite primordial
Isn't it ridiculous, full of mirth?
all this time we've been so probial
but in our stomachs, give mycelial birth
to a colony of fungi, microbial

I'm not talking about those portobello
mushrooms you put on your burger
or those cute little chopped shrooms
that you marinate and decorate steak with
there's a much darker breed of fungi on rise

It feeds on sugar and yeast
Coca-cola and Cheetos
its a snack loving beast
If you allow that it grows
upon you, it will feast

It used to be a cute little monster
before the over-use of sugar became the classic
it was decided, that fat is truly sinister
but without it, food tasted quite tragic

consumers wanted fat-free
sellers just wanted to sell
in order to make everyone happy
swapping fat with sugar seemed swell

Swell it did, our little monster
and best believe it is conscious
your cravings are not out of hunger
they are due to atrocious Candidas

We were born with it
and when we die
it is this that takes over
and devours our remains
It sounds gruesome, I know
but even babies have it
each and every one of them

Nika McGuin

Chantefleurie, La Poupée De Temps: Ein Märchen

There was once a doll, so cruelly enchanted by Father Time
her name was Chantefleurie, and this is her märchen

~~~~~

Draped in shimmering turquoise threads  
every night she sat alone at her table  
never making eye contact with those around her  
yet, at every move she was aware of being watched  
even if that in itself was some unfulfilled fantasy  
it was as if she was just waiting to be noticed  
hoping to be swept off of her feet  
praying to be made a friend of  
so she was always mindful  
to make no unwonted movements  
no mistakes to be seen by her observers  
no tripping, or even coughing  
unbeknownst to her though,  
the girl hadn't been as unnoticed as she thought  
Father Time, had taken an interest, for whatever reason  
he charmed her into a living doll of sorts  
doomed to wait, 'twas the price  
of perpetual enchantment

Sure as turquoise glistens,  
folks are allured  
by enchanting looks,  
but pretty wary  
of living dolls

Chantefleurie's wish was never granted  
she continued to wait in vain  
the years ticked past  
she became silver haired,  
lonelier, and lovelier than ever  
practice had truly made perfect  
and all traces of humanity  
had haltingly faded away  
along with them, her voice  
yet her gypsy-like movements,  
had become so polished



silky and graceful  
gathering oodles of ogles  
leaving bodies limp like noodles  
still, the spell kept them at bay

In her final years  
as all dolls do  
she declined into defectivity  
the doll was a hollow figure  
with a set of batteries for a heart  
kindness was a trait  
she'd unlearned  
centuries ago

He'd seen enough, finally  
Time took pity on her  
and she disintegrated  
porcelain dust  
became human ashes

She found peace,  
amity, and quietus  
in dissolution  
knowing her ashes  
were amongst others  
her loneliness  
met it's end  
as she rejoined  
the human race

\*\*\*\*\*

Historians still wonder why  
Father Time so inconsiderately  
ensorcelled the girl  
perhaps, he wanted to  
go against mother nature  
they were never  
of the same mind afterall  
she gave birth to entirety  
while he was ever the angel of death  
for the first time, he chose to extend life  
knowing that the consequences would be dire  
maybe, he saw some part of himself in her

just maybe, he was even lonelier  
than Chantefleurie

Nika McGuin

# Chauffeurless

Remember when your parents whipped you  
and they said, 'this is going to hurt me  
more than it hurts you'?  
Well I'm beginning to relate

Letting go of you  
is for both your  
and my own good

I've had dreams  
of how our lives would be  
when we reached this point  
but because of you they've all  
been shattered  
There's nothing left of them  
except the ruins I see  
in my mind's eye

We had both agreed  
that once I could drive  
we'd have the best days  
I'd pick you up in my car  
and we'd leave the bayous  
to see the city lights

Now, I know all too well  
that if I tried to make it happen  
we'd only be going to see  
one of your 'lovers'  
or better yet,  
another helpless fool  
who only exists  
to be used by you

We'd park at his house  
and I'd be stuck there all day  
like a cricket in a spider's web  
just waiting for you to say  
you're ready to leave

There'd be no girls night out  
There'd only be a pimp  
and HER unpaid chauffeur

Nika McGuin

# Cheap Emotions Aren'T Cheap At All

I'm always miserable  
about nothing

I'm overjoyed  
about nothing

It's probably because my life  
is full of nothing  
empty of everything

I'm merely thriving  
on mere existence

I'm simply dying  
on dire luxury  
extravagantly dining  
on cheap emotions  
every smile, a product sold  
ping-ponging myself  
from splurge to purge

Just to feel something  
even if it's just biochemical  
two seconds of temporary bliss  
that only leave me staring fixedly  
into space, into the nothingness  
that awaits me once it's all over

I am only as whole  
or rather hole - as my outer shell  
for there is not much inside  
most days I rise mechanically from bed  
like a clockwork automaton  
&quot;living&quot; without much thought or reflection  
right now that's the only way to be happy  
or something close to it

But it's not enough,  
because here I go again

from splurge to purge  
just to feel something

Nika McGuin

# Chroma

Outside my window  
lies a quiet world  
brimming with blue  
blue cars,  
blue buildings  
- even -  
blue roads and trees

it's 7: 35pm  
all the world's  
a shiny sapphire  
of endless facets  
and hues

but I know  
the morning will be  
so un-blue  
the world will spin anew  
and with the rising of the sun,  
repaint itself

Nika McGuin

# Civil War Of The Sister Cities

Things weren't good from the beginning  
we were pitted against each other  
our relatives would boldly compare us  
as if we were deaf beings from another continent  
but on the contrary, we took that stuff in  
and it formed the basis of our relationship

Though we described our bond as  
'close, 'like sisters, ' we still spent  
all twenty-something years fighting  
either directly or covertly  
about which of us is better - at this,  
at that - at life. But I'm tired now,  
my sword grows heavy and I'm ready  
to let it sink into the earth

This war is unwinnable  
even when I feel utterly defeated  
you still don't feel that you've won  
maybe you finally will, when I am gone.

Nika McGuin



# Clear Polish

Though the polish is clear,  
Though it shines and reflects the light,  
Thin fissures are visible on the surface  
And they foresee cracks and chips

You can predict the end of something  
But you never quite know how it will break  
When you thought it would just hurt you,  
You come to find out it also would hurt your parents  
And you never quite know when it will happen  
Even as the cracks are forming, you don't know  
When the pieces will begin to fall off

When they do though,  
They leave you stripped and weakened  
Like your nail beds after removing acrylic nails  
Dry and brittle like skin after a hot shower  
It's a rough and splitting situation

With acceptance new growth begins  
Slow, like growing out thin nails  
Like growing pains, like grief

Nika McGuin

# Cliché~

Can't live with 'em  
can't live without 'em  
Its cliché, yes I know  
can't stop saying it though

Ever wonder how they 'stood the test of time? '  
(cliché #2)

Its because they 'ring with such truth, '  
(cliché #3)

That so few synonyms can 'hold a candle' to them.  
(cliché #4)

But in poetry, it is best to 'march to the beat of our own drum.'  
(cliché #5)

And so I say, a plague on all clichés.

But for the time being:  
I, 'just can't help myself.'  
(cliché #6)

Nika McGuin

# Clock~tower

Out in the middle of the forest  
surrounded by thick thorn-laced branches  
and bent weathered trees older than time itself  
there was an antiquated clock tower  
high enough to scrape the sky  
inside lived a bitter and lonely old maid  
holding a grudge, more than a hundred years old

Time is a fickle thing  
in matters of the heart  
when we've gotten over something  
it suddenly seems so far away  
so much longer ago than it really is  
but when we're deeply hurt  
time seems to stand still  
we live our lives in the past  
stuck in the same year and month  
as the hurt which occurred  
the hands of time get stuck  
at the twelfth hour -  
each chime, a repetition  
of the painful memory

Sometimes, it's hard to get out  
that's why so many people  
live trapped, in their own  
tailor-made clock towers  
watching on as the world  
continuously changes below them  
meanwhile, the interior  
of the clock tower is  
cobwebbed, dusty, and ever-same

Nika McGuin

# Complicated

Amongst all the sadness  
and missing of other people  
you came and raised my spirits

You are  
the little brother  
I used to, almost have  
the connection that is complicated  
and difficult to explain to outsiders

I hope we can always  
get along like this

Nika McGuin

# Consumed, One Way Or Another

when the war of man vs. food is done  
it's hard to tell, by whom its been won  
green soldiers lie fallen like broken statues  
as their murky fluids surround them  
bacteria swoop in like ravenous vultures  
picking away at their remains  
until all that's left are strange clouds  
mottled black and white, reeking of death  
they evoke both, extreme disgust  
and wonder. this death too  
is another part of life  
and we are all its crops  
our parents sprout, bloom, produce fruit  
which eventually falls from the tree  
to be consumed by the world

Nika McGuin

# Convinced

Did I ever know you?  
I held your hand for years  
and still I wonder,  
was any of it real?  
and do you even feel?  
I'm convinced you're someone new

Did I ever know you?  
the man I loved had morals  
he was a man who'd failed before  
but always with honesty and integrity

who...  
but who is this liar?  
this deceitful stranger in my view  
there's no way he could be you  
just tell me it isn't true  
anything to take away this blue feeling

Did I ever know you?  
you swear that I did  
but I'm convinced  
you played me for a fool

Nika McGuin

## Cowardice & Pretense

A strong wind saunters through the house;  
it pushes my door open with a loud creak.  
I look over my shoulder in horror  
but my voice is the picture of confidence:  
'ma' is that you? '  
'you always tryin' to scare somebody.'  
There is no audible reply.  
Pushing fear back into the crevices of my mind,  
I force myself to look at the crack in the door.  
An eerie kind of darkness stares back.  
My body betrays my charade of dauntlessness  
as hairs begin to rise. I block its entry  
with a small trash can, only for it to be flicked away  
almost mockingly. At this, fear is washed out by annoyance.  
I replace the trash can with my heavy booksack  
and I dare it to push that.

Nika McGuin

# Crystal Meets World

When it happened  
I thought, lord!  
what's the world coming to?

I knew things were bad  
but you see, at the same time -  
I really didn't

I had been floating around  
in my own crystal bubble  
thinking, this world could never touch me

But, then it happened,  
happened out of the blue, in a shocking way  
the world - crashed into my bubble head on  
and shattered it, to crystal bits

August 2nd, 2015  
Nika~

'You see, it's easy to ignore trouble, when you're living in a bubble.' - Paramore

Nika McGuin



# Daddy Long-Legs

Step-Daddy fouled-up  
Blood-Daddy went missing  
But Daddy Long-Legs sat waiting  
just for me to sit beside him.  
When I arrived he just stared,  
watched me drown my bitterness  
in four bowls of lentil soup.

I walked away and he's probably still waiting.  
I'd always have to seek him out,  
just like the other Daddies.

Nika McGuin

# Dancing On Needle Pins

You might as well just hang up your old coat  
unfortunately, I know you are here to stay  
useless words are choked in your ragged throat  
I'm not the one to fix it, better see a doctor baby

The same endless rhythm strikes up again  
your off-white gloved hand is outstretched, I cannot abstain

No, dancing the waltz with you has never been much fun  
you lift me high only to drop me to the ground  
spinning me at neck-break speeds, its too much to bear hun  
I grow weary of having my toes stepped on, stop treading my gown!

It's a constant game of push and pull  
we don't want to quit, yet nobody ever wins  
your clothes are all stained, how can I trust you in full  
still we stay here, dancing on needle pins

Nika McGuin

# Death Of A Netizen

The Internet:

Like a giant fishing-net,  
draws out all matter of seafood

The World Wide Web:

Ensnares us all in its network  
and we are eventually wiped out

But a netizen's death is odd, hence  
they may not truly be bereft of life  
but simply in a state of abeyance

They're in a bizarre kind of limbo  
you can not tell, alive or dead  
there is nobody to ask who'd know  
it's a mix of befuddlement and dread

There is no closure in such a death  
there's no funeral, no official mourning  
Instead, posts are their last puffs of breath  
what is left of the netizen, if a site is closing?

Nika McGuin

# Debt Of Expectations

Nothing I own is mine  
not this room  
not it's golden key  
not this car  
not this phone  
or even this pen

They're all rentals  
that i'm enslaved to for the time being  
one day I have to give them back  
even this happiness is not my own  
beneath it a poorness hides  
to make matters worse,  
someone else is paying for it all  
I'm under contract presently  
there are things they want in return  
someone, they want me to be

So others look upon this lifestyle enviously  
they don't know it doesn't belong to me  
it's rented, on credit of expectations  
all it does, is add to my tribulations  
I can't live up to them,  
so I suffer debtor's frustration

Nika McGuin

# Deep In The Rain

I know the answer  
lies deep in the rain  
though at times it may seem sad  
that it's raining so hard  
but raindrops cleanse all  
washing away dirt debris and pain

When the downpour begins  
it can be hard to find direction  
stuck in the fog and mist of the storm  
wrapped and blanketed in confusion  
but once you step out of it  
glancing through your bedroom window  
suddenly, you can see things clearly

Yes, the answer lies deep in the rain  
and in its aftermath; it takes away  
that which is unnecessary  
however attached you may be to it  
but it also gives life, hope,  
and strews rainbows across the sky

Nika McGuin

## Define Alive

My fingertips are cold,  
but my skin is warm to the touch.  
The tresses falling at the nape of my neck  
are warmed by my life's essence.  
Meanwhile, my heart beats a steady rhythm  
in tune, with the contracting and relaxing  
of my two virile lungs.

Man, it feels so good to be alive,  
to cherish the preciousness of it  
without analyzing all the inner-workings  
and functions - there's a blissfulness, a state of ecstasy  
that arises when all about me falls silent  
save the persistent beating of my heart  
joined by my almost inaudible breathing  
and I'm filled, with awe and gratitude

Nika McGuin

# Defined Triangles

We are all  
the best of people  
and the worst of people  
loved by an important few  
but we're prone to be hated too

It's so vital  
not to let other's  
perceptions of loved ones  
change how you feel about them  
don't you go re-thinking your feelings  
because of something some outsider said

And likewise  
know yourself well enough  
to not be shaken by petty insults  
never doubt that you are indeed whoever  
you believe yourself to be, define thyself - thy world

Nika McGuin

## Domain: The Visit

I heard you pull up outside  
you rang the doorbell incessantly  
thoughts rapidly traverse through my mind  
of all the times you came here before

Back then, I'd opened my door wide  
and let the big bad wolf crawl inside  
I became a wide-eyed mule,  
to whom you were cruel  
and of whom you made a tool  
yes me, a damn well knowing fool

So this time, I didn't answer  
the ringing fell on deaf ears  
and as I heard your footsteps  
reluctantly trail away  
I knew this wasn't the end  
you'd be back again, but  
only to see that I've regained reign  
and you'll never again enter my domain

Nika McGuin



# Drive Home

In a daze  
the silence kills off  
my brain cells  
the lack of movement  
paralyzes my legs

Even if I put on headphones  
I can hear the silence  
seeping through

My body falls asleep  
but my eyes must  
remain open

I forget how to talk  
and my legs ache  
when I try to walk

My neck tires  
of holding my head up  
eight hours of this?  
once released,  
I can barely  
drive home

(8-14-15)

Nika McGuin

# Earthling

The wind blows a laden sigh  
yet comfortably, unmovingly, here sit I  
where some would become tense  
I am lax, billowing like ribbons on a fence

Misty rain sprinkles her blessings  
strangers race about, with their duckings and hidings  
but I am the ground, happily being soaked  
earth's pitcher - mouth open, uncloaked

An overly exuberant sun radiates above  
it is what some brown folk, wish to stay out of  
I too am brown, and like a cake - I taste better when baked  
human, of the earth and on the earth our identity let us not forsake

Nika McGuin

# El Viento's Revenge

The wind seemed to carry  
its brown leaves right in my direction  
as if it had been seeking me out  
they then proceeded to pound my windshield  
which led me to ponder just how much longer  
it would be shielding me from the wind  
not very much longer if left  
to El Viento, the raging wind spirit

When I at last ventured out of my car  
the wind gushed forward at full force to confront me  
its leaves, twigs, old McDonald's receipts, and more  
all began to pummel me, leaving me stretched out  
on the dank pavement like a bad papier-mâché experiment  
then and only then did El Viento feel  
his revenge was truly complete

Now, you may be wondering just what I'd done  
to deserve and bring forth vehement wrath?  
Well, that I would tell you - were it not  
that just the mentioning of the act  
would rekindle El Viento's wrath  
which would once more be pointed in my direction  
trust me, it's not a roller coaster  
that you would want to ride twice

Nika McGuin

# Embers

Watching videos  
seeing glimpses of  
brightly flickering finite lives  
I realize that the person I am watching  
will die - though I know not when  
and this video belongs to the stash of embers  
they will leave behind when they are gone  
and I realize that I too will die  
though I know not when  
and these writings are my embers  
I pray that they will keep  
all of my loved ones warm

~Nika

Nika McGuin

# Empty Classroom

enter the classroom of ghosts  
rows of should-be empty desks stir  
their inhabitants stare back at me  
but I can't meet their translucent eyes  
they turn and converse amongst themselves  
I sit alone in the front row, the only one alive  
to a stranger's eyes the room is full  
but I know ghosts when I see them,  
and these are it!

Nika McGuin

# Endless Rhythm

laid out on the warm  
wooden steps, with only  
my juice, my puppy, & my thoughts  
I'd lain there listening to the windchimes  
and the loud but endearing incessant chatter  
of the neighbors, of the birds, of the wind  
and of the world constantly rearranging itself

At once, my mind was without thought  
verbal communication too deemed unnecessary  
it seemed an interruption somehow  
of the natural physical world  
in which I'd now immersed myself

It was a place where  
everything talked, by not talking at all  
spoke with motion which unerringly lead to sound  
resulting in a most beautiful resounding clamor  
one beat, one rhythm, one song  
endlessly played, day in & day out  
orchestra of the earth

Nika McGuin

## Escaping~

"nights pass so much quicker  
than the days did"  
in The Weeknd's Canada  
I envy him for that  
for me both the days  
and the nights screech by  
filled with a different sort  
of nothingness, wasting  
my life away, just as they do  
less inescapably maybe-  
at least that's what I tell myself  
For the addicts he speaks of  
life seems a downwardly spiraling  
funnel of partying and self-destruction  
but at least it starts out as fun  
convincing themselves that  
a non-recreational drug  
can be recreational for them  
am I any different really?  
Convincing myself that  
being alone is better than anything  
and I'd almost believe it too  
if it were not for those meddling signs  
everywhere, constant reminders that I "live"  
outside the bounds of acceptable normalcy  
I'm sure that addicts feel that way too  
it's what makes the days  
feel so terribly long  
and the nights  
something they can,  
escape into

Nika McGuin

# Every Year

Every year, I want you to be here  
you know, I come only to see you  
If you should miss even one family gathering  
this once cheery scene would fall into shades of blue  
it's not always said, but we need you

No, don't you go anywhere  
don't you do anything too dangerous  
you know you gotta be here  
this year, every one of us is counting on you  
just waiting, for you to come through  
to put a smile on each face,  
to brighten up the place

Nika McGuin



# Eyewitness

I don't want to deal with it  
that's why I lock up in my room.  
there's so much going on around me:  
friction, madness, illness, sadness...  
locking it out is the only way  
to remain sane, and whole

I feel sort of like the eye  
of a destructive southern hurricane  
people probably think it's crazy  
that I remain so calm  
in the midst of it all

The truth is a little different  
because when I open that door,  
all the dirt, debris, and fierce winds  
come rushing at me, so overwhelmingly

And I don't want to deal with it  
that's why I lock up in my room, you see.  
there's too much going on around me  
but I'll have to come out, and deal with it sometime  
I'll have to bear witness  
to the aftermath

Nika McGuin

## Fear & Other Death-Traps

I am at a loss for words  
sometimes too, you know  
& life isn't always easy go, breezy flow,  
not that I'd know, no  
I haven't lived it yet

Haven't placed my bet, in this grand roulette  
of life. Still, I know that what awaits me  
is strife. But I must plunge forward.  
The fear of never feeling & never living,  
is far greater than the fear of failure  
or even, the fear of a tragic death.  
Because living in fear, ain't living at all

I know it well,  
because these last few years  
living in fear is all I've known, all I've done.  
Fear of failure, didn't keep me from failing.  
Fear of people, never shielded my heart  
& fear of life, sure as hell  
didn't stop it from passing me by.

Nika McGuin

# Firewood

It can be  
saddening,  
to lose  
a leaf, a stem -  
a branch -  
from the tree  
of your heart.

What does not bear fruit  
is in turn, doing harm:  
Weighing on the tree  
sapping it of nourishment  
twisting its thick bark into gnarls  
causing the tree to lean in pain.

Yes, it can be painful to lose a limb.  
Still, much liberation comes from loss.  
Unburdened, the tree can stretch forth into the sky  
expanding, flourishing, bearing more fruit than ever before.

Letting go of that which no longer serves a purpose  
the heart will feel lighter, and will have more love to give.  
love, that wont be wasted, or unappreciated, or unreciprocated.

Nika McGuin

# Flames: Yellow & Blue (Is It Poetry Collaboration)

Yellow:

To dream about the yellow flame of May,  
I dream I'm covered by the smell of grass by me it is.  
Sleeping where I sleep, among the flowers.  
Beneath the tree, I rest against the sturdy trunk.  
I glide above the rhythm of each cloud as it floats by.  
No one taught me how to bow, I know it fleeting is.  
Alone this tree it stands across the field above the rest.  
And to climb this tree in sleep and sleep it is.  
I dream this tree is like an endless sea of waving trees.  
I dream a burning bush beneath this tree its top of leaves  
and full of life, the yellow flame of May, can not put out.

The yellow flame of May holds its breath in yearlong anticipation;  
here in this desert dreamscape, wildflowers may bloom.  
Parched sands dye golden under the flame's impatient gaze  
for no one knows when, or even if they will bloom this time.  
It is all so dependent on mother nature's mood swings.  
But for the time being, I dare to dream of once barren fields  
now filled with a sweeping array of colored efflorescence.  
Here the trees are dislodged by cacti, newly crowned in posy  
and these fields become a rolling sea of paint splattered hills.  
I dream of desolate lands that endured a lifetime of dry spells,  
only to be enchanted, spell bound by boundless fauna and flora.  
Proof that even under the yellow flame of May, life is sown and reaped.

Blue:

Why are you trapped as you are?  
Feeling the hand, of the blues.  
Someone else other than me,  
has left you as one should not be.

I saw your picture back then  
when I read the poem,  
you had written with him.  
Did it not go as words  
tend to flow,

back to the sea of your dreams

Indigo-skinned fingers lace fixedly at your throat  
leaving you, a caged bird incapable of singing.  
Under the cover of night the words float to him  
like the mementos of so many broken promises.

Only fragments remain of your now obscure past:  
poetry you read to him, the old worn shirts he gave in return  
as lost as the snippets of your once long curly hair.  
They are but floating diyas upon the river of remembrance;  
their lights flicker as they drift along  
fading slowly into bitter-sweet dreams.

Nika McGuin

# Floating On Whimsy

I remember  
the day I captured the moon & sun  
I tied them both together with a big long string  
one that dangled from the heavens  
right on down to earth

What I did next, might sound crazy  
but I grabbed hold of that string with both hands  
just as it was taking off, and there I was -  
taking off too - floating on whimsy  
letting it take me wherever it willed

Nika McGuin

# Florette's Woods

And there she was  
hair a waterfall of waves and curls  
and like a river, it flowed elegantly  
as she moved about the forest grounds  
Florette was such an inquisitive girl,  
she took several pauses to appreciate  
the woods in which she'd lived her entire life  
Still, in everything she somehow saw  
beauty, mystery, and a sentient life force

Yes, if you saw this girl, you would think  
'why, what a beautifully insane girl'  
because more than likely, you'd stumble upon her  
talking to and questioning inanimate objects  
and creatures that could never respond to her inquiries

Indeed, where some would hug trees  
florette danced with them and adorned herself  
with their blossom laden vines,  
draping them around her neck like mini-scarves  
and where some would skip rocks across the river  
Florette built little twig boats for them  
so they'd never be stuck to the bottom of the riverbed

One can not help but become engrossed by her essence  
floating like a cherry blossom petal on the wind  
Florette, child of the woodland forest, every heart does win  
be you man, or rock, or stick, or sand, she'll take you in  
the gift exchanged amongst you both: a pair of eternal grins

Nika McGuin

## Foul Fowl~

little men in all black suits  
pace the parking-lots day and night  
with scrawny legs and stick-like feet  
piercing beady eyes and sharp black beaks

these men live so much freer than we  
they scrounge for food and care not where - or what  
building their homes out of dead leaves, scrap, and dirt  
wandering like nomads, yet always found poking around in parking-lots  
leaving black feathers on the wind, and cackling caws in our ears

Nika McGuin



# Frankenwatch

They say the clocks tick by cruelly  
they say the time flies truly

If I could ask time to read my clock face  
to see through me like an automatic skeleton watch  
just what would he see,  
what time would it be

These hands of mine  
appear to mark the hours of my life  
seem to move with purpose  
but to what unknown  
and to what end  
or would this timepiece simply be serviced

And start again?  
as much newness as the future lends  
it greedily takes away just as much  
will I then be a frankenwatch  
composed of old gears and face  
but new case, shiny bezel,  
shiny lugs and crown?

If so, then I'll take it  
I'll take what little  
of my clockwork soul I can keep  
for to die every few years  
like some cheap quartz watch  
and have my dead battery replaced  
I couldn't bear it, I wouldn't -  
be me any longer

Is it not the same  
as being possessed?

Nika McGuin

# Free-Falling

Scatterbrained dreams,

flickering scenes,

none of it makes any sense

but the film just continues to roll

From the moment I closed my eyes

I've been falling through the subconscious

like falling through a dark chute

somewhere in the aphotic zone of my mind

it's never-ending, there is no floor here

to land on, and no hand or footholds

that could pull you back into the light

Only the flickering scenes

each one beyond your own control

the only way out is to realize that you're dreaming

Wake up...

Wake up...

The warmth of daylight surrounds you as you come to,

and all memories of the coruscating scenes

are quickly erased

Nika McGuin

# Friends

Oh, estranged books  
be my friends once again  
hide me, within your pages, crannies, and nooks  
And to come out anon, I would not fain

Nika McGuin

# Gilded Doors

a hot Louisiana summer day  
finds my mother and grandmother  
whipping up paint fumes with their brushes  
as they slather the front doors in liquid chroma  
the house's mouth is gaped wide  
inhaling all the scents of the sub-tropical breeze  
and they inhale it too  
about as much as they inhale the joy  
of each others company  
with chit-chat and laughter  
the day passes swiftly  
the tedious work is made light  
and the house's entrance gilded in warmth

Nika McGuin

# Girasol Y La Hada

Upon her head  
tight amber spirals  
moving freely, cascading downward  
to meet, a sweet treat,  
her skin the color of buttered toffee  
accompanied by the delicate aroma  
of freshly creamed coffee

The girl's name was Girasol  
and she walked through life  
much as would a tightrope artist  
always one foot in front of the other  
lined up perfectly, as if she were  
a ballerina, until she arrived  
at her destination

The only thing is, she never knew  
quite what that was. So she kept on  
walking endlessly, tracking her line  
of footprints, trailing through  
enchanted forests, sleepless cities,  
and uncharted islands around the world

At one point, Girasol began to feel as if  
nothing would ever change, that her journey  
was an endless one with no definite purpose  
suddenly she fell, spiraling downward  
like her numerous russet coils of hair  
into a well of hopelessness that not even,  
a downed tightrope could draw her up out of

It was then,  
that she heard the tiniest of voices  
accompanied by a most other-worldly tinkling  
at once, there was light in the well  
there at the bottom, amidst the moist cinder blocks  
a coral colored phosphorescence flickered

It took the shape of a crystalline sphere

and as it floated about the well's bedrock  
Girasol recognized the ethereal creature, slowly  
as if remembering a long since forgotten dream  
and her mouth opened in utter surprise at the revelation  
... it was a fairy, & more surprising still,  
it was talking to her - to Girasol Mundial:

Girasol! , Girasol! , wake up niña  
you weren't meant to stay here so long  
your journey must continue child -  
not just for your sake, but for  
the sakes of those whom you will touch  
whilst making your way

Despair not, your fortune will change  
even if it doesn't happen as swiftly  
as you would like...  
[here the fairy's voice trembled with passion]  
Remember this Girasol, just as you  
placed one foot in front of the other,  
change happens the same way, small steps!  
one small occurrence leads to another &  
before you know it, you'll look behind you  
and find yourself miles away from this decrepit well  
so get up now mija, I'm flying you out of here  
back to where you belong:

That giant tightrope in the sky!

Nika McGuin

# Glasses

Blurred vision can be so beautiful  
you see what you want to see  
you squint, and its still magical  
but eventually there are things  
you need to see and know  
that they are indeed real  
and everyone is telling you  
to get glasses because blurred,  
perfectly beautiful vision-

Love really -  
doesn't allow you  
to see the truth  
Is love stupid?  
why cant love  
and true vision  
simply co-exist?

and love after glasses  
just hurts  
after I put them on the blurring  
isn't beautiful or magical anymore  
what to think of this creature I love?  
this creature that  
lets me down  
and breaks my heart  
why are you like this?  
and why don't you hear me?

Hardly matters now  
because what I saw  
was so greatly flawed  
I don't know when  
the flaw started  
all I know is  
it hurts  
to look at you now

~Nika



Nika McGuin

# Glisten & Wait

London blue gems glisten,  
are ya listenin'? quiet,  
for these gemstones speak!

In the ice filled lanes of December  
they're found. Turquoise being cut  
gives off it's polished shine.  
Solitaire rings and their blue topaz stones  
compete with trendy designs full of tanzanite sparkle.

And all but left out, bloodstone and lapis lazuli wait,  
wait to be remembered by their oldest friend December.  
Yes, these gemstones speak,  
glisten, shine, sparkle, and wait -  
for snowfall, for Christmas trees,  
for old st. Nick and his reindeer,  
for December to make them feel brilliant again.

Nika McGuin

# Hands And Pillars Of Sand

## I: Hands

In the same breath  
we two desperate black girls  
last-minute haggling  
over justice, practically begging  
with money in hand  
yet, we can not buy  
I daresay,  
it is not our dollar bills  
which are curse'd in their eyes  
but alas, our hands

## II: Pillars of Sand

And in the same breath  
our woeful black boys  
like us, but worse off still  
are struggling, reaching out  
continuously failing to gain  
equality, or even respect  
they do graduate from college  
build pillars out of grime, and dirt, and sand  
but in the back of their minds  
there is a voice that whispers, always  
urgently, and full of anxiety:  
speak 'properly, ' cut your hair ultra low,  
dress like them, and blend in  
maybe they won't notice  
the pigment of your skin  
oh, but most of all don't ever let your mask slip  
because all it takes is one misstep  
for the pillar to collapse,  
as easily as a sandcastle  
whisked away by the smallest of waves  
it becomes dirt once more  
and despite your many accolades  
all you are to them  
is a monkey, and a thug

~Nika

Nika McGuin

# Have You Ever Noticed....

Stranger in a suit  
slender man sure walks fast  
or do I watch slow

They all seem to be in such a rush  
mark not where their feet touch  
into mud, into shrubs,  
they care not  
their great wide steps,  
clanky and unsexy

Have you ever noticed  
people walk so much slower,  
and with tiny shuffling footsteps,  
when they travel in packs  
the larger the slower  
the larger the louder  
that is, until a stranger passes them

And have you noticed  
you appreciate the oddness of humanity  
so much more, when you are alone

Nika McGuin

# Hole

strange the lies we tell  
just to keep afloat  
we build a raft  
to float over hard times  
by whatever means necessary

Still I wonder if the lies  
we tell in desperation  
could end up forming the hole  
that sinks us

~Nika

Nika McGuin

# Hospital Portraits

Little rooms made larger  
by adding large portraits  
such clever doctors  
they know patients  
would rather be miles  
away from here  
so they add pictures  
we can escape into

Nika McGuin

# Hot Lies

Was the intimacy ever real  
Or did you really just feed me lies  
Which I ate up like hot fries

You can never do wrong  
Something I've known about you all along  
I've just ignored it, every time  
I apologized for your mistakes

Our reality for me  
Was as malleable as memory  
Always orchestrated by you  
Till this day I have no cognizance  
Of how much is false  
And how much is true

The uncertainty keeps me awake at night  
Events and memories running through my mind  
Like so many faded photographs  
The more I attempt to sort them out  
The more confused I become

Sometimes, I even miss you  
And want to be friends again  
But then I wonder, were we  
Really ever friends

Or were all the things you told me fake  
More lies, I surely ate up like hot cakes

No, I know the truth  
I always have, but it's my heart  
That seeks out denial  
regardless, until you can be wrong  
I think it's best I stay gone

After all, hot lies breed indigestion  
And Internal disarray





# House

Such awkwardness  
as we go about the business  
of rebuilding the wall of trust  
attempting to form some chemistry, between the two of us

I've never built a house, I don't know where to start  
but if you were to help, it could be a work of art  
oh but how? how can we build a house upon such slippery foundation  
the mortar that is lies, let downs, and deprivation

Nika McGuin

# House On The Hill

what is the American dream  
but the house on the hill  
with no doors, but large windows  
it has a sweet smelling rose garden  
that draws in bees from afar  
but they can't get past the white  
picket fence, that has no gate,  
that can not be crossed  
that which entry into can't be bought  
even if it could, the golden ticket  
like the dream, would be a facade

Nika McGuin

# How To Hang Fog

A downcast fog hangs about me  
neither past nor future can be seen clearly  
blurred and blotted, the sun's rays don't reach the tree  
instead moistened leaves recoil into themselves entirely  
trapping fog until on clear, unclouded instances  
the tree's leaves unfurl and hang fog from its branches  
putting a stopper on both overcast and inwardcast

Nika McGuin

# I Am Not Catholic

I frequent this warm cinnamon bench  
at my college's open air catholic altar.

But I am not catholic,  
I merely come here when I'm feeling off:

for the waterfall  
the lush green foliage  
the smell of rich moist earth  
to feel God's nearness,  
because it feels like  
I've been away from home too long  
but mostly because  
nobody else comes here

Its just me and my thoughts  
and the sloshing fountain waters  
the fragrant smell of earth dampened  
and God, God all around me

Nika McGuin

# I'D Be Alone

Listening to Mapei's  
"Don't Wait"  
the lyrics  
were shaped  
in the pattern  
of my life

When she sang  
"If it wasn't for you, I'd be alone.  
If it wasn't for you, I'd be on my own."  
I thought of you

Though we haven't spoken in months  
our bond is the kind that time can't rust  
just knowing you're alive out there somewhere  
I feel a lot less alone

Just hearing that you  
asked how I've been  
I feel like we've finally met up  
and had this long awaited conversation

Just writing this poem,  
though you'll probably never see it,  
I feel like you'll understand me-  
in fact, I feel like you already do

Nika McGuin

# Ignorance

I love black girls, he says  
I just nod, okay  
their bodies are amazing, he says and  
hey, what dances can you do?  
I just stare blankly at him  
he doesn't get it  
when he says he 'loves' black girls  
what he speaks of are the girls he has seen  
on rap videos, dancing suggestively to the beat  
he's never dated a black girl  
he knows zero, about us  
nada, he doesn't know we aren't all  
built like video vixens  
and that our talents, amount to more  
than shaking our posteriors  
he doesn't know how it feels  
to be a real black girl in america  
no, he doesn't love us  
he loves strippers

~Nika

Nika McGuin

# I'll Tell You What I See

I see León,  
León, Nicaragua  
I see me  
amidst a whirlwind  
of self discovery  
surrounded by  
brown children  
and tarnished  
colonial architecture

I see me,  
living a life  
care free & bold  
I see me,  
breaking the mold  
of what I've been told  
I'm expected to become

I see me,  
breaking free!

Nika McGuin



# Independence

You're gone,  
left... casually  
saying goodbye  
as would I

You said it  
the same way  
you have for  
the last six months  
as if all was normal  
and I'd see you tomorrow  
the same time  
here...

When in reality,  
tomorrow is a mystery  
you wont be there...  
who will guide me  
& keep me on task?

Independence came much sooner  
than I thought it would

Nika McGuin

# Intertwined (Aka: The Meaning Of Life)

It seems to me  
so many people waste time  
contemplating the meaning of life  
they read books about it  
pray about it, meditate about it,  
even see gurus about it

For me personally,  
it's not something I have to  
wonder and worry so hard about  
day in and day out, constantly questioning  
because, you see, I already know  
I've made my own answer

'Life is like a river.'  
when you know where you want to go  
all roads lead to the same place  
the same vision, the same destiny

All one must do, is keep on paddling  
keep working onwards towards your dreams - the shore -  
the way I see it: dreams, life's meaning, and life's purpose  
are all inexplicably, inexorably intertwined

PS: If you lose your dream  
somewhere down the stream  
fish for a new one, and  
make your own answer

Nika McGuin

# Introduction

Stompin' the turf  
with class  
with sass  
mystery be her mass

Beet red lipstick  
hair bigger than day  
she don't want your man  
no how, no way!

Bearing thick black lashes  
fanning the sway of seduction  
I got your phenomenal woman  
and then some, no reduction  
I write my own introduction

Nika McGuin

# It Ain'T Easy

Objectively it may seem,  
like the path to freedom and joy  
instead, it resembles a dreadfully bad dream  
days of incessant flood and melancholy  
before at last, rainbows above loom

Alas, divorce is  
that cold kind of silence  
where common dialogue  
becomes awkward and guilt-ridden

And when looking at one another  
reveals such misery laden eyes  
from which tears have lead paths  
well-trodden, down each somber cheek

Its when staying  
means crying  
and when leaving  
means crying  
when your relationship, is past saving  
when its dead, no longer dying  
and if I said it was easy, I'd be lying

Everything you've built together  
becomes the representation of failure  
all that lingers are hopeless memories  
but they too, are carried away in the downpour  
traveling down watery paths, in separate directions,  
never again to intersect

Nika McGuin

## It Got Lost (Short)

Ah, Downtown Houma  
it's like a little piece of New Orleans  
wandered here & got lost  
supposedly, it decided to stay

Nika McGuin

# January Night

Cold blanket, cold legs, cold feet  
I just cant seem to trap any heat  
I'd fain get up and turn on the heater  
But of turning it off, roomie is a repeat offender

So I shiver, quiver, and wiggle my toes  
Begin to hold my sock monkey even more close  
Then as last, the sandman doth visit  
Aye, its still cold, but asleep I shan't feel it

~Nika

Nika McGuin

# Knot, Another Rose Bush

My jade plant has long since lost  
the red tips at the end of her leaves.  
She no longer tries to resemble rose petals.  
Instead, jade holds her succulent head high  
facing the sun, just like any other plant.  
She has grown well in this Louisiana weather.

My Hair too stopped trying to be like others, 'tis such bosh.  
This mane is of a different strand than that which requires not  
such preparation as twisting, and detangling before each wash.  
For them hair flows unshrinkingly in the shower, with few knots.

I wanted to try it once, I thought I'd feel freed.  
instead unraveling became a bothersome affair  
because my own common sense I failed to heed.  
Nor did I bear in mind, the needs of my own hair.

Lady jade is not like the celebrated rose bush,  
but in every respect she is just as lovely.  
These coils are like my people - of the Kingdom Kush.  
Thus, they are not straight, and need not ever be.

Nika McGuin

# Knowing The Truth

I know how to live in my fantasies  
despite knowing the truth  
When the bartender smiles and flirts  
I smile back, because I know

He is pure illusion  
that leads to no conclusion  
When the male manicurist holds my hand  
I can imagine us two in a fantasy land  
but I know, oh I know, pay is all he'll demand

The trouble begins  
when I know, and yet  
I still want the fantasy to be real

The trouble begins  
the disappointment begins  
and cracks on the surface of my heart begin

Only surface deep because  
I know how to live in my fantasies  
despite knowing the truth

Nika McGuin



# La Vida Es Así

La vida es un paseo en coche  
después de que ha estado lloviendo.  
Hay charcos de agua por todos lados.  
Aunque intentas evitar el hidroplaneo;  
los coches te pasan a velocidades tan rapidísimos  
que te hacen sentir como si tu cabeza está girando  
fuera de control más y más con cada paso.  
Y a veces, hay un camión gigante a tu lado  
escupiendo tanta niebla en tu parabrisas  
que a veces tu no puedes ver nada  
todo está cubierta de blanco

Pero recuerda, que tu aun tienes buen sentido  
conoces estas calles demasiado bien  
para irte virando a esos pantanos oscuros.  
Pueden acechar, pero ese momento  
nunca llegará. Vas a conducir directamente  
a través de la niebla hasta que el camión,  
que una vez apareció grande es nada más que  
una pequeña manchita en su espejo retrovisor.  
Pero te aseguro que, no será el último  
coche o camión - la vida es así.

Nika McGuin

# Land Of The Taxed

America, the land of the free -  
or so they say; but these days  
there's even a tax on happiness.  
Nothing is free. The things that should  
be a given don't come easy - or cheap -  
good wholesome food costs an arm and a leg  
clean potable drinking water, in some places,  
is a luxury. It's sad. But then, we must remember  
that this country was built on the backs  
of tormented slaves. Karmic law dictates  
that out of seeds of misery,  
only the corresponding flowers  
of misery grow

So, I want to go away  
to a place where one can enjoy  
the simple pleasures of life  
without feeling as if there were a tax  
on joy, as if there were a tax  
on one's entire soul  
No, I want to go to a place  
where people rejoice  
despite having so very little  
me, I have everything I need  
and yet, my spirit here feels weighed down  
it longs to escape the land of the heavily taxed  
to run free, in search of a true  
land of the free

Nika McGuin

# Las Llamas Y Ser Humano

night has come  
and the candles are lit again  
the flames dance,  
to an audience of melted wax,  
their gypsy flamenco  
and in the night, illuminate

las llamas, sí  
thus they are called in Spanish  
I could watch them forever...  
yonder, dancing on alone  
a solitary flame draws me in  
like a lonely moth, be it perhaps  
because I too have danced thusly  
for many a year

my twin fated flame  
you spend your short life, dancing  
flitting, fluttering, and knowing all along  
that you could be extinguished  
by the slightest puff of air  
ay llamita, we are all too similar  
you and I

Nika McGuin

# Las Ventanas

7: 00pm en México  
mark the hour  
when the sun sets  
throng of windows,  
go from 'noche' dark  
to 'estrella' bright  
interchanging selves,  
exchanging loot with day  
until people watchers  
become people watched  
and close their blinds  
rebellious against change

Nika McGuin

## **-late Freight-**

'Oh no, I'll be late! ' you thought  
so, you raced through the rain  
'till you were low on gas, alas  
you had to make a rushed pit-stop  
only to discover you were low on cash!

\$9.00 to your name, and it only got you  
a half tank of gas, you sped onwards though  
going 60 in a 50mph speed zone, and you made it.  
your hair was damp, your stomach running on empty  
and guess what? You arrived early! ! !

Nika McGuin

# Leaden Thoughts

I'm compelled again  
compelled by life  
to spill my thoughts  
heavy and full  
of lead, once more  
onto pages blank, and full  
of silence, silent  
like my cries  
silent, like tears  
that fall  
without the slightest sound  
for I too am falling  
spiraling, into despair

The days blur into  
each other and I  
can not find the beginning  
nor end, will this ever  
end?

You see, I keep peeling  
oranges hoping to find the center  
hoping to find some comfort  
in their sweetness

'Cause these days  
I am feeling helpless again  
The floorboards are so  
cold, it has penetrated  
even my soul, shivers  
I find myself fighting  
this massive tide  
and losing; My voice  
grows weaker each day

Still there are others  
fighting larger tides  
and with much stronger force  
at the sight of them

I am engulfed by shame

~Nika

Nika McGuin

# Libretto For The Lost Boy

He loves to eat, and frozen cups in tow the morning greets  
that's what the boy in the tattered white shirt said  
as he squelched and gulped down the sweet icy treats  
ever annoying, the lanky boy endowed with an enormous head

He once had a mohawk, I wonder where did it tear?  
somewhere between his different homes, it was lost  
or was it shaved off to grow in the newly coiled hair  
once grown out of, like his old clothes was it tossed?

No, like everything else in his life  
it really wasn't his choice to make  
it was deemed as lopped-sided at once  
and slashed off by a song-less mother

Nika McGuin



## Lines (Short)

Long winding lines of social strata,  
are where observers go to be observed  
& indeed, to do the like

Nika McGuin

# Little Games

I can't even say  
it was a fun ride  
while it lasted,  
because, it didn't last  
at all

I can't even say  
well at least,  
we shared  
a few good moments  
because, they were all  
too few

I can't at all say  
it was a fun game,  
we played together  
because I'm the one,  
who got played

Nika McGuin

# Lost In Thought

On mornings like these  
my thoughts run rampant  
and my heart feels trampled

A stampede of memories  
have run amuck  
stomping all over fragility

At times like these  
the world seems so quiet  
and my mind, so loud

I wander the hallways  
lost in thought  
and I cant seem  
to find my way out

Nika McGuin

## Louisiana Weather (Short)

A sheet of wet curls lay over her face  
she'd been drenched by the downpour  
and her brand new shoes were indubitably ruined

Louisiana weather  
could do this to a girl  
one day is sunny and humid  
and the next, is cold and wet

Most of your winter is hot  
and most of your spring is cold  
its changes can be so bold  
it's the strangest weather story ever told

Nika McGuin

# Made For Walking

It's boot season  
heels equal treason  
unless joined to boots in adhesion  
and I don't need a reason  
to watch winter reruns  
no snowflakes in sight  
Louisiana ground's far from white  
but that's alright,  
my boots are dyn-o-mite!

Nika McGuin

# Magic Unveiled

Children

still know the secret spell  
the one that unlocks happiness with ease  
if we listen,  
they'll gladly hand over the key

Dogs

can still decipher nature's call  
watch closely, & follow the paw prints  
mother nature will accept you again  
with open arms!

[I guess cats know it too  
but don't expect them to show you]

Nonetheless,  
magic doesn't just come to you  
you must listen.....watch  
& it will, unveil itself

Nika McGuin

## Me & Them

I want to roll about on the grass  
and not wonder, are the neighbors watching me?  
I'd like to get in someone's car at night  
and not look over my shoulder to see  
the neighbors blankly staring back at me  
I want to send away unwanted visitors  
using a mixture of silence and negligence  
rather than overhearing the neighbors say:  
'Yeah, she in there'  
or 'Mhm...just keep knockin''  
or still worse, 'No, she at work,  
she'll be back around six'

What I really want  
is to live out in the country somewhere  
with an immense green field and a towering fence  
between me,  
and them

Nika McGuin

# Merry Xmas (Growing Apart)

we were so close  
kindred spirits  
who knew every inch  
of each other's souls

today we are distant  
stars, drifting  
in opposite directions

a conversation with you  
is like walking on  
egg shells - like skating  
on thin ice  
attempting the double axel  
twice - and failing

I know it isn't too late  
to strike the match and  
rekindle our flame  
yes, I do miss you  
so much that I  
could cry, but  
you are no good for me  
now, and I can't be  
who you want me  
to be anymore

so yes, I'll see you tomorrow  
we'll say our hellos, merry xmas  
the resounding silence  
will consume us once again

~Nika

Nika McGuin



# Merryweather & Rue

Merryweather stormed upstairs, or rather hopped  
carrying a pail of water and a weathered rag  
Globs of water splashed, puddling the floor  
Until rue came in and fussed him, saying  
Incompetency! clean it up this instant!  
Nagging him along, she saw to it that he missed no spots.

- moments later -

Merryweather's furry little paws worked onward  
causing Rue to stomp her rabbit's foot impatiently  
Glancing up at her hesitantly, he gave askance  
Um, you realize it isn't imperative that you monitor me?  
I'm going to wait, she replied, until you do it correctly  
Now then, he said taken aback, I'll leave you to it Rue!

To Be Continued...

Nika McGuin

# Messages Of The Wind

White feathers waft miles above  
the pages of my book curl up  
like thin white waves of ocean water  
and a verdant border filled with leafy mouths  
beckons, swishes and sways as if  
forming a string of sentences  
mankind could never hope, to decipher

Nika McGuin

# Midnight Ode To My Hair

Afro puff diva  
pineapple headed me  
as I settle into my sheets  
preparing to call forth slumber  
I am trapped, in the mysterious  
cool gaze of my shadow  
and the unexpected depth therein  
even that of my hair  
its turns and twists reformatted  
flat, gray, yet intriguing  
even forced into two-dimensionalism  
its beauty doth not perish

PS: I really should sleep now...

~ Nika

Nika McGuin

# Midnight Paranoia

Midnight paranoia, once again is here  
it keeps me steadily losing sleep  
nightly with me, is the constant fear  
that darkness, into my room might creep

Now every night, I must talk myself into sleeping  
afterwards, I take to distraction - in whatever form  
otherwise over my shoulder, I'd be constantly peeping  
with covers up to my neck, I finally ease into a sleep easily torn

For me it's not uncommon, these days  
to startle myself awake in panic at midnight  
and I know, I am aware, the threat is likely far away  
- half imagined - maybe... but that doesn't end my paranoid fright

Nika McGuin

# Miura Haruma

Most smiles are instant  
and slow to fade  
but his pauses before its start  
then at once, springs forth  
accompanied by a peculiar sucking sound  
somewhere between a gasp and laughter  
it's dazzling, like the eyes that crinkle in tune

Nika McGuin

# Momma's Baby, Momma's Agony

At one time  
she carried youth and promise  
around in her uterus  
but she was too scared  
to tell Momma, too scared  
that Momma might tell Papa  
and too scared that Papa might kill baby  
these are legitimate fears  
but they leave guilt in their wake

Baby was born still  
to this day, she will speak of how beautiful  
she was, she will speak of regrets  
for there are many, one having attempted abortion  
another, not going to get check-ups  
the list goes on and on, as with most guilt trips  
we send our selves on, extended vacations in hell  
and now she feels as if the recent miscarriage  
coupled with the first loss she suffered  
are Gods punishments, and I want to say:  
'No love that can't be, ' and 'God would never  
give you this much pain, without reason'

But I know she's heard this all before  
I know she is hurting still  
this kind of pain lasts,  
much longer than the stinging of tattoos  
this kind of pain, I can't imagine  
there's nothing, I can say to ease it  
There's nothing we can say to each other

So she and I don't play with Barbies anymore  
she plays with Ken, hoping he can ease her pain  
and I play with myself, hoping that one day HE, God, will

Nika McGuin

# Monogram Ring

How can my name be golden to you  
could you tell me mister,  
will your voice ever ring with it  
would your heart cling to every syllable  
and break, upon setting them free?

Heaven forbid, that it should be  
uttered carelessly, or tossed out like a pebble  
into the ocean, sinking to the dark depths  
to be treated like a common rock for always  
and never the prized gemstone that rests upon your finger  
well that, you must know, would be a tragedy

Yet, if my name were golden to you  
it would be spoken in smooth metallic tones  
cast out by a honey throat  
and if it was a precious gem  
it would be the diamond accented ring you never  
take off, and in its gallery my name  
would be written in gold

Nika McGuin

# Most

We were married once,  
you and I  
for many years

In the beginning,  
I remember I sought you out  
but I didn't let you know  
just how much I liked you  
instead, I let you woo me  
I let you do the chasing

After a time,  
You had pursued me so well  
I became convinced  
that you loved me  
more than I loved you

Now we are no more  
you and I,  
and I watch as you  
swiftly move on  
off to your next target

Shocked, I finally realize  
it was I, who loved you  
most after all

Nika McGuin



# Most Detested Topic

So, your birthday is coming up  
but I know I shouldn't even remember it  
all you've done this year  
is drag me through the mud, just to leave me  
stranded, all you've done is lie to me,  
use me, and throw me away  
just like some dirty napkin you've decided  
you don't need anymore

If this is what growing up means for you  
then you should have just stayed young  
time should've frozen right before your heart  
began to rot away, before your soul lost its light

Honestly, I can't stand the fact that  
I still think of you from time to time  
I can't stand that there are more good memories  
than bad, I can't stand that I've written so much for  
and about you, I want to let go of it all

Most poets have the loveliest revisited topics  
nature, love, life lessons, self study even  
so, why does mine have to be you?

For your birthday  
don't expect a gift  
don't expect a call  
I would probably text you  
but I have a new number  
I've decided, to keep you in the dark  
about it, right where I'll cast away  
my love for you  
someday

Nika McGuin

# Mounted Butterfly

forced into a corner  
the heat intensifies  
as her eyes shoot darts  
with every word they sink  
deeper into my flesh  
until I'm pinned to the wall  
like a dried butterfly  
unwillingly put on display

Nika McGuin

# Mr. Big

No, ... nobody tells you  
that it can make every day  
feel as slow as a grain of sand  
waiting to drop into the bottom  
of the world's biggest hour glass

For a person who never had  
ambition or goals, other than  
the most basic human securities,  
to suddenly have a dream  
so big, that it engulfs your entire  
being? , so big it feels as if  
your heart, will be crushed  
under it's heavy boots?  
Such a feeling can only be described  
as the sweetest torture

Although suffocating, if stopped?  
it would surely stomp the breath  
from your tiny lungs...  
a dream this size, is like a giant  
clinging to your back, like a parasite,  
for dear life... but if you shake  
him off, his fall will kill you...  
your life crumpled like paper  
under his weight

No, it's more like a tiny snowball  
at the head of a towering hill  
that - when pushed, by the slightest wind -  
takes off! & is suddenly unstoppable,  
endlessly rolling onward, growing larger by the day  
until it becomes the ferocious abominable snowman  
who chases you through the alps of life

To put it simply...  
a dream this big is like a leech  
draining the life out of you  
yet keeping you hanging on

leading you where?  
you don't know...  
until you either succeed or  
it all falls through

Until then,  
you cling to it  
much as it clings  
to you

Nika McGuin

# My Meandering Mind

The morning came in slowly  
like a languid melody carried loftily by the wind  
Here I was again, a traveling wavelength - pensive,  
drowsy, but coherent. Savoring a cup of lukewarm coffee,  
feeling a stray ray of sunlight on my cheek - I'm here, I'm awake.  
And yet, my mind drifts on miles away.

A form of double consciousness takes over me:  
Even as I drive to work my eyes take in only  
the most important details, red light! Now green,  
Red tail-lights, ok go! ....Still, my mind is elsewhere  
on a safari somewhere in Africa, then listening to  
a mariachi serenade in Puebla, Mexico, eating fried kimchi rice  
at a quaint mom & pop restaurant in South Korea, and so on and so forth  
and on and on, until my mind's eye becomes dizzy and struck  
with whiplash from the constant whirr of it all.

Suddenly it stops, I pull into the driveway of my place of work  
where the mind slowly begins to reunite with the body.  
We're here, present now. I cant help but feel trapped  
Stuck here, when I'd rather be elsewhere, traveling.

Nika McGuin

# Mystery

my face  
pale and sallow  
my eyes  
scant and foreign  
this heart  
so off and on  
this depression  
unreasonable and strange  
my solitude  
both caress and gun shot  
but these tears  
don't flow  
and my life still  
joy, sadness, mystery

Nika McGuin

# Nature Of Self

peculiar weather we're having

the sky is a faded dreary blue  
the trees seem to weep, though willow-less  
the wind gives a series of ghastly low moans  
the clouds all shed salty sprinkled tears

and at first I let myself be taken with it  
feeling sympathetic of natures woes

but alas, it was against my nature

Nika McGuin

# Niagara Falls, Subdued

What is the trick  
to being happily single for years?  
to subdue emotion so deep, for so long,  
that even you don't realize you're doing it

Until one day  
the dam bursts open,  
the bridge collapses,  
and the river overflows

How?  
you began counting the years  
which, sure enough, only brings tears  
the ones you had no clue  
you'd even been holding back  
all this time

So the trick?  
empty the riverbed  
and let the floodgates stand agape  
wash away all concealed pain  
then, shut the door  
solidify the rugged bridge  
start again, wait again  
hide the waters behind  
your widest grin

Nika McGuin



# Nobody Knows

Nobody knows that my wounds  
from our last fight  
were more than physical  
I was left feeling  
anger upon  
embarrassment upon  
hurt upon  
confusion

I felt so weak  
as if my punches -  
as if I- were all in vain  
In my moment of weakness  
he seemed to grow stronger  
as if aided by some demon power

Time sped up  
the room began to spin  
a sure sign  
that all control had been lost  
this was the climax  
to end all climaxes  
the place I never  
dreamed of entering  
but was shoved into

Now I was yelling  
trapped inside a mist of confusion  
thick like soundproof walls  
utterly lost, I'd all but forgotten  
my reason for coming this far  
but no, the one yelling  
pushing me from behind is him  
and the word 'nappy' has never  
sounded so brutal

The war ended  
and I swept away the dirty  
mess he'd made

still, I remain  
angry upon  
embarrassed upon  
hurt upon  
confused

Nobody knows that my wounds  
from our last fight  
were more than physical  
I've tried to find the words  
to explain it to them  
why my body is fine  
but I am in pieces  
its because I loved him  
too much it seems  
a loner will cling  
to whomever comes their way  
I claimed him as family  
alas, it was not his forte

~Nika

Nika McGuin

# Nómada's Wires

a canopy of loose hanging wires  
a massive mess of red and blue straw figures  
dangled just inches out of reach  
Nómada laid back upon the mattress  
staring at them quite pensively  
but, her mind was entirely elsewhere

It was only the most common thing for her  
her mind wandered unbound, unbidden  
It traveled where she could not  
Mexico, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Peru!  
It saw all the things she could not yet see  
all the things she might not ever see

For Nómada the wanderings of her mind  
were much more enchanting than the 'real world'  
she would space out for moments on end  
leaving those around her terribly puzzled  
by the blank stare, ever present on her face  
they knew by this point, she was gone  
somewhere, their feeble minds just couldn't reach  
and they dared not try, for fear of losing themselves  
for fear of not ever making it back to the safety  
of the known, the mundane, the ever-same

Meanwhile, Nómada was somewhere in outer space  
then suddenly, in the middle of Seoul, South Korea  
she could never stay long, lest boredom would plague  
her mind and it would become stagnant with consistency

abruptly, there was a hitch in her journey  
shockingly - she couldn't come down  
she was trapped in the wires of her own imagination  
just as those watching Nómada had feared,  
she lost her way, she lost her home  
she - was lost..

At once, she remembered  
she reached into the back pocket of her cerebellum

and came up with a pair of electrician's scissors  
in a sharp flash, she snipped the red wires  
and came tumbling down, her mind went black

When she awoke she found herself  
on the mattress again, her arm outstretched  
she had been staring up at the fan  
looking at the wires that hung from it  
at this she thought to herself aloud,  
'We really need to get this fixed'

Nika McGuin

# Nothing Human Can Be Alien To Me

I woke up one morning, and I found  
the world was full of addicts all around:  
narcotic users  
coffee drinkers  
fummy smokers  
sugar sprinklers  
hypocritical posers  
nymphomaniacs  
habitual liars  
cheating spouses  
murderous fiends  
disingenuous thieves  
slothy procrastinators

Then Maya Angelou told me about Terence's profound quote:  
'Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto.'  
'I am a human being, I consider nothing that is human alien to me.'  
It has stuck with me ever since, as its truth echos thunder.

It means that we can't ever say  
'Oh, I would never do that.'  
because we're all human beings  
made of all the same ingredients:  
sugar, spice, and things not so nice.  
Any one of us could end up being  
murderers, prostitutes, or addicts.

It is shameful for us to cast judgment  
on others, when we aren't any better.  
We should instead make a covenant  
to make choices that are worthier

We don't know everyone's life story:

Life is like a meandering river  
you never know what turns it will make.  
It wanders hither and thither  
you might wind up in an ox-bow lake.



# Nought

If you told me yesterday  
that you loved me  
but today you acted  
like you didn't care  
its only natural I would question  
do you love me,  
do you love me?

Its the same old dance  
its this empty romance  
I listen, and you are heard  
I talk, but I am ignored  
here we go again  
its a labyrinth without end  
a merry-go-round that never  
ceases to spin

I love you, like I've loved  
no one else  
but what's it all been for?  
nought, you live  
for only you

Nika McGuin

# Obviously Oblivious

I used to say  
'I wish we could always,  
get along this way'  
but now, all too clearly  
I can see you moving away  
like tail-lights in the distance  
red to pink, growing still fainter  
as I stand alone on this cold sidewalk  
watching our sunset fade away

And I give up  
defending you, needlessly protecting you,  
& and clinging to you as if you're all I have  
it's clear you have so many others  
& it's clear you've never  
cherished me in that way  
I've never, been precious to you

Hard of hearing & quick to wander off  
I turn my back for a second  
to find you've disappeared again  
you make it so obvious  
you'd rather be anywhere but here

With your headphones on  
& your baggy gray shirt  
I watch you trail away, into the mist  
with that stupid grin on your face  
oblivious & uncaring

Nika McGuin



# Old Roomie

Mine early rise  
doth mine roomie despise  
yet, I rise  
unapologetically  
moving about  
to and fro  
making clamor  
as I go

Soft sleeper, fare thee well!  
you see, I simply must  
beat the morning bell  
soon you'll wake, more than a tad poorly rested  
only to find, by old roomie, you'd been bested

Nika McGuin

# On The Clock

Outside yonder door  
unfolds and breaks loose  
the most vivid, beautiful country scene  
ever to be seen, although only a sliver  
of it is even visible

It reaches outward  
though nothing can reach back  
nothing can parallel its efforts  
for a thick pane of clear glass blocks  
its beloved grasps in every which way

Still yet, it reaches forward  
in layers of lush color each one stacked  
in sloping ribbons upon the other:  
the first a hazy sky of blue fading  
into the richest vanilla creme

Creme interrupted by the leafy heads  
of trees poking out into the scene  
well beneath this layer of trees lies  
a plane of grass mottled in gold and green

Its verdant spades wave a humble greeting  
inviting all to roll n' rump about in their field  
but to do so one would have to  
cross the ever perilous byway

Upon which vehicles race past  
at the speed of glistening sunlight  
a few of which pull periodically  
into the lowest layer of them all,

A parking lot, of grays, browns,  
yellows, and blues; still most speed by  
never noticing the rapt receptionist  
at her lonely post, but she more than  
notices them, she writes of them

There in their natural setting just beyond  
her crystal encasement, outside yonder door,  
yonder portrait-like entrance way -  
she writes of her dreams, that cannot yet be touched

She is on the clock

Nika McGuin

# Ownership

you only realize that a place isn't your own,  
when you come back to find things have shifted  
black and blue chairs all askew  
staring at you  
chanting in broken unison:  
we don't belong to you  
we don't belong with you

Nika McGuin

# Page

blank page  
be ye friend or foe?  
what types of words  
shall fill your empty spaces?  
be they great or poor  
let me write once more

~Nika

Nika McGuin

# Passel Of Prisms

Sweet potato flowers  
blooming in a Louisiana garden  
a careful mix of beauty and fragility  
are we two not the same?  
are we all not the same?

Yet so different...  
we are like flecks of light!  
bouncing off of one another,  
heading, sporadically, in different directions  
all flashing in different shades and hues  
but are we all not the same?  
cast through a crystal prism  
are we not all but refractions of sunlight?

So much time wasted,  
in comparing and contrasting  
discussing our differences in hue  
that of: 'But I'm purple and he's blue.'  
when all we are in essence  
is wavelengths of spirit, soul, and light.

Nika McGuin

# Philosopher's Wing

As I passed the threshold  
a mysterious song was playing  
with words so ominous  
a halting pause ensued  
provoking me to think, and think, and think

'I'll never get the chance again..  
I'll never get the chance again..  
I'll never get the chance again..'

Was it missed opportunity  
or simply not destined to be  
is it that the world is full of people we'll never meet  
or is it that we only intersect  
with those whom we're meant to meld with

Perchance, I should just go  
with the flow  
and not try to know  
still, wise men say we should always ask: why, why, why  
but instead of wise  
they must be: mad, mad, mad  
asking why, and still never knowing  
could dither anyone insane  
it must be fitter to have a birds brain  
they seem to tweet on by  
never caring or wondering why  
thus instead of man, they fly

Nika McGuin

## Planchette & Page

I think books are beautiful  
and libraries are magical  
perhaps the last drops  
of magic that can be touched  
by a mundane

drowning in a sea of books  
I find I'm no longer human  
but the planchette of a ouija board  
delighted, I let the spell take over,  
let it drag me through aisle after aisle  
as it leads me to my partner in destiny

sigh of relief and jump for joy  
I've found you  
you've called me more likely  
as I press your smooth cover to my chest  
I can feel  
that your ivory pages have so much  
to tell and so very much  
love to share

as I hold you  
tightly wrapped in my arms  
I feel so much more alive than usual  
as we talk in the quiet language  
of strangers who fall in love at first sight  
at least in this moment of rapture  
I don't feel so alone

we will read each other  
teach each other  
and play with one another  
like the children we are

even if the last page isn't reached  
your story has impacted me  
for you and I have whispered,  
chanted our tales



nightly, in voices quiet  
like rustling pages

~ Nika

Nika McGuin

# Portal Chasing

I stay up late  
gazing through a portal  
catching glimpses of life  
on the other side  
of the world

Their lives are so different  
from mine, and yet  
so similar, as I watch them  
their world seems  
like a dream to me  
I have to remind myself  
that it is just as mundane,  
just as dreary, as my world

Still, I want to dance into  
this 'dream world'  
mundial DJ, I implore thee  
play a song long,  
slow, and beautiful

Because soon, Ill return home  
where closed-minded citizens  
who know nothing  
of this realm await

I feel sorry for them,  
they haven't danced about  
twirling and spinning  
through mysterious portals -  
they don't even have interest

Living in neat, tight little boxes  
they are content  
that is the saddest part of all

Nika McGuin

# Puebla Waltz

Sleep that waltzes into foreign lands  
dreams dipped; In bright swirling colors enveloped  
eyes laced with heavy dark lashes, flutter  
opening to behold an unfamiliar, yet intimate passageway

Here, the buildings resemble an unorganized crayon box  
after an over-zealous kindergartener has been rearranging it  
a world beautifully chaotic, & I blissfully lost in it

I wander the streets for hours  
lost in the haze of culture shock  
me, from the tiny city of Houma  
lost in this overwhelmingly gigantic angelópolis

Its splendorous chapels coated in gold astound me  
just as much as its graffiti & poor inhabitants  
mystified & confused, I wander onward  
in semi-circles, in loops, in figure eights  
doing, the rapturous Puebla Waltz  
until I wake again

Nika McGuin

# Quoth The Girl

Cold inside  
plain on the out  
I go bumbling  
bumping into things  
as I struggle  
to find my way

This fragile path  
was laid out for me  
with such great care  
They'd so hoped  
that I'd walk gracefully  
gliding upon the stairs they'd built  
but I relapse  
trip, fall, roll, and then tumble  
I fail seemingly without reason

Now I sit numbly  
staring into space  
can't believe, nor conceive  
how I'm here again  
resting upon this golden stairway  
by no means  
do I deserve  
all that's been given

I am Adam  
lying lazily, hardly reaching out  
as God stretches with all his might  
so that he may bestow upon me  
the gift of life  
all his hopes are deeply  
invested in me, in my potential  
I have failed, still his faith  
in me is everlasting

the faith of man though  
can not be so infinite  
those that worked so hard

just to get me here  
now what of them?  
they gave their all  
to a failure like me  
so willing to help  
and I can't fathom why

You see, I am no gem  
I am no heroine  
I am not even a friend  
just a cold, empty shell  
of a girl, who does not know  
if she has the capacity  
to love someone  
or even to love herself  
that after all this time  
still lacks, confidence  
and even social skills  
have yet to be found in her

At this she quoth:  
'Give unto me  
thine eyes  
so that I might see  
where in me, value lies'

Nika McGuin

# Raining Inside

Is it raining outside  
like it's raining in here?  
do the storm clouds loom  
does the thunder roll  
in tune, with my conflicted  
internal atmosphere

Does anybody know  
that it's raining in here?  
what was once a leak  
and a tiny puddle  
is now a house flood  
that my soul sluggishly  
treads through

Please tell me,  
is it raining outside  
like it's raining in here?  
or am I alone, all alone  
in my inundation

Nika McGuin

## Ready & Waiting

The banquet had ended about 30 minutes ago  
when she turned to me and said,  
'you ready to go? '  
& I answered, 'yes.'

But we stay & we stay  
my mood: gray - bored in every way  
as I look on, watching her  
talking the night away

Nika McGuin

## Recrudescence (All Cried Out)

I watch through my window  
as the early rain begins to fall  
and think back on all the years  
I've been used by you...  
there it is again, that old pain  
it swells up in my chest  
and clutches it with might

This feeling is a common thing now  
this very feeling, used to make me break down  
and cry, it used to make me feel  
as if the world was tumbling down  
around me; but now all I feel  
is a quiet pain that comes and goes  
-I'm all cried out, over you-

Nika McGuin



# Red Sweater Intentions

The guy in the red sweater  
posted up at the high table across from my booth  
watched me as I struggled my way through tables  
past wet signs and on-lookers  
as his eyes followed, his mouth parted slightly  
as if it was somewhere between awe  
and forming a sentence  
when I made it to my seat however,  
his eyes diverted back to his phone  
and a few minutes later  
a girl arrived at his table  
I heard him as he spoke to her  
with a smooth silky melodic tone  
I'll admit, I was impressed  
without ever having the courage to meet their eyes  
because with such a short distance  
they would surely notice  
and my eyes, would be clear windows  
to my thoughts, my intentions  
the kind a person should never have

Nika McGuin

# Refulgence Beyond A Shadow Of Doubt

The sky darkens  
to a hazy soft blue  
and the dim orange glow  
of dusty old light bulbs  
seemingly grows brighter  
as it pours out of rickety old windows  
revealing cracks in their chipped paint

I am aware  
it's all just  
a matter of perspective  
it's like realizing that  
the streetlights were on all along  
and that they simply couldn't  
outshine the sun

Once it's race across the sky was run  
and into darkness the earth had spun  
windows, streetlights, porch lights, and even brake lights  
all shined brightly as if they'd finally won  
as if, the dawn of unobscured refulgence had just begun  
instead, it would soon again be the dawn of the sun  
but the lights were too bright to let that dim their fun  
if only for six hours, beyond a shadow of doubt the sun was outdone  
and if you would, please pardon my pun!

Nika McGuin

# Remains (Or Forgotten Dreams)

It is a quiet  
beautiful morning  
yet I wake, moody

this strange feeling  
did it start subconsciously?  
perhaps, the answer  
lies deep in my soul's core  
somewhere just out of reach

or maybe it started  
with some tragic dream  
of which little minions  
erased even the slightest trace  
except, the emotional impact  
like heavy liquid it  
oozed out of the dream world  
it forced its way  
into my blood stream  
and made a beeline  
for my heart

So, I put on make-up  
though I've got no plans  
and take pictures  
in the bathroom mirror  
until my heart is is confused  
but the only thing confused is me

still how much more  
hurt would I be  
If I remembered?  
I wonder what's the reason  
some dreams are erased  
and others, etched forever

~Nika



# Riddled With Pain

Ow!

did you feel it?

you weren't paying attention

but you must have felt it, yes?

the pain is echoing now

is it too late to say ouch?

and if you say it late

is it only half-assed then?

by the time you decipher this riddle

the pain will have ebbed away

Nika McGuin

# Right As Rain

Right as rain they say  
but how can rain be right  
If you're driving  
it can be quite wrong  
unless of course  
it hits the town right of you  
but even then it isn't right  
its quite vertical actually  
unless it's in inches upon the ground  
then, it could be horizontally sound  
during rainstorms, thirsty plants can be happily found  
yet it only fills humans with glee  
when it is experienced dryly

All the same  
rain is rain  
invented to wash away pain  
thus, here it shall remain  
so I guess its alright-  
right as rain can be

Nika McGuin

# Riveter Of Worlds

I sit, posted up  
beneath the flagpole  
its ropes swish  
giving way to clink after clink  
I look up and realize  
the world is upside-down  
or the world is split in two  
that decision is up to you  
but, in the deep sea above  
float white cotton masses  
and wading in it all lies the flagpole  
conjoining the two distant planes

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Nika McGuin

# Room

Heavy room this be  
I'd heard stories about it  
what I should say once inside  
known about it for over a week  
once my foot enters the threshold though,  
I am hit by the sheer force of reality  
the realization of what this room  
means and is overwhelms me

The door slams shut behind me  
this room is filled with history  
and stories of woe  
they swarm around me now  
pushing at my flesh  
weighing me down  
its terrifying, this room  
so tiny, yet so full of doom

~Nika

Nika McGuin



## Room ?

footsteps approach  
rhythmically echoing  
could they be coming for me?  
the door swings open  
to reveal an angel of light  
though I was afraid  
he reassured me  
things would be okay  
as he carried me on his back  
and told me to have faith  
we escaped together

Nika McGuin

# Salty Stew: Aka Unequally-Yolked

If only  
I knew how to give  
just enough of myself to you  
our friendship would never end  
come what may, near or far  
you'd continue to be part of my life

The trouble is,  
I don't know  
for me it's all or nothing  
my love has always been heavy-handed  
so it's all my fault  
if I've added too much salt  
and now it'll never taste the same

What's worse is  
you've never given me enough  
your love is the selfish kind  
so frustrated, I've overcompensated  
I've nothing left? that's an understatement

All I've ever wanted  
was to be equally yolked with you  
but now, I'm home alone  
with a bowl of salty stew

Nika McGuin

# Sanctuary

In the park  
just before dark  
the birds are  
chirping all around me  
& brown crinkly leaves  
are falling, landing softly

& I can hear  
the chatter of beautiful  
strangers & the breathing  
of sleeping babies, even  
their whimpers upon waking

Yes, it is here  
that the ants  
crawl on crisp  
little twigs  
yes, I am here  
enveloped in emerald  
dusk, in the middle  
of this fragrant  
March air

Still,  
this serenity  
is so often interrupted  
by random grips of terror  
itchiness,  
crawling sensations,  
the sound of buzzing

Bugs!  
God's vilest,  
yet most prolific creations  
Oh! they're insufferable, detestable,  
& everywhere!

Yes: beauty, bugs, & all  
it's high time

to leave this place  
& go home to my,  
at least seemingly,  
bugless sanctuary

Nika McGuin

# Scales

I fear to enter the world of women  
who weigh their self-worth  
on the scales of society

The society where women must  
shrivel, and men are urged  
to magnify, as a representation  
of their status, in this patriarchal world

The only measurements of true importance  
are those of our souls on judgement day  
at which time, the measurements of society  
will be rendered useless, utter rubbish

~Nika

Nika McGuin

# Seeking Inspiration

Is it possible  
to seek inspiration?  
I think it is  
but it always feels so generic  
its always so much more honorable  
when it just comes to you

But when poetic withdrawal sets in  
and I just want to write  
something, anything really  
I find myself in situations like this  
forcing myself to venture out at 6pm  
going to the cafeteria  
when I'm not the least bit hungry  
eating an overly tart, cherry tart  
just so that I can look a bit less crazy  
are there even any cherries in this thing?

The most I get out of it  
are poems that sound more like journal entries  
somehow its still worth it  
because sometimes, I get great poems  
that sound more like 'did i really write this? '  
and for a good poem  
i don't mind people thinking I'm crazy

Nika McGuin

# Sepia Dusk Of Extinction (A True Story)

Bronson, my life's great tragedy,  
looks at me with eyes brown and orbiculate  
the most sympathetic canine eyes I've ever seen  
and all but abandoned  
he lies groaning in his corner of the backyard  
in the filth that surrounds him, he's lost his hope  
his body is fed and watered daily  
yet he is starved for affection  
it reflects in his outward appearance  
which is that of a kwashiorkor victim  
a distended belly, yet the ribs and spine are exposed  
fed, but still so hungry

Counting down the days until his death is the cruelest torture  
seeing him, is a sight to cause sore eyes  
His owner is complacent and treats him like a collectors item  
something used to show off his stature as a man  
but he never touches him, and it's been ages  
since the customary bath or walk – these are like luxuries to Bronson  
like diamonds are to a pauper boy

As a puppy he had it all  
a shiny chocolate coat,  
baths, walks, freedom, and my affection  
but the larger he got the more trapped he became  
I could no longer take him on walks  
his strength was that of Hercules  
but his heart was, and is, that of a small child  
his spirit has never ceased in its longingness to play  
but when I set off for college,  
hardly coming home every other weekend,  
Bronson got less and less attention  
there was nobody else there to give that sort of love

Soon he developed a mysterious illness  
his stomach began to swell  
he seemed to drag it around with him  
or rather he was dragged by it  
as his energy began to dwindle

it seemed to suck the very life out of him

He now sits,  
imprisoned in the static route  
between his doghouse and a board of wood  
only venturing inches away from it to "do his business"  
this is his life now, and I feel helpless to do something about it  
the only thing I can do is continue the unfruitful pursuit  
of begging his owners to take him to the vet  
the cheap pills haven't worked, and it's time to take action  
but the main owner, the husband,  
takes no responsibility for his dog's needs  
he instead guilt-trips his wife  
for not loading the huge pit-bull into the truck herself  
even though she works two jobs and is even busier than he is  
even though he bought the dog without her permission  
even though she has never been an animal person to begin with  
and he guilt-trips me for not being able to convince her  
somehow he is the only one who bears no guilt in this situation  
and though it isn't my fault,  
every time I look into those chestnut eyes,  
something in me breaks all over again  
old wounds are scraped afresh  
but avoiding those eyes  
is like ignoring the mastodon in the room  
and at this moment he is as they were,  
at the dusk of extinction

Like this, Bronson's illness has continued  
for what feels like eons  
honestly, I'm surprised he is still alive at all,  
though he certainly doesn't appear to be kicking  
after calling the shelter and pet control  
and having neither of them do anything  
I am, needless to say, woebegone

So yes, Bronson is my life's greatest tragedy  
the one situation I feel powerless to change  
all I can do is pet him as much as time allows,  
look into his wistful brown eyes,  
and watch him fade slowly into sepia  
like an old photograph, but in his case



there's not a single photo of him

Nika McGuin

# Serpentine Abyss

Black is a word,  
If you were in a car  
it would make you swerve  
Thoughts going through your head  
the only thing you can see, is the color red  
Demons floating in nearby skies  
Mama never did sing lullabies  
The darkness overflows your vision  
you can't remember why you're here  
what is your mission?  
scanning for memories  
but you have none  
the only thing you can hear,  
is something loud, like the sound of a gun  
your shadow follows me  
I tried to run away  
the only thing I can hear  
is the stepping of feet

From the age of five  
I'd been taught to submit to the beast,  
that I must quell my anger and resentment  
and I'd lived with it, suffered its taunts daily  
until at last, hope surfaced - a lucid phantasm  
with its serpentine tongue an oath was sworn,  
that the creature could be vanquished  
soon, I'd be free of the cell I'd grown accustomed to  
like a fool fully garnished in naivete,  
I began to reminisce about the way my life was  
before the monster's abhorred presence made itself known  
but hope too is an intruder  
and like all serpents, it slithers and lies  
the beast's dark shadow hunts me still

Nika McGuin

# Six Sides To Every Thought

This free-form college collage  
houses the school of thought  
concepts, they shimmer above us  
coated in tangible flickery blue  
glitchy boxes that beep at each new entry  
we co-writers, and this our sci-fi movie

Naught but sketches initially,  
six ill-shaped visages, hexagonal in nature  
but he, seated lax atop his desk,  
directs them, molds them thoughtfully  
in a series of deft taps and shifts  
he creates a hovering diagram,  
the hexahedrons hesitantly gather, linking up

Those of us unwilling to share ideas  
are simply dragged along nodding dumbly  
and that's well enough  
for most days I'm altogether reticent,  
nodding with the best of them  
but on today, I startled myself  
my mouse-like voice that forgot to squeak  
instead shook loudly, split ground, shattered silence  
It was my finest collection of cubes yet, to be sure  
even so, his boxes are always bulkier,  
infinitely broader than this cubicle in which we reside  
and each roll of his dice reads: box cars  
that too is well enough  
in fact, all is as it should be,  
otherwise the telekinesis wouldn't work,  
we wouldn't compose so many bluesy notes  
of flickering quadratic matter

Nika McGuin

# Slice Of Life

staring at a dry-erase board  
and I realize there are no dry erases in life  
in fact they're usually sopping wet with tears  
a clean cut too does not exist  
when life cuts there are often  
rough edges  
hanging seams  
and strings attached  
in fact the chef's knife is so dull  
it often takes ages to cut at all  
it is not easy to simply grab a slice of life  
its like scooping cherry crumble  
too much crumble not enough cherry  
you never get as much as you wanted  
what you do get consists of short-lived fragments  
but we must convince ourselves that we're full  
knowing that in a couple of hours  
we'll have to eat again

Nika McGuin

## Something Profound

I walk past this place everyday  
heading in the same direction  
to the same old crumbling building  
Though it is a dreary experience  
there's something I always look forward to  
this patch of stubby flowers,  
with globe-like yellow blooms  
I know not what they are called  
but having the privilege to watch them  
wilt, come into bloom, and wilt again  
it's as precious as seeing a blood moon  
on a night overcast with cold wind and storms  
yet, to see it peeking through the clouds  
darkening as a scarlet sea washes over it  
it's something many people miss  
walk past, and sleep through  
but being the one who sees it  
and knows its worth,  
that is something profound

Nika McGuin

# Soul Serenade

How do we know  
the tragic beauty  
of our ancestors' hums  
we know it...

as well as we know the azure  
of thin veins in our wrists  
as well as we know the toffee brown  
of our melanin-abound skin

It echos in our ears  
ringing like song with no beginning  
& no ending - like a song we've  
never heard, yet somehow know  
a song kin to our ancient souls

We hear it in our sleep  
see the green cotton fields  
in our dreams, the sad hymns of bygone times  
become our inheritance

Nika McGuin

# Spending It~

Money,  
making it can be so hard  
spending it, all too easy

Its costs:  
Blood, sweat, youth, the hours  
of your life - & yet...

You so easily forget  
& yet, we all so easily forget  
when we're, spending it

~Nika  
8-16-15

Nika McGuin

# Star-Lace

Star-lace

Somewhere between existence  
And pure imagination  
We existed

It was a fragile thing really  
You were raw, imperfect,  
Beautiful

I was both brave and unsure  
Giving, determined, and  
Yours

One day I woke up and looked around,  
I couldn't find us  
Anywhere

Like sugar crystals, like snowflakes at warmth  
Did we somehow  
Dissolve?

No, maybe we are just like star-lace  
Twinkling in stardust filled clouds  
Delicate, fading...reappearing

More than beings, together we were metaphysical  
Two consciences meshed together by  
Star-lace

Nika McGuin



# State Of Mind, Or Mind Of State

Bangles only jingle on the arm  
but if you have bad luck, they say  
it doesn't matter where you sit

So I often question  
whether my environment  
affects me  
or is it affected  
by me

The turbulence of my mind  
has a way of becoming physical  
unbeknownst to me, it creeps out at night  
forsaking the realm of metaphysicality  
like a hurricane it whips into my room  
rampages, and wrecks havoc for fortnights  
littering the scene with idleness

A kind of stupor is induced  
and I begin to slowly sink  
into this unfolding whirlpool  
It's a seasickness that only I  
am able to pull myself out of

Abruptly, inexplicably,  
the cognizant waters calm  
as my mood lifts  
so does the rubble  
within an hour or so  
the mess that seemed endless:  
empty bottles, chip bags, and laundry  
teleport to the recesses of memory

Replaced by spotless productivity  
that would have been impossible  
to achieve in cluttered surroundings  
it would have been like trying to author  
a book on Louisiana's deltas  
whilst living in Minnesota

Nika McGuin

# Statuary: Marble Sanctuary

cold induced yawn  
warm breath expelled  
a bout of restrained shivers  
and a foot tapping soundlessly missing the ground at times  
another foot planted, shaking steadfast  
a warm wave washes over  
instantly crashed by an icy relative  
it's wednesday, and frosty lace has veiled her  
a colony of icicles clings on about its edges  
they draw close during wintertide  
to be melted with the coming of summertide  
once human, the kindly statue remains  
bearing the harshness that dangles from Orion's belt

Nika McGuin

# Storm~cloud

What do you do  
when fresh air isn't as fresh  
and everything outside seems to  
remind you of the one you lost

And what do you do  
when music just makes it worse  
you thought it would lift the mood  
but instead it highlights your unhappiness

I don't know what to do, honestly  
on days like this something weighs on me  
like an over-packed suitcase, too heavy to board  
my bad mood follows me around  
a dark storm cloud raining just for me

for all of my attempts to run away  
it has refused to let me be free

????????????????????????????????????

realizing there is no escape route  
from my own feelings, I stop  
and arms folded, eyes closed  
let everything  
rain down on me

Nika McGuin

# Strangling Ties

When she walks in crying  
and you, the culprit, are whying  
my anger comes out of hiding  
connections with you, I'm all but denying  
always with her, I'll be siding

If, like seconds before this situation,  
you remove her from the equation  
then, you're just sufferable enough  
I can dub you a diamond, although very rough

Alas, it's undeniable  
my bond with her is much more pliable  
and mine with you is stubborn, inflexible  
it's oh so fragile, quite easily breakable

These facts, and our lives you callously mishandle  
and her heart you've chosen to mangle  
embedding my emotions in such a tangle  
until subsequently, our ties you do strangle

Nika McGuin

# Such Is Life

Life is a car ride  
after it has been raining.  
There are puddles of water everywhere.  
Though you try to avoid hydroplaning;  
cars pass you at lightning fast speeds  
that make you feel like your head is spinning  
out of control more and more with each passing.  
And at times, there's a huge truck at your side  
spewing so much mist on your windshield  
that you can not see anything,  
everything is covered in white.

But remember, you still have good sense.  
You know these streets too well  
to go veering off into the dark bayous.  
They may lurk, but that moment  
will never come. You'll drive straight.  
through the fog until the truck,  
that once appeared large is nothing more than  
a small speck in your rearview mirror.  
But I assure you it will not, be the last  
car or truck - that's life.

Nika McGuin

# The Absence Of Sandcastles

Nobody ever explains how much  
waking up from a dream hurts  
dreams, building giant sandcastles  
in our hearts; yet when we rise  
there's no sand in sight, only high tide  
and an empty aching inside

Yesterday I cried enough  
to last me a couple of years  
To a fly on these pink walls  
it must have looked ridiculously  
dramatic, I know, but it couldn't  
be helped – I couldn't, be helped  
I'd awakened to all raging torrents  
and not even a granule of sand  
with which to reminisce

No, I'd felt the sand receding for months  
& I'd clung to clumps of it, kissed them goodbye  
as I saw the rapids growing nearer by the minute  
& told myself I'd be ready for them  
but all the preparation in the world  
can't soothe the pain of loss

Still I cried  
repeated the most melancholic song  
I know - probably about 16 times -  
when I stopped it was not  
because I couldn't cry anymore  
instead it was because  
my eyes were swollen nearly shut  
my throat had become raspy and dry  
my wet face looked worse for wear than ever  
and my heart was simply limp & tired; from it  
I'd poured out as much of the venomous pain  
as was possible in one sitting  
like black oil in gulf waters though,  
it continued to rise to the surface

Yet somehow, it was a familiar pain  
much like the pain an only child feels  
when her cousin's sleep over  
only to leave early the next morning  
while shes asleep, oblivious  
to her sadness and never  
saying goodbye

Its several levels under  
the sentiments of an only child  
who loses an infant adopted brother  
alone and sibling-less again

The brevity  
and delicacy of  
fleeting love and joy

The pang  
of it's absence  
on a cold spring morning

It's familiar  
all too familiar

Nika McGuin



# The Best Day, Unlocked

It was the best day  
freedom handed me the keys  
and I took them gladly

The currency in this land  
is recklessness and fearlessness  
I'm still poor but steadily gathering my coins

out on the town  
ripping and running through all the stores  
riffling through merchandise and buying nothing

I ran behind you snapping ridiculous  
pictures of nothing and everything  
giggling like preschool kids  
we spent all of our money  
on frozen yogurt and arcade games

It was the best day  
and it left us breathless  
our last stop, the new sushi restaurant  
at the end of the lane, its beauty enraptured us

as we split a single order of snow crab rolls  
and it was the best thing we'd ever eaten  
I hadn't been that full in a long time

It was the best day  
I took the keys  
I was enriched by the land  
I was left breathless  
and free

Nika McGuin

# The Core

It has been a year  
of utter outward evolutions  
the skin has changed, the voice deepened  
as onlookers, we can only hope that the core  
has remained the same, or betterment has ensued

We can't help but express our distress  
that so much in so many has been remodeled and reformed  
not realizing, just how much we too have changed

Our only assuagement is the core,  
the innermost part of the soul that never changes  
the one piece that can never be tampered with,  
that can never become impure, the core  
assures us that some things  
never completely change

Nika McGuin

# The Dangers Of Seclusion

Being alone  
for long enough  
can have serious effects  
on the state of your soul

loneliness causes the soul to wither  
and slowly lose chunks of it's humanity  
daily interactions become foreign territory  
solitude becomes less of a choice,  
and more of a habitual dependency

a soul in isolation runs the risk  
of going mad, positively insane  
as one forgets what's normal  
and what is not normal  
left alone with a mountain of faults,  
a colony of insecurities nibbling  
upon the residual shreds of self-confidence

God said, man was not meant to be alone  
and whether you believe in God or not  
it is still every bit as true

Nika McGuin

# The Griot

An old man came into the office today  
in his expression, a mixture of mirth and magic  
and when he opened his mouth,  
countless stories were sure to fall out  
- wild ones - always full of adventure  
and overflowing whimsy

The old man had an impatient streak though,  
if you didn't have the time and attention  
to devote to his stories, he couldn't be bothered  
with you. If you did though, he'd tell them all  
and the whole room would fall into a subtle hush  
mesmerized listeners, all blown away by his tales of wonder

Nika McGuin

# The Honey Pot

I saw a ghost today,  
and it looked a lot like you  
I'd been clinging to the back of its shirt  
you see, all this time I thought it was you

But this morning, I opened my eyes and gasped  
without even moving its lips, the ghost spoke  
'Ah, I see you're finally awake.'  
'Who are you? '  
'I am a fragment of your memories and disillusion.'  
before I could respond,  
the specter disintegrated into a thousand tiny crystals  
and wafted away on the morning breeze

Dumbfounded, I sat there  
reflecting on everything  
I wondered, when did you leave me?  
and how long have I been holding onto nothingness

Suddenly it all made sense,  
no wonder I always felt so alone in your company  
like trying to shake honey out of an empty honey-pot  
this relationship has long since been empty  
oh but when, when did we run out of honey?  
when...?

Nika McGuin

# The House Of Forget-Me-Nots

Here, the roaches  
climb the walls  
here, the rugs  
are old & sullied  
here, this house  
is deeply rooted  
in its many tribulations  
they seem to be the only  
things that are plentiful  
& multiplying by the day

But here, in this little old house  
there is a problem  
bigger than any other...  
things keep going missing  
one day, it's a picture  
from the walls of memory  
a fragment of times long past  
now lost for good  
the next day, it loses track  
of time & how to count  
the hours, forgetting its inhabitants  
& all of its possessions  
little by little

& my biggest fear is  
that one day, it will  
forget me too

Nika McGuin

# The Jars

Wine colored lips  
& almond eyes with their lashes all furled  
the picture of sophisticated calm  
she's got her zebra scarf on  
guarding the jars of forgotten things:

Your childhood dreams  
the love you gave away, so many yesterdays ago  
the way life used to be before this, before that  
the things you used to believe in  
things you wish you could remember again

Wine colored lips  
& almond eyes with their lashes all furled  
the picture of sophisticated calm  
she's got her zebra scarf on  
guarding the jars of forgotten things

Nika McGuin

# The Job

The television hums  
transmitting the frequency  
of so many unfamiliar voices  
and commercials that dispatch lies.  
They penetrate the pixelated membrane  
proceeding to infiltrate homes and souls  
covering their walls with a thick layer of soot.  
Ultimately, they clog the mind's arteries  
and tightly shut the doors of free thought.  
Acting as a sedative, its drug-like  
dependency is created - their job here is done.

Nika McGuin



# The Maze

Lost and alone  
I wander the aisles  
searching for you

I look left  
I look right  
you are not in sight

Boxes and their shelves  
become and ever spinning  
maze around me  
little people rush  
about, to and fro  
and where'd you go?

\*\*\*\*\*

Found you!  
how ridiculous  
I feel, as you look  
at me as if  
nothing happened  
as if the seconds  
in which I was missing  
were like the  
blinking of an eye  
instantaneous, and in no way  
requiring thought

you haven't a clue  
the hell I've been through  
just looking for you

Nika McGuin

# The Monkey Dance Of Death

I don't hate him  
I just hate the way he acts,  
The fact that he never listens  
It's that hard headed nature of his  
That seems to be getting worse and worse  
With each passing year

Last night I had a dream  
And it summed up everything  
That has been happening with him

He'd fallen off of a cliff  
I looked over the edge  
And there he was  
Hanging on to a solitary branch  
With one arm, his phone in the other  
He didn't seem to care  
That he was quite possibly about to die  
So transfixed on his phone, his distraction  
To make matters worse  
He began dancing like a monkey  
Shaking the last branch that was holding him up

Shocked, I rushed over to help him up  
I'd never seen someone care so little  
About the direction of their own lives  
I said to him, 'brother, give me your hand'  
Eyes on his phone, he only shook his head no  
And continued dancing

I reached for him  
But he was too far away  
I called his name, pleaded with him  
Tried to explain to him how dangerous it was  
I told him that his life was hanging in the balance

But all in vain, he ignored me  
And continued dancing

I warned him, that a storm was coming  
The branch he held onto would soon break  
And I wouldn't be around to catch him when it did  
I'd done what I could, though he ignored it all  
I had to leave, I couldn't bear to watch him die  
Because you see, I don't hate him  
Not at all

Nika McGuin

# The Mutilated Dead

room full of chairs  
what do most see?  
Inanimate objects  
artfully constructed by man?  
Foreign parts pieced together  
wooden frames  
burgundy seat cushions  
and metal chair glides

room full of tables  
to accompany them  
but what do most see  
its all too similar  
another inanimate object

a shelf full of books  
bound in leather  
with pages that flap nonstop  
but I suppose that is inanimate too

back to the restaurant now  
the waiter has brought the meal  
a beautifully decorated plate  
upon which lies a perfectly cooked steak  
food is all they see there  
but, you may not yet see what I'm getting at here

we are so disconnected to the world around us  
when death becomes normalcy  
we don't have to think about it  
we don't need to care about it  
so the origin, or the process  
of how it arrives before us  
never crosses our minds

these chairs are partially dead material  
so are the tables, deceased brownery  
the shelf, the books, the bindings, and the pages  
and especially the steak – a dead animal

we are surrounded by carcasses on the daily  
this is the world that man has created  
built up by tearing down the life around him  
he has always been a cruel usurper of crowns  
even writes his own book claiming the earth as his own

I'm not saying start a rebellion and build an army  
just take the time every now and then  
to realize that the world around you  
is so much more than it seems  
that a chair isn't just a chair  
it's a dead body carved by an artist  
and the dead deserve to be respected, no?  
even the mutilated dead

Nika McGuin

# The Reels

Sometimes,  
in the morning I sleep like a log  
dreams hazy,  
as I wander through the fog  
of my mind...

My bones sink into the mattress  
my lungs begin to compress  
my eyes seal shut as if glued  
my head, lies so heavy on my pillow

But inside!  
I'm running through the mist -  
subconscious thoughts go wild!  
converting themselves into reels of footage  
unintelligible to even me, the dreamer

They pile up heavy  
like the weight of my body  
upon awakening,  
sometimes

Nika McGuin

# The Ring Of Truth

The truth is not  
an easy thing  
we beg to know because  
no one, likes to be deceived

Yet once we know it,  
our only wish is to go back  
to retreat into ignorance and disbelief

Nika McGuin

# The Tiny Avenger

Fish have bones for a reason  
to strike back at those who eat their flesh  
no matter how beautifully marinated  
all it takes is a single scrawny bone  
to take all of the pleasure out of eating it  
I realize they serve living fish differently  
but for dead fish they are weapons of revenge

Nika McGuin



# The Weed

Between two fences  
once sprouted a little weed  
no one thought much of it  
no one looked at it twice

Ignored,  
it became a green sapling  
growing neck - and - neck  
with the height of the fences

Still,  
no one thought much of it  
no one gave it any second glances  
winter might kill it they thought

Besides,  
how much longer could it live  
sandwiched by two fences  
one of metal, one of wood  
but live it could - and would

Years passed  
and the tree developed  
a thick woody trunk  
its verdant leaves scraped the sky  
and mingled with the clouds

Someday soon,  
it will break free  
of its constraints  
someday soon,  
it will leave both fences  
bent, warped, obliterated

So you see...  
the belief that if you ignore it,  
it'll go away - is false  
like racism, like domestic abuse  
the issue only gets bigger

growing like a weed  
unchecked

Nika McGuin

# The World, As Seen By Lazarus

These chamber walls will me to hush,  
yet they continue their perpetual thrumming  
in a manner most soporific  
as they beckon that I approach  
'listen, ' they whisper, 'hear it now? '

The alcove's windows are thrust agape  
and outside them the sound grows  
shaped by people and places  
of which I'll never know  
to which I'll never go

Surely, It's the houses I'll never live in  
the expensive cars I'll never drive  
and the friends I'll never meet

At this I reply:  
'Ah yes, this is how the world sounds.  
This is all that makes it up; this is all that it is.'

Nika McGuin

## This Place (Short)

Blur of colors  
churn of sound  
tenderness all around  
birds chirping  
mama calling  
pops griping  
neighbors fighting  
ah.....  
it's home!

Nika McGuin

# To Momo: Soothsayer Of Rain

me, the only sibling-less child out of the bunch  
and my numerous cousins, all gathered at my Momo's house  
as we were obsessed with sleep-overs in our youth  
we begged and begged to sleep over at each other's homes  
but we all agreed being down the bayou was the best

we all converged on the car-porch  
I think it was painted green back then  
the memory has blurred some with time  
but as I remember it,  
Momo was leaning on her old blue Lincoln Towncar  
watching us play amongst one another  
she stood up suddenly and said, 'ya'll smell that dust? '  
our little noses began to sniff the air  
'thats how you know it's about to rain'  
and to our wonder it soon did, thus we began to play in it  
frolicking and singing 'If all the raindrops  
were lemon drops and gumdrops, oh what a rain that would be..'  
Until she fussed us that is, 'Get out that rain 'fore ya'll get sick! '  
and I, convinced of my immunity replied,  
'I ain't gon' get sick Momo, just give us five minutes? '  
but ofcourse I failed to convince her,  
and we were all made to return to dry land

I wonder if we all share this memory  
and if we all recall how to predict rain  
walking back today, I smelled again the rising of dust  
just like the magic of childhood, I heard each drop  
as it plopped upon the earth, rousing particles in its wake  
I took it all in, and let it carry me back to that green paint  
the blue car's bumper that scarred my cheek in a game of freeze-tag,  
and Momo's big warm smile, her hugs warmer still,  
and how she doted on me so endearingly

Its been ages since our sleep-overs  
we've all aged and dissipated into our own lives  
but there are so many things that for me will never fade  
and they remind me of Momo on a daily basis  
even though I don't call nearly as much as I should

Such as:  
my flat feet,  
that Momma says are due to Momo letting us go barefoot  
as soon as we crossed the threshold

Tomatoes,  
because I remember how she used to buy them for me.  
I'd sit in the back seat quietly nibbling away.  
Every now and then, I eat them uncut for nostalgia's sake

Ants,  
because there was that time she took us fishing  
there were ants crawling atop the bait  
I was desperately trying to convey that message  
apparently it got lost in the mail  
To this day she claims that I was talking to the ants  
and to this day my cousins recall it and laugh

Fishing itself,  
because she took us with her so much  
They became some of the fondest memories I have  
that probably all of us have  
Along with visions of her vast collection of fishing hats  
Some were caps, and others sombreros  
all of which we were allowed to choose from

Going to garage sales,  
or 'hoppin'" as she calls it, because I received so many robes and pajamas  
whenever she went. I've even kept the necklaces she gave me long ago, yet I'm  
so prone to losing my other jewelry

Smoke, believe it or not  
I was always fascinated by the elegant vapors  
that came coiling out of her cigarettes  
Ofcourse, I was fiercely warned to stay away from them.  
Hence, I learnt that not everything beautiful is benevolent.

I could go on endlessly, but there's too much to tell  
because she is such a core chunk of my being  
this is the woman who always came first in my prayers  
'God please, let Momo live to be 100, '

that was my childlike prayer for decades  
this is the woman who gave me the nickname Nika  
when she responded to a letter I wrote in 3rd grade  
and when I said 'Ma, 'this is the woman  
who in perfect harmony with my mother  
answered 'yes? '

Nika McGuin

# To Pseudonym Users

to pseudonym users  
I can understand  
your desire for privacy  
but what of your desire  
to be remembered?

you may write amazing poems  
but when you cease to exist  
nobody will know who you are  
nobody knows you personally  
or even your real name

have you ever thought  
that having a pseudonym  
makes it nearly impossible  
to leave a legacy?  
with celebrities its been done  
but for poets it is rare

Life is finite  
let us not be afraid  
to let others in  
let them know who you are  
see your face and know  
you are more than a pseudonym  
Privacy is worthless  
in the afterlife

Nika McGuin



# Too Quiet

Its too quiet in here, he said.  
I told him silence was good for me,  
with TV I can't hear my own thoughts  
over all the yapping of strangers.  
His response was that it made him  
think too much, regret too much.  
He couldn't stand to be alone  
with his own thoughts.

He flipped on the television  
but didn't stay to watch it.  
He wandered a couple of rooms.  
I didn't watch him, so don't ask  
what he did in them. All I know  
is that he left the light on  
in the bathroom, and he left  
the TV on in the kitchen.

He went outside, leaving the house  
ajar, like the emotions he refused  
to face, like the sins that caused  
him to avoid his own reflection.

Nika McGuin

# Tranquilo (Tranquil)

Peach skies on the horizon  
whisper to me that the day  
is coming to an end

The hours that have come and gone  
are of those that'll never return  
this is fact, as sure as the setting sun  
eases into a subtle afternoon burn

A calmness settles over this place  
the copper flecks of afternoon sunlight  
reflect softly on the walls of the office  
and the suited workers commence to gazing longingly  
out the windows, counting down inwardly the minutes

As they set out into the parking lot  
the skies fade into serene shades of lavender and cream  
the hours that remain flow as languidly as viscous honey  
once home, tranquility envelopes them like a warm heavy blanket  
and at last, the day is done

Nika McGuin

# Tumbleweed (Maya Angelou & Grandmother)

'God please, let Momo live to be 100'(childhood prayer)  
Maya Angelou(April 1928 - May 2014) R.I.P.

These two events, for me have meshed together  
like a tumbleweed that snowballs in size  
Losing Maya was like losing an extrafamilial grandmother  
the unthinkable had finally happened

Somehow I knew the time was approaching  
because she was the only poet  
out of the top 5, who was still alive  
but I always pushed such thoughts back

But here's how the two become intermingled:  
ever since watching 'Fools Rush In' as a kid  
I've always been a firm believer in signs  
It has brought me both joy and pain  
this instance would be the latter

Four days after Maya Angelou's death  
my grandmother passed out outside of her home  
It happened so suddenly, so frighteningly  
that it sent a shock through the entire family

It's a large family, and Momo(my grandmother)  
has always been our leader, our rock, and our center  
to have that rock become so delicate, was beyond belief  
before my eyes flashed a daunting possibility

That I could soon be losing my real grandmother  
that the loss of the beloved Maya Angelou  
is a sign, is some cruel preparation  
for the pain I'll have to endure in the future

Needless to say,  
I'm a ball of emotions at the moment  
or a tumbleweed, whichever you prefer

Though everything checks out okay with my grandmother

I can't help but be shaken by the idea of it  
I have to at least admit, that I'm immensely afraid  
to some it might sound crazy to correlate these events  
but to continue denying it would make me  
an even crazier, emotional tumbleweed

Nika McGuin

# Under The Sun Thoughts Wander

Walking home,  
I've got sun in my eyes.  
It's got me in its heat-filled gaze.  
People walk by, following them my mind wanders,  
as I wonder, what they think when they see me.  
Do they really see me, like the sun does?  
What do they think about me,  
a stranger to their palates?  
They probably don't even think about me,  
not quite like I think about them.  
No doubt, they see just my furrowed brow,  
squinting eyes, and my hair -  
a tad too poofy today.  
I don't know,  
I just wonder  
as I wander home.

Nika McGuin

# Underneath The Falling Icicles

'You belong to the temporary moments of a dream'  
a dream cut short - and yet we stand,  
waiting for it to begin again  
for it to finish where it left off  
could it be the unknowing nature of it all  
that keeps us frozen in expectancy, and in time  
maybe tomorrow night, or the next after  
the dream will pick up in the middle of its last scene

dreams oft carry such warmth  
warmth, that makes waking cold  
and as sharp as a falling icicle  
for some, waking is too painful  
for some have chosen encapsulation  
inside tombs of fire whose casings,  
consist of sheets upon sheets of ice  
ice that awaits the dreamer's awakening  
longs to grip them in its icy embrace

There too are those bitter dreams  
that seep their way into waking hours  
like one you wish you hadn't told  
so that it wouldn't come true  
alas, you did speak it  
and here it is upon you now  
-the most dreadful of daymares-  
and finds you in the dead of night  
do not say, that your mother  
had not warned you against it

But where does one go, when both waking  
and sleeping lives are haunted  
by fears of the future and ghostly memories?  
waiting for the dream to return at last  
they lie frozen beneath the icicle laden eaves

Nika McGuin

# Unspeakable: X

This sadness is  
the poem that, I can't write  
& the words, I can't say

These tears are  
the secrets, I must keep  
from even myself  
& the apologies I dare not give

This melancholic morning  
is the product of useless dreams  
that stir up old memories  
memories, that ceaselessly torture  
my soul

~Nika

Sunday: Sept.13th,2015  
8: 52 am

Nika McGuin

# Unsung Topiary

my favorite tree stands yonder  
walking past it I often ponder  
what on earth could its name be?  
for I've never come across such as she  
her leaves hang in clumps resembling bananas  
then in autumn they hit the ground ploppingly  
as if they've fallen here from Montana  
in a flash of green, sometimes kiwi, sometimes lime  
making dull all others 'cept the sun's shine  
admiring her is my sequestered joy  
large, bright, and by all means refined  
yet glossed over by every other girl and boy

Nika McGuin



## **-vacío-**

My heart is empty inside

-vacío-

a fortress sealed tight  
letting nothing and no one in

Inside only a clock ticks  
its alarm set to some unknown time  
when the tiny doors will swing open,  
the blank spaces will be filled,  
and nothing will ever be the same

The only problem...  
is waiting  
as the dust collects on its doors  
as the hinges slowly begin to rust  
waiting, in fear that the clock's gears  
have ceased to spin

Nika McGuin

# Veggie Soup: Whole Beans, Potatoes, And Thangs

no lentil soup to be had tonight  
instead spicy taco soup, meatless luckily  
most nights here they serve  
chicken and sausage gumbo  
or chicken noodle soup  
and various forms  
of white goop

such is the lot of vegetarians  
and the lot of vegans  
is craggier by far

it's preparing yourself for the fact  
that there's probably nothing prepared, for you  
and feeling extremely grateful when there is  
but even then, it's probably only one dish  
so you go overboard  
and appear to be greedy  
because you're gobbling it all up  
taking two bowls instead of one  
to prevent an almost certain second trip

it's becoming a scavenger  
in the wilderness that is american cuisine  
its walking down the grocery aisles  
and getting embarrassingly excited  
when you find something that doesn't  
read: 'with chicken' or rather 'with beef'

it's being that character  
who lingers on the frozen foods aisle  
for extended periods of time  
considering steamed potato options  
and filling their cart to the roof  
with green giant valley fresh steamers

it's realizing you are the archetypal oddling,  
the aberrant one out of the bushel  
especially if you live in the south

uber-especially if you're afro-american  
and your family is green, to all but soul food  
which frankly, should be renamed as:  
'how to drain the soul out of food'  
the soul, being the nutrients and vitamins,  
the entire purpose of eating vegetables

to my family, if your red beans and rice  
contains whole beans, that are veritably  
recognizable as a member of the legume family  
and not the red mushy substance family,  
then you're obviously doing it wrong  
and they'll agree unanimously, you're a bad cook  
of the absolute worst caliber  
such dedication is admirable,  
to say the least

to my family, if you cook a dish  
of exceptionally high culinary rank  
with meat that screams 'look for me! '  
their appetites will shout in unison  
despite your betokenings of its expense

in my family, needless to say  
they think I'm from some distant star,  
that I could possibly be adopted  
decidedly, the blacker sheep  
amongst black sheep even

Nika McGuin

# Vintage Dreams

What's on my heart today  
it might be awfully hard to say  
from that organ, my mind has strayed away

But now, breaking into chilled shades of purple and blue  
I'm diving, searching for what about me is still true  
what I once thought was impossible for me to do  
well, the pace of time has made such thoughts untrue  
and now I can just feel those vintage dreams coming through

If I blast forward like a shooting star, I might find  
regret and long for the dazzling sky I've left behind  
If my dreamscape varies so drastically from the true environment  
It'd be a shame, such a shame, to lay vintage dreams to retirement

But don't you know, there's nothing in existence more ardent  
than a dream so far off and brilliant that for years you daren't  
even think of attempting, but now, allowing yourself to think of it  
is an amazingly, frighteningly hopeful thing that consumes your mind - until no  
other thought can fit

Yes, a vintage dream can be a dangerous thing indeed  
one that in both fear and excitement  
keeps the heart exhaustedly pounding

And though one hesitates to dream it  
it's a dream that devastates, if its goals go unmet  
still, I dream it yet

Nika McGuin

# Waning Gibbous

Under the waning moon  
a yearlong conflict was resolved  
In order for these wounds to be healed  
they had to first be broken open  
the salve - a dose of brutal honesty -  
came in contact at the most painful  
moment possible, but it had the most potent  
impact. Like this, the wounds began to heal

Over a lengthy phone call  
the coldest and most secret of words  
were spoken, breath that had been held  
for decades was finally released  
a breathy shuddering sigh shook the room  
at once accusations were cast left and right  
they flew spiraling between their speakers  
until they both confessed their shortcomings  
and decided that what they both really needed  
was to metamorphose entirely

Under the waning moon  
they realized what made it so bewitching -  
was the fact that it always changed  
nightly, it showed a different face  
that night it's face shone pearlescent with calm  
a yearlong conflict had been resolved

Nika McGuin

# Water Hyacinth & The Bayou

Bonsoir cher!

Sit down, and let me tell you  
about a girl I once knew  
she lived down the ol' bayou  
know that what I'll say is true:

Pheromones seemed to waft off of her skin  
drawing all the neighborhood boys in  
one by one they'd get close  
and of her they would each take a dose  
only to vanish from her heart's vicinity  
taking her purity, and leaving her empty  
a cold shell of who she used to be

She had so changed  
her priorities were all rearranged  
and from me she became estranged

That alone was painful enough  
without every smile now being a disguised bluff  
every visit because she needs stuff  
like a water hyacinth she'll drain me dry, sure enough  
making the bayou between us impossible to luff

More painful than not seeing her  
is seeing her, and being fed doses of poisoned sugar  
more painful than seeing who she's become  
is seeing her, doing the same thing to me

Those boys may have taught her  
that the world is cruel and cold  
though it was half-lies they've told  
she was young and easy to mold

Now she goes around  
passing out frowns  
taking warmth from others  
never giving it back  
good qualities she had as a girl

she now deeply lacks

The thing is, we were once great friends  
now we stand on opposite river bends  
I don't know how this story ends  
on her, it all depends

Oui, there was once a girl I knew  
who lived down the ol' bayou  
inside her coldness grew and grew  
now knowing her only makes me blue  
so stubborn is her water hyacinth hue

Nika McGuin

# Weapon Of Choice

Optimism is my gift:  
even in the darkest of times  
my eyes scope out that which for others  
goes unseen, a miniscule crack in the corner of the room  
shedding a single spade of light -  
that little bit, is all I need

Hope that small, can move mountains  
never losing sight of the light,  
working my way towards it, groping about in the darkness,  
though I may stumble and fall, I'll get there  
and with optimism and hope in tow,  
I'll bash through the walls of desolation;

I'll sternly grab hold of my dreams!

Nika McGuin



# We've Met

I'd say, I've never seen  
the sea  
but, I'm fibbing  
possibly  
as it huddles  
all about me  
- we've met -

I hear its sloshing  
as wind caresses leaves  
an unmistakable sea song  
- we've met -

I see it move  
as clouds waft amidst blue  
I behold the sea's mirror  
- we've met -

And I feel its lull  
as its waves cradle me  
and rock me to sleep  
- we've met -

All along  
seashells have been sent  
to be strung together  
- we've met -

Nika McGuin

## What This Is (Short)

It's happened again  
I've fallen down that deep dark well  
where nothing goes well, despite well wishes  
when you're out of hits, and its nothing but misses  
that's, what this is

Nika McGuin

## When Sepia Is No More

Every time I step outside  
I look back at where he used to be  
half-expecting to see a flash of chestnut brown fur,  
to hear a low mangled howl,  
or the sound of his bony tail  
repeatedly banging against the shed's tin wall

I find myself searching for traces of him  
but there's nothing left,  
just his memory in my mind's eye  
like a ghost that haunts my soul  
though I'd prefer a more life-like version

As of yet, I haven't been able to face  
the grief born of his death  
or the weight of his absence-  
Bronson's sepia dusk, is suddenly midnight  
somber and hush swoop into the scene  
but even the vultures hang their heads in mourning

Nika McGuin

# When Silence Speaks

Listen to the silence  
for long enough  
and it'll soon begin  
telling you things

Listen to the wind blow  
softly into the cavities of your ears  
whispering its secrets for just you to know  
it could bring joy or bring you to tears, but..

Listen to the clocks ticking  
singing a warning constant and true  
you may pause to listen  
but time does not

Listen as I ponder now  
does living require most action or reflection?  
I believe they are in an ever spinning yin yang  
so live, act, take part in life to the fullest  
but also take time to

Listen and reflect  
when silence speaks

Nika McGuin

# White-Out Swim

This aura of newness can be stifling  
being an unknown entity, knowing no one  
the only exchanges between myself and those around me  
are those tristful acknowledgements of unfamiliarity

How long will this cold isolation persist?  
until all smiles and warmth are won?  
until I become 'one of them' or they become in-tune with me?  
is any of it even guaranteed?

I say, these grounds shake  
they reject all that is unknown  
and I say, these faces smile fake smiles  
underneath the formalities lies  
a shuddering nonchalance

Here new does not equate with rare  
this revolving door of entry level exhibits is merciless  
they peer in at me like tourists at an aquarium  
and so I swim, in this terrarium  
of printers and paper clips, staplers and white out  
I swim on, swim on, and swim

Nika McGuin

# Winnerland

Front & center  
cameras, speeches, flashing lights  
everyone's stars are hanging gold

Outside the halls are cold  
jammed packed with certificate winners  
together, they inch a slow mile  
all they know, is how to smile  
yes, here everyone's a winner

Nika McGuin

# Wondrous Daydreams

Who knew  
that daydreams  
were so much better  
than night

I do not speak  
of waking dreams  
no, not those  
based on fickle reality  
oh, but those that come  
whilst napping  
are wondrous indeed!  
those that tuck you in  
and fill your lonely heart  
with such warmth  
that it forgets a lifetime of woe  
even, if only for a while  
yes, those dreams that do whisper:  
thou art loved, thou art loved, thou art loved

~Nika

Nika McGuin

# Worse Tenfold

Growing up, I never found that one  
person who I could call Dad,  
My biological father was impalpable  
due to his issues, my mother left him  
she was always such a strong woman  
with a hard exterior, and tender insides  
always giving, in fact too giving at times  
She was a woman who knew what she wanted  
and out of love for me and herself, never settled

By the time I was seven or eight,  
I had a step-father, whom for a while I did hate  
their marriage stood strong, wouldn't end upon my whim  
consequently, I learned to put up with him  
eventually learned to love him, flaws and all  
(and trust me, there were many, Ya'll!)

Still I could never call him Dad  
that just isn't the relationship we had  
believe me, it was not for lack of wanting it  
like parallel lines, we abided and never quite connected

I'd pour out my sorrows, and he never understood.  
I'd express my ideals, and he always disagreed,  
unless of course, I'd agreed with him  
I always had to agree with him, or else the penalty  
would be another argument, and of those we had plenty

he always demanded the utmost respect, but rarely gave me any  
but all of this, is not to say that I don't love him  
I'll tell you what I do not love: his overwhelming perfidy  
his hypocrisy, two-faced lies that pushed my mother above the rim

Now he must leave, he has all but lost our affections  
still, the nucleus of my being twists in separate directions  
once he is gone, so is our bloodless conjunction  
in comparison, kids of divorcees live in such satisfaction:  
at least, what they lose was truly theirs  
I am losing what I never had to begin with



If you ask me, that's worse tenfold

Nika McGuin

# Wrapping Paper, Bows, And You

If you open your eyes  
to see me standing before you  
you are in luck, chuck.

For in me are all the makings of a something  
but nobody knows what that something is yet  
tell me, how do you guess what's inside a gift box  
if it makes absolutely no sound when you shake it?

Surely, you and I both know an item's weight tells everything  
and still nothing at all. So I plan to knowingly take the fall

We'll both plunge headfirst into an endless pile  
of wrapping paper, packaging materials, and unopened boxes  
there'll be ribbons to untie, tape to un-stick, and a big mess  
to clean up when the search is all finished

And in the end, it's possible that we'll discover the answer  
is impossible to unwrap, it cant be tied in a bow  
or boxed and wrapped in festive designs  
there is no amount of stuffing paper that can hide it  
No one else can tell you how to open it,  
the gift of self-knowing and self-acceptance  
now tell me, what's in your gift box this year?

Nika McGuin

# Wretched Desecration

Know ye what it's like, to be caught unawares,  
To be robbed of one's security  
and peace of mind in the middle of the night  
Sleeping, and defenseless?

It leaves me with an uneasy feeling  
Yea, it leaves me lying awake wondering why  
And worse still, I know exactly who the thief is  
Because we're forced to share the same room

Even now, as I gaze across the room  
My eyes land on his dark lanky figure  
Curled up, vested in deep slumber  
As if nothing ever happened

The awkwardest of situations,  
Is now my constant reality  
I no longer sleep as peacefully  
As I once did, that is, if I sleep at all

Thus, I feel prepared to give up my room  
In search of some place safer  
Even if it means sleeping on a cot  
In some abandoned warehouse

As long as the doors lock - I'll take it  
For me, it would be a sanctuary  
Compared to this

Nika McGuin

## Y... [and...]

Y con los días  
todo cambia  
me cambio yo misma  
ya no temo  
en la cara de  
~ juicio ~

Y ya no me importa  
que piensa la gente  
~ de mi ~

Y hago lo que quiero  
lo que siento  
~ sin miedo ~

Y... es verdad  
con la edad  
viene confianza

(And as the days pass  
everything changes  
I myself change  
No longer do i fear  
when faced with  
~ judgement ~

And no longer do I care  
what people think  
~ of me ~

And I do what I want  
what I feel  
~ without fear ~

And... It's true  
that with age  
comes confidence)

Nika McGuin