

# 5 (five) (5!) poeMs poems poems (5)

by Alāna Rader

**WHY I LIKE IT: Poetry Editor HEZEKIAH writes...**

*Alāna recites words like warmly whispered sounds, softly trumpeted, on a brassy sunset in perfect embouchure. She's a breezy sultry symphony of ember notes, simmering to crisp; too long-playing for the sullied, unseasoned top forty...here she is; rant, rave and outrage, Ms. Rader is taking the stage...still your heart, she'll steal you away. I'll get you started "The alchemy inside of me is stretched out thin / see-through / like damp paper." "It anchors me / in a sea of could be, should be, might be..." Well my note's blown...*

Something New  
by Alāna Rader

The alchemy inside of me is stretched out thin  
see-through  
like damp paper.  
Inside the tiny porous holes,  
I see the sunshine  
peeking in,  
fuzzy at first.  
It anchors me  
in a sea of could be, should be, might be,  
I catch a glimpse of  
little vessels filled with hope  
in every corner.  
Add in layers of grief  
steeped in sorrow  
a hollow reminder of what was.  
But tomorrow whispers..keep going.  
Weaving in weary optimism  
stitches of joy  
embroidered into my  
emerging landscape.

building  
planting  
nurturing seeds  
watered with tears and bliss,  
longing and gratitude,  
culminating—  
in faith.  
That lingering question mark  
resides in the dark  
asking...  
Are you enough?  
My soul cries out- yes.  
The story, incomplete  
read and re-visited  
some chapters have more ghosts than others  
you can't edit your story  
that would mean going back  
tipping the hourglass of time  
the looking glass staring back  
pointedly asking...  
Are you enough?  
My heart cries out-yes.  
Mirror, mirror on the wall.. nah, wrong story.  
These former chapters  
remain  
stains and all  
the ink is permanent  
the only choice is to not read ahead  
but keep writing  
the answer lies in the not knowing  
like a cavernous lake  
dark but inviting  
water and wind can heal  
once you learn how to wield them  
the weather pattern changes  
like my cells  
each new chapter tells  
me to keep going  
the rise in conflict  
ebbs and flows  
while I'm in flow  
knowing  
every sunrise marks a chance  
for renewal.

Ember  
By Alāna Rader

An only child  
lone wolf  
stoking the embers of imagination  
excavating ideas  
like pebbles on the playground-  
limitless.  
Was the flame too hot  
too bright  
too much?  
A red-orange glow lurking beneath  
a flicker of knowing, growing  
smoldering at the surface.  
Her face  
threatening to erupt, disrupt  
abrupt...but not.  
It was coming  
a reckoning.  
But then, the silence.  
an inner violence against herself  
shut up! she cried  
and just like that,  
she shrunk  
retreating within  
a masking, hidden away  
she stayed for years  
the fire out, extinguished.  
Her shell grew hard and cold,  
The quiet anguish,  
pressing.  
Is this what they want,  
what they like,  
who they like...  
was she good...  
enough?  
But those who fear the fire never feed it,  
or fan it.  
She's never good enough.  
They stomp out her ember, smothering  
until...  
until...  
Was that a spark?  
A stark glint in the dark.  
She sees it.  
Recognizing it

like an old friend  
familiar face,  
tracing it back to  
then?  
Remembering embers  
tending the tinder  
sweet surrender.  
The flame so small  
but hungry for more  
a little air,  
some kindling,  
our inner nurturing begins.  
Hands trembling  
she covers her ears  
drowning out the noise  
of the boys and the bosses  
the misses and losses.  
She struggles and lashes  
springing forth from the ashes  
evolving/revolving  
she fuels her fame  
reclaims her name  
asks herself a question  
holds still  
and listens  
for the answer.

The Art of...  
By Alāna Rader

Like a child holding tight to a balloon  
floating  
arms outstretched  
reaching towards yes  
hoping for maybe  
propped up on my Pop's shoulders  
so tall  
peering over a sea of heads  
the waves of people  
waving their arms to the music  
fluid acoustic sounds  
while my heart pounds  
the stage in the distance

the expanse  
I felt I could touch the sky  
a mosaic of pink, blue and indigo  
every sunset brings a new day  
while we are carried away by  
the blanket of night  
tucking us under its clouds  
shrouded in darkness  
a quilt of silence  
the alliance of stars  
co-conspiring in our slumber  
hitting the reset button  
on our little life  
like an alarm  
charming us into dreams  
sewing the seams of possibility  
stitching and knitting in each little flicker  
like a hint of hope or  
a flash of faith  
or a glint of gratitude  
these possibilities  
grow, marinating  
unspoken,  
steeping in the teacup of your soul  
the parts do not surpass the whole and  
the incline is always steep to the summit  
but once lifted  
every vantage point exposed  
each note composed  
like an epiphany of synchronicity  
on the precipice of transformation  
formed from years of perspiration  
our inspiration built from the blocks we stacked  
to the pencils we held  
the art of possibility is less art  
and more work  
a labor from the heart  
bound by dreams in the ink  
thinking beyond, reaching out  
a magnifying lens  
won't bring us closer  
if we hold others  
at arms length  
this scrutiny in mutiny  
your creativity  
feeds, fuels and satiates  
allowing us to radiate

love  
grow and swell  
a reflection of our soul's song  
distant, resistant to change  
yet hope lies within range  
it takes strength and skill  
to embrace  
and will to sustain  
what remains in our brains  
not to turn out that light  
but illuminate  
our innate ability  
and responsibility is to keep the windows open  
breathing in possibility  
don't close a door when you already have  
the key

The Song  
By Alāna Rader

There once was a girl  
homegrown in the woods,  
planted in trees,  
riding the breeze,  
watered with milk  
and sweets.  
Her ears heard a different song,  
buzzing and long,  
yearning for honking horns,  
buildings and lights  
so bright, they hurt your eyes.  
The expansive skies  
from her youth felt stifling  
Her small town seemed to shrink around her  
and the song grew louder.  
Escape was imminent.  
When she first set foot  
on the hard concrete,  
she felt complete,  
a sharp contrast  
to familiar fields  
her feet felt grounded.  
The pace was exciting  
even if the space was confining,

the energy contagious.  
Was this home?  
She hustled and bustled,  
alone,  
the way city folks do  
the country mouse once timid,  
now coming into her own  
she followed the song  
to stages  
wrote pages  
for what seemed like ages  
chasing Holly Go Lightly, Carrie and Daisy  
almost crazy in her pursuit.  
The song decrescendo'd  
a trope, worn and cliched  
but she stayed, defiant.  
It changed tunes and styles  
while she walked for miles  
pounding the pavement,  
her heart pounding less but she persisted—  
chasing.  
Then something inside her grew  
a small seed  
germinating, generating  
a fleeting thought  
like a bird  
not yet ready  
to take flight.  
“Explore” it seemed to say.  
She found a hand to hold,  
a shelter so safe,  
she began to unfold.  
Taking off to search and see  
the mountains, Paris, Italy.  
Her world expanding  
arms outstretched,  
she'd grown.  
Her heart, now her own,  
grew too.  
And songs heard new  
with older ears  
her mother's hands  
long nails to match  
her mood  
pale skin  
cloaked in mittens.  
She continued to listen

and follow her instincts  
experience shifting  
her city scape changes  
but the song played on  
high atop mountain ranges  
whistling through rivers,  
it murmured  
“Don’t Stop.”  
While wandering with wonder  
her eyes shone  
brighter than the blinding lights  
ever could.  
Recognizing the tune,  
realizing the song...  
came from her, all along  
now that she was ready  
to hear it.  
Imagine anew  
By Alāna Rader

In a world where I can’t see the sky  
no windows  
my living room a blank slate of blue and clutter  
muttering to myself  
hoping to create  
invigorate  
open your mind  
open mine  
seeking to connect  
not reject  
my buffering zoom screen  
muted  
camera off  
I scribble  
and type  
grasping for something  
that feeling when  
that moment of...  
release  
this piece  
new and scattered  
what matters when the world’s turned off  
can we hit restart or refresh?  
I feel nothing and everything all at once  
sick of the scroll  
the trolls  
the lies

the highs and lowest of lows  
sick of being clever  
I endeavor to  
raise you up  
like levin or levity  
the brevity of  
baking and making  
like a small ball of clay  
today..  
I will create  
and motivate  
illuminating a  
stagnant pool  
dormant and dark  
not ready  
to start  
steadying my breath  
I reach inside my imagination  
trying to discover or uncover  
my mask  
a task in  
ideation  
a train pulling into the station  
remember the subway?  
remember friends and connection?  
zoom cannot replace sharing a room.  
our energy infectious, laughter  
collaboration  
I miss it  
my brain foggy  
feeling soggy like a wash cloth hung out to dry  
will the sun come out this winter?  
the cold  
hindering my hope or faith  
this complacency can't last forever  
is this the dip or a rip in my heart  
irreparably there, a tear  
trying to fight the good fight  
remember the reason for the season  
is gratitude  
embrace this place  
you are healthy and here  
the fear speaks loudly and carries a big stick  
but it's not real  
a figment  
you feel it then set it free  
healing synergy

conjure love  
summon light  
expand and align  
attach a patch to my wounded heart  
then start  
and begin  
anew

**THE POET SPEAKS...***I am inspired by so many things and strangely, I think my mind often thinks and processes feelings via poetry. I'm always interested in exploring nature as well as the creative process. The poem "Ember" was inspired by Glennon Doyle's beautiful memoir "Untamed." "Imagine Anew" was definitely a quarantine-induced creation and the other pieces deal with the abandonment and/or re-discovery of self. This past year has been one of quiet reflection, mourning and acquiring a deeper understanding of myself as a writer. Poetry is one of our highest expressions of Art. A poem can capture a moment or memory, preserving it in the basement of your soul. I continue to be influenced by and in awe of the poets E.E. Cummings, Maya Angelou, and Mary Oliver.*

**AUTHOR BIO:** Alāna Rader is a Brooklyn based theatre maker/poet and speaker. As a singer and classically trained trumpet player, all of her writing has an innate musicality to it. She finds comfort in words, sounds and language. Alāna recently had a Haiku digitally published with the Nick Virgilio Haiku Association. [www.alanarader.com](http://www.alanarader.com) @lanaenchanted