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An Ode to Myself

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KAITLIN HOELZER

An Ode to Myself

We are often told
to treat ourselves like we would
a little sister
or a best friend.

I assert
that we have no greater friend
than our own
bodies.

The advice
still stands.

Even when you feel
anxious
ugly
unloveable
crazy
blemished
too much
not enough

too tall, naive, happy, sad, bossy, nice—

The list goes on.

And the advice
still stands.
Would you tell
a green-wooded sapling
that since it is
easily bent in a storm
it will never grow
to a strong oak?

Would you ask
a robin
to stop singing,
or tell a peony
that it should
change colors
to match the roses around it?

Would you look into the
sun-soaked, freckled face
of your baby sister
and tell her
that she is not inherently worthy
of everything good
the world has to offer?

No.

So this poem
is to me—

My beauty
in silky hair and loving arms stretching to the heavens
in long legs
observant eyes
quick mind.

My imperfections
in anxiety
and ambivalence
and acne spotting my chin.

I am
a work of art;
a river-mystery
flowing down mountains
full of contradictions.

Two steps backward,
one step forward
is still progress.

I am
lover of enchiladas
hater of littering
podcast-listening

poetry-writing
student of the world.

I am
intelligence, tranquility,
curiosity, exuberance—

A tiny speck,
nonetheless important,
in the vast universe.

I am all of this
and more.
You are too.

Above all,
I am
enough—
just as I am.
You are too.

KAITLIN is an English major minoring in global women's studies. She plans to attend grad school and get a PhD in English or history. Kaitlin loves to read and write, and is currently researching the effects of the nineteenth-century poetic tradition on twenty-first century poetry by Mormon women.