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Leaving to Stay

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Leaving to Stay

The artist must possess the courageous soul that dares and defies.
~ *The Awakening*, Kate Chopin

rising up the way the sun opens
the eyelids of the sky each morning
my life hung like a cracked egg
in the horizon for all to see

flummoxed by discovery
like finding a body buried in the crawl space
of a *recently* acquired home
learning the value of unnumbered bones
holding my unspoken story

letting go a decade absorbed in the ether
released abruptly by my own will
from his terrorizing hand fear at first
heartsick during transformation
then relief *in feeling* something so oppressive
drifting away from me

tenderly sifting through the fragments
for pieces of my flesh once scattered in *our story*
transcribing cryptic words from a shattered fairytale
the fragmented narrative comprehensible for the first time
as my voice emerges without hesitation

confidently perched above the gilded cage
now pried open molting outgrown subjugation
assuredly spiraling up and up
aloft in the pristine blueness of a different sky

ring finger unsure of its sudden liberty and lightness
the binding it bore resting in a soap dish on the lavatory sink
a forsaken token *never catching his eye*

renting an apartment on the north side of town
in early spring
finding a place for *this* leaving *that* on the curb
cramming my life into three rooms
traversing the sardonicism of my new home
too small for my physical possessions too large for my fettered spirit

asphyxiated aspirations flailing in the madness
of hasty movement
not knowing
which dreams to give wings to which dreams to keep caged
only to wake in the middle of the night
flooded by rehabilitated dreams
more vivid and stimulating than those I saved up
someday taking a decade to arrive

hot-blooded awakening
tangled in sheets with new lovers
legs wrapped around *his* waist mouth pressed into *her* lips
to muffle my blissful screams
electrifying and emancipating the woman who once slept
obediently within me

leaving to stay entering a realm I always knew existed
not a trace of the familiar “exhaustion pressing upon and overpowering me”
uncovering the crucial fearlessness to swim far out into the *waterbody*
daring in my exploration of the yawning depths of my interior
defying the urge to surrender
after the voyage out the shore luxuriating in my return

Journey McAndrews is a freelance writer, editor, poet, publisher of *The Single Hound*, and contributing writer for *Kentucky Monthly* and *LILIPOH* magazines. Recently her poetry has appeared in *Inscape New Verse News*, and *MOTIF 3*. She has held two writer’s residencies at Hopscotch House in Louisville, Kentucky in conjunction with a grant from the *Kentucky Foundation for Women*, and was the poet/mentor in the Nation of Nations poetry and art project. McAndrews is currently a graduate student at Morehead State University pursuing an MA in Communications. She lives and works in Lexington, Kentucky.

