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# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Kelsey Bryan-Zwick: Three Poems

Kelsey Bryan-Zwick · Thursday, February 17th, 2022

### Left Thigh

I'm trying to convince my Left Thigh to flex, to push past the numbness and infuse feeling into the flesh, but Left Thigh is having none of it. The prolonged concentration beading sweat on my brow, and still the action is only murmurs of fizzles out.

Yes, Left Thigh hardly yawns or blinks, ignores both heat and ice the deep cat scratches accumulate—my own hands become a stranger, hot tears and anger stream down my face as I grasp at straws.

Imagine Left Thigh, you are not—not made of tissue, tendons, and sinew. Let the marrow in your bone melt, imagine you are composed instead of fistfuls of flowers blooming today's begonias.

And like a dreaming dog, Left Thigh twitches—like a child suddenly paying attention.

And so, I raise my voice up again. Everyday a new story: this one goes you are made of ginkgo leaves yellow fanning, a rustle in November's wind, and Left Thigh flies a kite.

I say Left Thigh you are not, have no legs at all, rather a mermaid's glossy tail, rhinestone bright beneath the water, and Left Thigh swims.

Soon, Left Thigh exhibits magical powers, says to me today is not a cold day, wind pricking up goosepimpled skin. No, Left Thigh is warm, feels a wind cloudy with pollen, late in the spring. The twist of birds, Kingfisher snatching at the air. Left Thigh wears these costumes like a skin beneath the skin.

Now Left Thigh can go out dancing, the night made of sequins and velvet, just the right amount of glitz. Left Thigh twirls and steps, never tires though the rest of me slinks back, exhausted.

The memory of what Left Thigh was before may blip  
faint cry of homing beacon lighthousing through space,  
but under the pool of numbness, Left Thigh becomes all of their desires:  
flower, yellow fanning, twist of birds, a true shapeshifting sophisticate.

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## Scoliosis

Unplugging the bathtub drain with my curved toes  
numb, where I cannot bend to reach, learning this and  
to have self-esteem, even with legs unshaved, toenails  
grown long, hair unwashed, wound crusting over, blood  
in my mouth from intubation, back of the throat scratch  
letting the cup half-full, fall and shatter with stunted reflex,  
letting someone else to tidy the jagged edges—as I contend  
with mending my own, placing the odds on myself, even  
as the doctors explain the risks, explain the need—to once  
again sharpen their knives.

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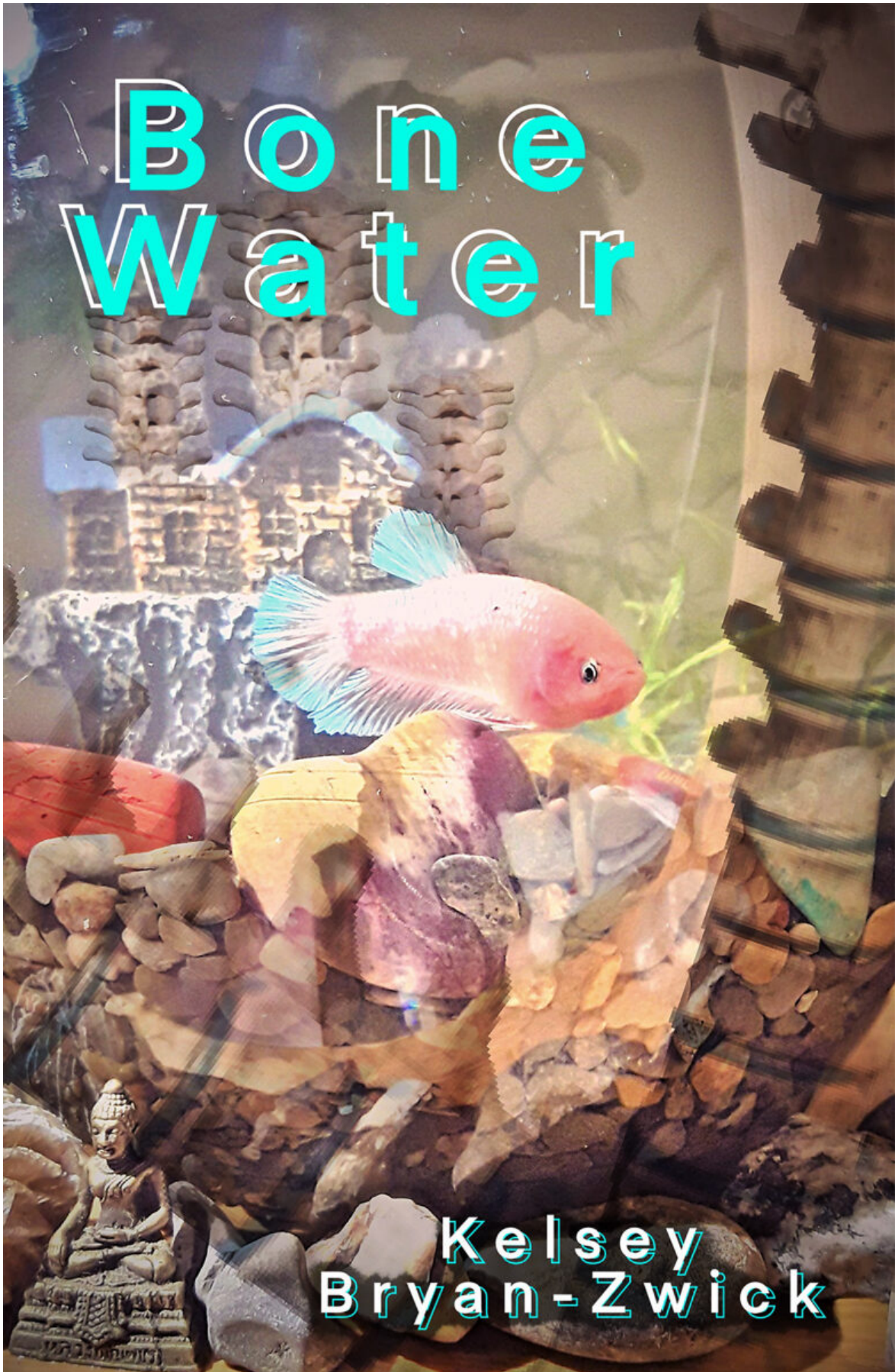
## New Love

My scar; long divide down the spine,  
explicit trauma on display,  
bathing suit exposing, or tank top revealing  
where sutures have been.

My scar, now multiple surgeries deep,  
marks the path I walk, the miles  
to go before I sleep, the hours  
I've had to cry, sweat, bleed, beg  
this life for another chance.

This scar: the only way I know how to love  
all those who trust me, have given me  
blood, cadaver bone, seat, tears.

Let this scar show all there is to tell,  
an openly worn story, my brutality clear,  
my beauty: not the face that launched  
a thousand ships, but the heart that takes  
a thousand arrows.



Book cover for BONE WATER by Kelsey Bryan-Zwick

To buy the book BONE WATER by Kelsey Bryan-Zwick, [click here](#)

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