

# Fleeting

Kaoutar El Ouadi

There is, and will only ever be, one of me,  
and the only promise I inherit  
is that she ends.

Nothing I hold will ever remain,  
and still, I press myself into the grains of this earth—  
folding passion into my fingers,  
holding love inside the organ of my chest,  
cradling peace before it, too, is ripped from my grasp.

Yet, I have bargained with the gods,  
standing, trembling in the doorway of leaving,  
pressing bone to bone for warmth,  
learning the quiet rhythm of another's breath—  
as if lingering close to another  
could blur time,  
mislead death,  
allowing me to remain.

But time carries on; he is indifferent,  
and even the willows inside me  
loosen their green, tactile hands,  
letting light illuminate the spaces between,  
whispering with the wind—  
a proof that what cannot be seen  
can still be felt.

I am small, brief, already vanishing.  
And still—the knowing  
that every touch, every breath, every becoming  
does not lessen my warmth.

These sparks flare, falter, vanish—  
and yet, they burn.  
I burn.

There will only ever be one of me—  
and she is, and always will be,  
fleeting.