

SECOND PLACE - 2022

someday this pain will be useful to you

i have locked myself in rooms where dying felt less sad than living,
garnishing my body in a war paint of dazzling red stripes,
but i learned that skin welds wounds back together all the stronger
and that each throb is an echo: this ache is not yours alone.
my body still remembers things i keep telling it to forget.
but consider how old skin cells fall away to make room for new ones,
and winter always surrenders to spring in a profound manifestation of rebirth.
so although these bones are cracked, faulty, and decaying,
and there are days where i'd give anything to be liberated from this cage,
i know this heart still pumps redemption into every fractured shard,
and these scarred hands know how to comfort when words fall short.
you will forever detect trembling in the vibrations of my tongue,
but that doesn't mean i don't have something worth saying, worth hearing.
my calloused feet are dirty, but they have walked in enough shoes to know:
nobody is too far gone from consecration, there is not one soul so lost that it cannot be found.

- Honor Heindl, 2016 graduate Washington University, George Warren Brown School of Social Work, St. Louis