

# Julia Aloi

**Bio:** Julia Aloi is an eighteen year old writer from the United States. She is an editor for BatCat Press, where she also practices a variety of bookbinding techniques. She serves as the managing editor of the award-winning literary magazine, Pulp. Her work has been published in Balloons Lit. Journal, LandLocked, Jokes Review, Variant Literature, and Sheepshead Review.

## Small and Insignificant Things

I write memories and glimpses  
from my childhood down  
on the rose-patterned walls  
of our house so I know to never  
forget them.

Before you found them  
and painted them over:  
the springtime picnic in the meadow,  
mosquito bites from the campfire,  
eating burnt toast on Mother's Day,  
the birthmark on your left ear,  
cutting holes in bedsheets for ghost costumes,  
baking blackberry pies in the summer,  
and all of the moments  
where being a girl  
and being my mother's daughter  
were not exclusive roles.

Though these inked moments  
remain forgotten by you,  
I still like to think about the times  
that are now long covered  
by paint.

### **Cellar (Door/Spider)**

*Cellar door*

is thought to be one  
of the most beautiful phrases  
in the English language,  
though the reason behind its  
inherent attraction is unknown.

I have a few words that fall into  
the same category:

*lemon drop*

*defenestration*

*canary*

*pocket lint*

*pluck*

*shatter*

*flutter*

*quintessential*

*obsidian*

*waltz*

*Mother*

However,

cellar doors and cellar spiders,

though stemming from

the same base word,

are opposites.

Cellar spider mothers will

throw themselves in front of their

unhatched eggs

as a defense mechanism,

crawling and wrapping

themselves around

the egg sacs with feverish love.

Yet when the eggs hatch,

the children will not hesitate

to feast on the corpse

of their creator.

Just as we are drawn to phrases

such as *cellar door*,

the youthful children are drawn

to their cellar spider mother -  
though their intentions  
aren't as sweet.

## **Teeth Box**

My baby teeth are set in lines,  
shapes of tiny white morsels  
with caked blood,  
in my velvet, heart-shaped,  
emptied ring box.

You stopped collecting mine  
after I lost my first few,  
the manila folder labeled  
"TEETH"  
pushed back into the filing cabinet,  
so in the box they now rest,  
back with their owner  
for even cold teeth deserve a home.

## Clinging

Baby orangutans will hold onto  
their mothers for up to a year,  
no force capable of tearing them apart  
from her.

If their infant dies unexpectedly,  
the mother will carry the corpse around  
for seven days,  
and on the eighth day,  
when the child no longer resembles the child  
and the mother sees not a son or daughter  
but a piece of meat,  
she picks apart at its flesh,  
picking and scooping and eating.

When the child no longer resembles the child.

When the mother does not recognize her child.

At what point does this happen?

When the infant's face is unrecognizable,  
stolen by death and decay?

When the infant's face is fresh,  
untouched by the worms of the earth?

Does the mother feel guilty?

## Beets & Pricked Fingers

Your mother always hated makeup,  
forbidding you to wear it as a child.

I know this because

I have suffered the same fate

that you most likely did -

growing up as a teenage girl

with a mother,

a loosely-defined one

at that

in both mother-daughter cases.

Each Sunday, before the mirror

I crush up beets in the sink,

staining my fingers pale pink,

and rub the colour onto my cheekbones.

When you saw the beets

and half-used makeup wipes

in the trash can,

you became suspicious.

I prick my pinky finger

with an earring and dab the oozing red

onto my cheeks instead.

The earring is thrown away  
and the makeup wipes are hidden  
under the wooden floorboards.  
I learn from my mistakes.

### **About a Butterfly**

Two glasswing butterflies  
flutter through the air.  
Their opalescent wings,  
radiating and proud.  
In the mushroom meadow,  
they land on a fallen log of oak,  
oozing a fermented sap.  
The creatures land and sip on  
the ambrosia, drunk with sugar.  
With serrated wings, the zebra longwing  
appears and shreds one into pieces.  
Its remains scattered on the log,  
sticky and dead,  
combine with the sap.  
The remaining one sips from the mixture.