

# Anthology of Megan Blaney



Presented by

*My poetic Side* 

## Dedication

*To Russ.*

## summary

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## A Tiger, a Tie, and a Monkey with a Note

A tiger paces his cage  
Back and forth  
Furrowing the dirt  
Forgetting his majesty

An executive fixes his tie in the mirror  
Practicing his speech  
To his wife and daughter  
What will they say?  
When he can't pay the mortgage  
Any more

A monkey hangs from a railing  
Picking passerbys pockets  
He steals wallets  
Keys, and protein bars  
Once, he stole a suicide note

He unfolded it behind the food court  
Mouth full of almonds  
Tracing the letters  
With grubby fingers  
Not understanding the weight  
But sensing the hurt

The tiger growls at dusk  
Not out of anger  
But hunger for something  
He can't name

The executive sits in his car  
Forehead to the steering wheel  
Tie loosened

Searching his breath  
For a scrap of courage  
To walk inside

And the monkey?  
He tucks the note  
Into a planter by the escalator,  
Where a janitor finds it later  
And reads it  
And decides to call  
His estranged brother  
For the first time in years

## My Soul for the Devil

Should I sell my soul to the devil?  
In trade, I offer my poems?  
a place in famous anthologies,  
a chance to reach the world  
with my words.

I ponder this in the comfort  
of my living room,  
a lavender candle lit,  
my cinnamon delight curled at my side,  
watching a bug limelight its way  
across the ceiling.

Limelight?  
is it worth the weight of my fate?  
Of every laugh, every tear,  
after the contract is signed  
in blood?

I wonder.

But then I think?  
what is a soul made of  
if not the ravaged, tender pages  
I've already given away  
one poem at a time?

What bargain could he offer  
that I haven't already made  
with midnight,  
with coffee spoons,  
with the quiet ache  
that pushes me to write

when everyone else sleeps?

Fame is a fickle lantern,  
glowing bright, fading fast.  
But my words?  
my stubborn, breathing words?  
they are mine.  
Hard-won.  
Homegrown.

And I decide,  
as the candle burns low  
and my cinnamon delight sighs  
against my ribs?

I will rise on my own ink,  
not on his terms.  
Never on his terms.

## Rift

A narrow rift opens?  
splitting the bright  
from what's gone sour.  
It widens by the hour,  
pulling down pieces  
the past won't claim.

Throw in your worries,  
your half-formed fears?  
the rift swallows everything.  
With every offering  
it grows deeper.  
Careful now?don't slip.

One side: the hopeful.  
The other: the haunted.  
Be grateful, we say,  
for the space between?  
as if distance could save us,  
as if it could drag the worst away.

But listen?our footholds  
are dusting out beneath us.  
And in the end,  
we tumble together  
into the widening dark.



## The Reaper Said

I walked backward  
through time's busted window?  
glass dust on my sleeves,  
cobwebs clinging like old excuses.  
I kept walking  
until my legs quit on me.  
Sat down on the bank  
of some muddy river,  
the kind you only find  
when you're tired of pretending.  
The boat back to my past  
was tied to a splintered dock,  
half-sunk,  
taking on gray water  
like it was finally admitting defeat.  
I ended up talking to the Reaper?  
not dramatic,  
just two worn-out people  
sharing memories.  
The tea was terrible.  
The cookies fell through him.  
We laughed anyway.  
I asked him why endings matter,  
why any of this has to go dark.  
He shrugged.  
"Why start at all?"  
So I told him my reasons?  
the real ones,  
the ones I never say out loud.  
He nodded.  
"There you go," he said.  
"Flip the coin.  
It's the same story."

## Dragonflies

You showed me the different colors  
of dragonflies,  
their wings flashing blue and gold  
as they skimmed the air.  
You pointed out the ant mounds,  
the wasps humming their warnings,  
and the moths  
that unfolded like soft flowers  
from their chrysalis.

The tiny world fascinated you,  
and you invited me into it?  
each creature a treasure  
you couldn't wait to share.

Before my panic attack  
Tore it all away?  
In the middle of the woods,  
Past the water?  
Where I swore you would propose.  
Down on one knee,  
Tossing stones that skipped  
The waves.

## Stuffed Peppers

I slice the peppers  
horizontally,  
the way you like them.

Stuff them with turkey,  
tomato sauce, rice,  
and spices  
(secret).

A little cheese on top,  
then the oven?  
375 for forty-five minutes.

No, this isn't a recipe card.

I know you love stuffed peppers  
and I can't wait to?

Wait.  
What's this text?

Of course.

The timer chirps.  
I pull them out.

I set one pepper  
dead center on the plate,  
wipe the sauce from the rim,  
presentation still matters.

Steam curls up.

I eat standing at the counter.  
The other plate stays clean.

## Pale Moon

I want to believe in you.  
But I fall  
and you're not there.  
I cry  
and nothing answers.  
I bleed  
and nothing heals.  
Each time,  
I lose faith.  
I call your name.  
Silence.  
So I wonder  
if I've been speaking  
to nothing at all.  
Just me,  
yelling at the moon,  
soaking a pillow,  
hurting  
alone.

## New Year, New Me?

Resolutions

Come as

Personal

Revolutions.

What we

Really need

Is to lose

10 pounds,

And publish

A novel.

Buy a house

And invest

In stocks.

Get a puppy.

Get a partner?

Get married?

Or separate

And be strong,

Single.

Or maybe?

What we

Really need

Is to stay

Up too late?

Share a chardonnay

Or a seltzer?

With our families.

## Fishing with Ned

Went fishing Saturday with my buddy Ned,

We sat there quiet, barely what was said.

I burned through cigarettes?maybe twenty,

He cracked some beers, yeah, more than plenty,

And all the damn fish might as well be dead.

The sun beat down and cooked his round red face,

I said, "Let's drift on down, find us a place."

We floated slow, killing time downstream,

He had to piss?broke the whole damn dream?

And fish cleared out like we'd blown the case.

Then his old lady called from the mall,

Said she was done and ready for it all.

She wanted fish for dinner, fried up nice,

We said no luck, not even once or twice?

Just a waterlogged doll. That's all.



## I Sit

I came out of the womb silent,  
Yet at the behest of the nurse,  
I took a shuddering breath  
And wailed.

Decades later  
I sit in a coffee shop in Manhattan.  
People spill like beans around me.  
And here I sit.  
Here I sit.

I got into my car today  
After the funeral.  
I sat in silence.  
Until that night, at my partner's behest  
I took a shuddering breath.  
I wailed.

## A 4am Dream

I am covered with bugs.

Beetles. Lice.

Creeping, crawling things.

No spiders.

They cling to my hair.

I wipe them from my eyelids.

They infest my mouth.

I chew.

I spit them out.

They taste like kidney beans.

The other poets are hosts, too.

We are all hosts.

Food tables outside,  
covered in insects.

We dig in.