

# Damp

Poetry • Emily Clancey

I step outside and look up. I am small. The sky is an even wall of white, almost blue or even lavender. The porch is cold and slick beneath my feet. Birdsong echoes flatly.

I take it in, and try to find the warmth I had been looking for when I stepped outside to look at the sky. All I feel is cold.

There is something damp and dismal here. Something alive, but not the way people are. It's alive the way vines are as they creep into the rock and pull it apart. The way carpenter bees are as they buzz deeper into the wood. The way fungus is as it hollows dead things.

And the birdsong echoes flatly.

And the sky is a wall of white.

There is something dead. But not the way people can die. It's dead the way mirrors are dead. The way puppets are dead. The way acrylic, no matter how you paint it, is dead. There is something dead here and I think it lives in me.

And the birdsong echoes flatly.

And the sky is a wall of white.

There is mutiny in my body, rejection, revolt. Wordless noise ringing in my skull. Bouncing off of corners and polished mirrors. Emptiness without appetite, crying just to cry, body mute.

Wanting to be strong does not make you strong. I haven't been well since I was smaller, sickness seeds sown deep. Who knows how soon it deformed.

And the noise, it echoes flatly.

And my face is a wall of white.