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POETRY

CHALLENGE-TO-COLLAB

READERS' CHOICE

WEEK 2

VIS A VIS by Mamyaw Gajito

I look into my sunken eyes Bloodshot and watery A curse bubbles in my throat The offspring of misery Hate is such a weak word For the disdain I feel For this poor excuse of flesh crushed by life's heel The expletives come in a torrent Wild and unruly and dangerous I take it all in without a word Until I screamed myself raw I look at myself in pity And speak in a gentle whisper From the dredges of my psyche A light shines in the muck As heavy as the lashes I gave myself in shame These pure pearls of benevolence Weigh far heavier I balk at their brilliance Denying their existence In this moment of disbelief I finally embrace myself Cocooned in the warmth I never felt before I accept my shadow I accept my light I am far from complete But I am less fragmented now With each piece I find I soon will be whole



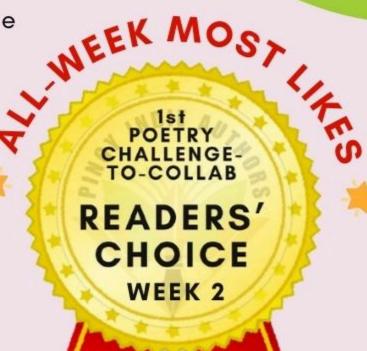
KAPAYAPAAN by Mamyaw Gajito

samyo ng hanging banayad haplos ng damo sa palad ningning ng kalul'wang hubad pusong walang hinahangad silay ng araw sa dahon tinig mong mahinahon alaala ng kahapon di alintana ng ngayon walang galit, walang lungkot bukas ay aking nilimot damdaming masalimuot iniunat bawat lukot sa saliw ng piping awit at damdaming di mabanggit sa tanda ng 'sang kudlit kapayapaa'y nakamit



MY WEYR by Mamyaw Gajito

I return to my weyr Bogged down with all of today's cares My nest is a welcoming sight my hoard gleaming in the dim light Ages have passed since I hatched from my dam's sins Growing up within this mountain What once were hers, I have now begotten Along the walls of this lair I have laid brilliant gems bare Each one twinkling before my eyes Each one worth a thousand kingdoms' price I lay on my nest covered in furs Yet it does not fit me as before l push against its rim Making sure I'm cosy within The nest cracks and breaks A part of me starts to ache Yet this must be done, true The old must give way to the new Once more, I rearrange my bedding Making sure it is to my liking I look around my lair And taste the warm air Some creatures await outside My heart skips, I want to hide I catch myselt, and I chide This is my weyr! I decide who comes inside With trepidation, I walk to the entrance At my sight, some dragonets begin to dance Their flights' beauty has me enthralled And to them, I gently called "Come into my weyr, tiny siblings! l pray that it is to your liking. Share my nest, my gems, and my hoard Let us live in peaceful accord.' As one they filled the air with trills My draconic heart was tilled Never has my lair been so alive Maybe now, 'my heart will thrive



TIGER STRIPES by Mamyaw Gajito

thin slivers of skin lighter than the ones surrounding it raised to the touch braille etched on flesh self-inflicted blemishes each denoting a personal shortcoming tiny crosses which I bear winched on each other like a veil wordlessly they accuse me of pride, of sloth of gluttony, of greed of folly, of blindness of deafness, of apathy my face is a rictus of repugnance at the sight of these tiger stripes the more I try to erase them my shame makes them angrier yet, there are a precious few who take in my disfigurements and see them not as just scars but as trophies of a mind at war now I see my brandings in a new light stories carved upon my own flesh reminders of moments at my lowest propelling me to reach my highest I am my scars my scars are me within my warm embrace I thrive; I am free



STEVE by Mamyaw Gajito

once when I was walking in the woods l came upon a kitten just newly born l looked all around it's mother was gone and through its piteous yawls I decided to take it home l fed it, l kept it warm I cradled it in my arms I thought, "Finally, a cat of my own!" thus I named the kitten Steve day by day Steve grew getting stronger, getting bigger getting livelier, getting bigger getting sweeter, getting bigger I then realised that Steve was actually female and that she wasn't a cat she was a cougar! I didn't know what to do I was scared when I knew but Steve would rub her head on my leg things didn't matter then I love Steve, and she is fond of me that's all there is to it I am Steve, and Steve is me one and the same, caring for each other everyday I am learning still to accept my wild, unruly self embracing all facets that are me and Steve living in chaotic harmony Steve is a gift I never asked for but I will never trade her for the world

