

“Glass and Ashes”
By: Lauren Foster

Cuts and burns
Slugs turn into jugs
Jugs of pills thrilling that chilling feeling
Anxiety compresses depression
Depression compresses anxiety
Hanging on to that broken branch on that tree
Standing in the middle of an open fire with a shard of glass
Feet grow numb to the feel of the grass

You ask what is wrong with me
That’s what I feared
That your advice that “it’s all in the mind” would die
And I know that it’s only a small fragment of the mind
I know that it’s only imagination
But all the small fragments gather into something bigger than me

Cuts and burns
Alcoholic holy water expose my cuts and burns
My anxiety compresses my depression
Then,
My depression compresses my anxiety
It’s not in my head
This is real
I am cutting and burning alive
Too close to go popping pills to heal my insides
Don’t try to find the body
A burnt ghost emerges
Cuts and burns turn into glass and ashes

Stop asking if I’m okay
Stop asking if I can make it go away
It’s here to stay
Stop asking who peed in my cereal today
Stop asking mundane, ignorant questions
Natural selection
Cracked and loaded gun can do more than just stun

It can kill you
Bullets are the words they force me to say in church
I'm in church
They don't deserve my actual words
Stop asking for my words
They deserve to be locked away in a cage never heard
Cuts and burns turn into glass and ashes

How dim are your sunglasses?
Does my sunlight blind you so bad that you're forced to gaze into my darkness?
Can you see me standing in the open fire in the middle of the woods?
Not feeling too good
My bad I forgot my parents are reading
God forbid that I cause my own bleeding
Dad's a nurse
Mom's a missionary
Sis is an entrepreneur
I'm the writer but for some reason can't write my recurring dark feelings
Because they're always reading
Everyone's reading
Don't start bleeding
They'll know you're human
Cuts and burns turn into glass and ashes
A reminder of how I've always been
Human