

POETRY | FALL 2023

The Volume of Pain

By Maya Klauber

My friend, whose body is also at war
with itself, once said *all good things*

feel immense. Those five words broke
me open—a gut punch to some tucked
up sadness I’ve carried from the start.

I’ve always listened as people said things
like no man’s an island. I’m not so sure

they know that pain maroons you, over
and over. Pursues you relentlessly—almost
single-mindedly—across borders and days.

Pain speaks out boldly, drowning out the
company you try so hard to keep. It’s that

weighted down difficulty of anything and
everything. Each step a sharp reminder.
Each inhale a chore. But now I’m not alone.

Ten thousand miles from here, where it’s
wintertime now, while it’s August here,

she wakes to the same unpronounceable
disease. Slowly. Carefully. We try hard
not to wake the pain, so we might hear

our world above it. It’s tough to imagine
Melbourne magpies or Manhattan doves

calling, and we can hear them. Morning sun
warming our old-young spines, and I think
maybe it’s never been truer than it is in this

moment—that *all good things feel immense*.

For Kate

Maya Klauber is a visual artist and emerging poet living in New York City. After earning a B.A. in creative writing from Colby College in 2008, her first poem was published in *The Café Review*. She went on to earn a Master of Social Work (MSW) from Columbia University in 2012, while coping with chronic health issues—experiences that have informed and deepened her empathy and style of writing. Klauber resides on the Upper West Side of Manhattan with her beloved husband and rescue pup. Her poems will appear in *Green Ink Poetry*, *Last Leaves* magazine and *Tiny Wren Lit*.

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