

POETRY | SPRING 2023

## Untitled, For A Bird

By Samantha Stewart

I stepped over the fray of feathers  
to gather a bag and paper towel  
to collect them not touch them  
the two clutching feet  
a tiny glistening organ  
and remains of gentle body with tufts  
of yellow and green

my own cat comes up to greet me  
as I write this and I loathe and love  
her in equal parts  
the bird is me and I am the cat  
the numb human who keeps a pet  
for company

I am the child and the parent  
I am the harm and the injury  
I am trying to undo this as I pinch  
the pieces into the bag that I will  
drop into the bin in the alley

no more! I say. I imagine rubbing  
my cat's face into it and yelling  
but know the utter confusion of it  
as I dream it

To be broken and small and beautiful  
To stand by something broken and small  
To hurt in an ugly way

I listen to the water boil and bury this all  
inside me, inside this poem. Tuck it with  
feathers and sunlight and bile  
a rough nest of dirty life

nest knocked by eucalyptus branch  
branch knocked by winter rain  
and we are all still here  
small and broken and beautiful

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**Samantha Stewart is a psychiatrist in Los Angeles. She lives with her husband, 3 children and their cat, Cookie.**

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