

My Mother, the Sun
Lindsay Young

Five billion years
Sit between now and the day that the sun will burn out

Five billion years is sixty-three million times longer
Than the average human lifespan
So I call this impossible stretch
Between me and the sun's end

Almost infinite

Tip my chin to its brilliance and drink
Like the two of us have all the time in the world

Some days, a sunrise is all that lifts me from darkness
Most days, when it dips below horizon
Something in me goes with it
A sun child
Tethered to the promise of its return
The promise of its warm
Tied to the promise of its
Infinity

Someone asks me what it feels like
To find out that my mother has cancer

It feels
Like a grand miscalculation
Like a smear on the universe
Turned infinity
To tomorrow

Like panic
Over never knowing life
Without sun
Never learning to survive
Its absence.
Fear that I won't
That no one will

Like setting its weight on top of me
Hoping my shoulders be enough to hold it
To the sky for as long as I can

Like fear of sleep
Of night
Of sun may not rise
In the morning
In a morning
Soon

The sick of knowing that I can't save it
From its own bursting
An earthbound servant watching
Its savior crucified by its own body,
Clinging to the light it leaves

Like I would rather the sun burn me
To a fucking crisp if it meant
Holding it
In my arms

Like finding out that they were wrong
That five billion years can shrink down
To the size of a hospital bed
Of a phone call
Of my father collapsing in their bedroom
Of her hands in mine

Like I was promised so much more time
So much time
It felt like the sun would never die

My mother, the sun
Warming every room she walks into
Keeps me steady
Keeps Kept me still

Imagine
A life without what tethers you to it
Hoping that you don't float off
Into space. Into dark,
An empty you can't fill

It feels
Kind of like that.

Lindsay Young is a poet from Long Island, New York. She competed at the 2018 Women of the World Poetry Slam and represented the city of New York as a member of The Nuyorican Poets Cafe's 2018 National Poetry Slam team. Lindsay was crowned a 2018 NUPIC (National Underground Poetry Individual Competition) Co-Champion. She was a member of the 2019 Brooklyn Slam team, and was part of their poetry production that premiered in Antigua in the Summer of 2019. She is the author of "Salt to Taste," her debut book of poetry, which was published the Summer of 2019. She is a Winter Tangerine alumnus, a 2020 Watering Hole fellow, and her work has been published in *The Fem Lit Magazine*, *The Offing Magazine*, and featured on Blavity and SlamFind. She currently works for nonprofit organizations as a counselor and workshop facilitator, largely servicing youth of color.