



# THE JAR

## *Gets Bigger*

The Love Yourself  
Foundation  
Blog

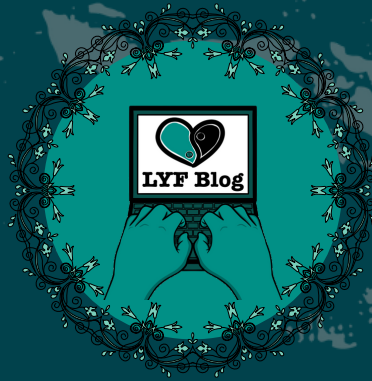


THE LOVE YOURSELF  
FOUNDATION ZINE

# *The Jar Gets Bigger*







"How lucky I am to have something that makes saying  
goodbye so hard."

Winnie the Pooh



To those who have had to say goodbye. To those who  
never got to say hello. To those who have lost,  
grieved, and missed anything in their lives—we may  
never be able to truly understand, but we can give  
you the space to show us what you feel. Thank you to  
all who have submitted to the first ever LYF Blog  
Poetry Competition: The Jar Gets Bigger, and thank  
you to all who continue to support us. We couldn't  
have gotten through such hard times without you.



Love,

The LYF Blog



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# DRIFTERS

JESUS SOLIS-LEON

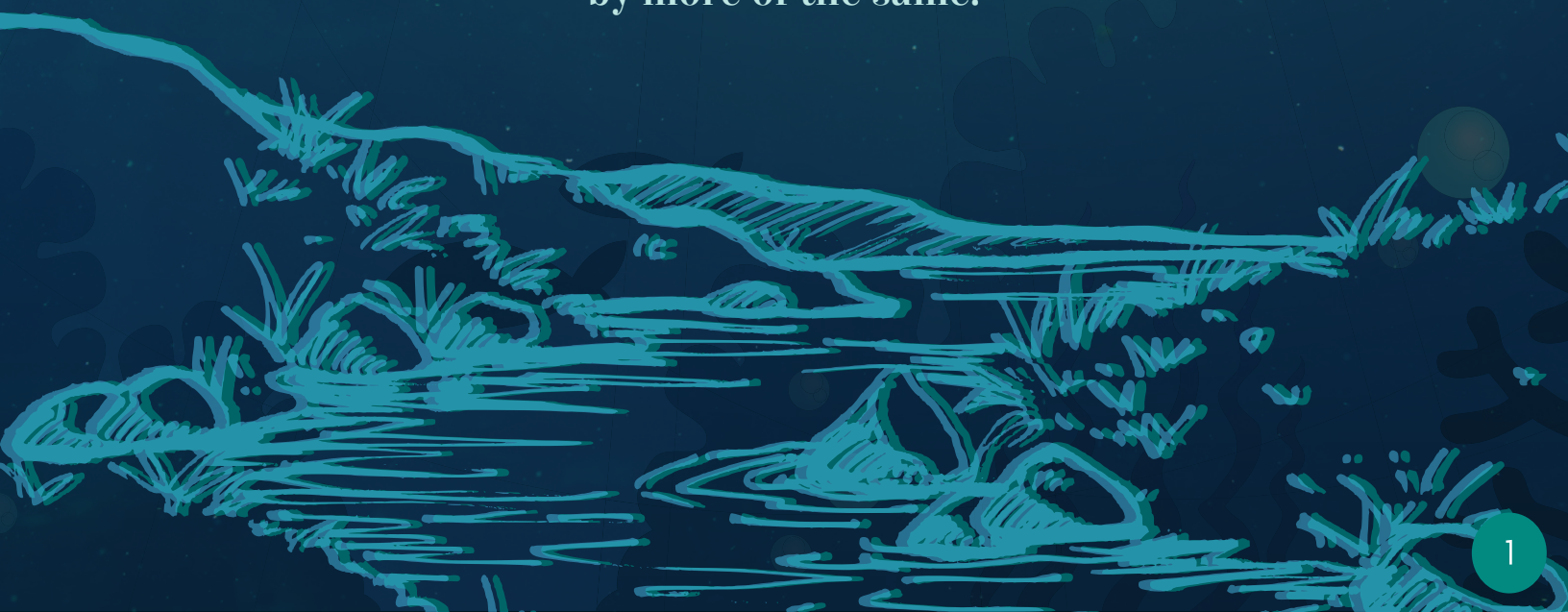
The rushing River Styx ushers spirits  
soaked in grief, to the great beyond.

Jagged rocks catch drifters  
whose tariffs were never met.

Drifters who think  
their time has come too soon.

Drifters who leave their families  
grief and strife-filled lives.

Only to be followed  
by more of the same.







To Clarice.  
May He Rest In Peace.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jesus is a first generation Mexican immigrant, artist, and scientist. Once an academic researcher, Jesus has moved on to pursue his passions in the performing arts world in both poetry and music. Since the beginning of 2022, Jesus had become heavily involved in the Las Vegas arts scene. His involvement and dedication to his crafts has landed him a feature as an emerging artist in the Utah Arts Festival, an upcoming poetry book release entitled 'Weird-Heavy' with BookLeaf Publishing, and an upcoming EP scheduled for debut in late 2022.

To keep up with Jesus, follow him on Instagram and TikTok  
@JezuzXP.



# valentine's day

MARYANN LANDKAMER

I'm sorry that I asked you  
    "what happens after we die"  
when I was eight  
Because I remember the bewilderment in your voice  
    that jerked the car  
But thank you for not telling me  
    "heaven"  
Because I appreciate the honesty of  
    "I don't know"  
And you probably didn't remember  
that conversation  
But it's all I can think about  
    when mom told me  
    "I'm going to give him these flowers"  
that she got from her boyfriend



# about the author

Grief to me does not necessarily connote sadness. It's a complicated emotion, yet it brings people together. My inspiration from this poem draws from the relationship I had with my father who passed away just after my 16th birthday. While the years continue, my family will never forget the impact he made on us and we will continue to share our lives with him even after his death. My name is Maryann Landkamer and I am a 2022 undergraduate from UNLV who aspires to write poetry and memoirs. When I am not writing, I like to crochet blankets for my sister's dogs or keychains for my Etsy store PeachiiPengwen. For more updates on my work, you can find me on Twitter @Quiafila or Instagram @Quiliadonna.





# MOURNING LIGHT

ALICIA LOPEZ

Allowing grief to lift up into the mourning light  
Casting a shadow as dark as the space you left behind.

These seven stages are more like cycles.

Me reaching, yearning, like the ocean wants to touch the  
face of the moon.

Taking all the love it can

With the rise & fall of the tide.

It crashes back into place just to reach back up.

I will keep reaching for the memories of you.  
The memories keep my days in sight.  
I hold onto  
The emptiness I feel inside.  
Because I want that space to be forever filled by you  
Even if it's the ghost of you.  
Or the energy you left in this room.  
The love you instilled inside of my being.  
I could never lose that light, where even my grief shines  
bright.





# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alicia Lopez is a Spoken Word Artist who explores her creativity in many realms. From the performing arts to martial arts, she is fueled by self-expression. As a Las Vegas local with Los Angeles and Mexican roots, she draws inspiration from her ties to the community and everlasting appreciation for nature. Her narrative poems explore patterns that can be found within all living and moving beings on Earth. An introspective lens is incorporated in her writing as she utilizes poetry to navigate her self-healing journey. By sharing her art, she empowers herself and subsequently those around her to live in truth and love.

# A Season of Swells

Niko Mendoza

Let the waves wash over you

Fear not the riptides sweeping you to sea  
Or the night blue deep seeking to swallow you whole  
A timeline pruned, a present changed to past  
That lost life deserves your grieving black

Like all storms it will calm  
You will reincarnate on the beach,  
slightly bruised, slightly drowned, gasping and new

A strange and yet familiar shore with smooth sand—only just jagged glass  
The salt on the breeze, a ghostly kiss of that which rubbed on wounds so tender  
The glint of sun on waves blinding more than the tears

Let the light bathe you and bask  
in the warm balance of life's ebb until  
The waves start flowing once again



# clinging is a most cherished illusion

Paul Stoddard

Retracing broken steps  
Grieving the man who died  
Shadows morph and play  
Across from flaming pyre:

HERE LIES A MAN  
WHO'S TURNED TO ASH  
A MASTER OF SELF-SABOTAGE  
BEAUTIFUL LIES BECAME HIS ART.

Trying to stop the motion of my sea  
anxiety became the master of me  
With dogmas to repeat:  
"avoid everything,  
think in extremes,  
it's real this time,  
they're annoyed with you,  
don't ask for help,  
Soon they'll find you out,  
Your good luck has run out."

Anxiety cut me  
off from feeling:  
real fear,  
joy expanding boundaries,  
anger bordering me,  
sadness rocking me to sleep-  
drab avoidant anxiety  
Pacing back and forth-  
not a walk or a run-  
sprint or jog-  
Unsustainable pace  
out of rhythm,  
Off the groove  
It wilts the grass down,  
gives the carpet dark spots  
And never rests

To transform like tide

time spent -sunlight blocked, curtains drawn-  
Unable to see:

that nourishment comes from within  
That he was enough  
to begin with,  
that what they said  
was not a definition

that relationships come with expiration dates- gotta  
throw out what's molding in the fridge-

That inspiring clear air

works both ways-

that being an adult means to take care of the kid  
within,

That reciprocity is the minimum

That giving too much is as selfish as it gets

That sometimes you gotta lose to win

That clinging is a most cherished illusion

that love is endless, and forever begins

the end forever begins,

the end forever begins.



my heart is a stubborn organ  
it refuses to let you go  
*i* refuse to let *us* go

it drags itself across a desert toward a mirage of false hope  
maybe you will change your mind  
maybe *i* can change your mind

it reproaches the world for making love complicated  
for enveloping intimacy in past trauma  
for portraying genuine connection as a daunting task

it desperately pleads to make what could have been a reality  
your radiant, smiling face gazing lovingly onto mine  
two passionate souls discovering how to be human together

it dives into sickeningly sweet nostalgia  
for a time that never existed  
a time where we worked things out

it misses the warmth of your embrace, your fingers interlocked with mine  
it misses the way you made it quiver with desire  
it craves someone you cannot be, something you cannot provide

it does not know how to accept our reality  
it aches, cracks, and desperately wishes to stop beating  
but it keeps going; it keeps loving

So do I.

## five stages

ISAURA GARCIA



# Hey, How's That Car You Bought Back in December?

Safiyya Bintali

One day during winter break  
you told me about  
"the most fun financial mistake"  
you ever made.

It was an old  
Toyota Supra

all scuffed white

and

falling

apart.

But  
you loved it so much that  
every day after you  
brought it home  
it was what we  
talked most about.

And that's how it went  
how we went  
for a while.

So much Supra that  
when I'd write  
s-u-p on my phone

it didn't suggest super  
but your car instead.

Then

when spring rolled around  
you decided we  
weren't so great anymore.  
We—  
that was us until  
March or February  
or whenever you made  
that decision

to quit.

I don't know.

Talks fizzled quicker.  
There was too much silence.  
Our everyday conversations  
became memories.

And as for the Supra  
  
we never talked about it again.

Once you mentioned selling it  
but that was the last I heard.

And soon enough  
s-u-p became  
super again

and Supra  
had to be  
all typed out

if I ever wanted to  
write it again.

But now  
really  
there's no point.

Because

yeah

I can take a hint.



# Imposter Syndrown

Anais Soto Lopez

I saw you drowning as I stood above  
"God help me, please," as water shoves.  
Imposter sin to lend a limb.  
An image never fitting from within,  
where do I end and he begins?

If I believe then you'll appease,  
in hopes that you'll just fucking cling.  
Submerged my feet to fit the King,  
but no crown emerged.  
To hell with this aimless shoestring.

As fear arose I start to swing  
It's now or never, sink or swim,  
The light is going dim.  
Reminding you that I'm not him but fuck,  
I think I have to jump in.





# LEAVE IT BE

Tanna Marie


You cannot experience love without grief.  
The two intertwine like the roots of a tree,  
Love being the branch and grief being the leaves,  
That will inevitably meet the soil beneath.

A reminder that things will come to an end,  
But grief is not the enemy, grief is your friend.  
Teaching you how to look within  
And navigate emotions that cut deep,  
But it's you who chooses how you view the leaves.

You can ignore them and wait for a gust of wind to lift them away  
Or you can pile them all up, jump in, and play  
With the memories of what was, what is, and what may,  
Grow again.  
Because they WILL grow again.

Unless, of course, you cut down the tree.  
Choose to never plant another seed  
Of love in the garden that is your life, but *please...*  
Remember the oxygen that tree will bring.  
Remember what it was like to breathe  
Before grief... took your breath away.

I promise if you allow the tree to remain  
Your lungs will be filled again one day,  
So I pray, you leave it be.  
Inhale the love, exhale the grief.



# Let Go

Craig Hall

When there is an upwelling  
There must be an outflow.

As memories flood in  
A downpour of tears must follow.

If pain won't breach its banks,  
Fissures and cracks will form in the dam.

Grief cannot be held in.

Sit by the water.  
Let the current carry the sorrow.

Let the breeze carry the  
“I miss you” up to the ascended soul.

It will hear and understand.

Remember, there has been loss  
Yet, all is not lost.



# *My Vision of an Ideal Future*

Madison Kleinrock-Andrews

My vision of an ideal future  
has changed several times  
over the years.

I was forced to make  
some of those changes;  
I chose to make others.

My vision of an ideal future  
used to be building a life with you  
until you ran  
from our connection  
straight to her;  
now, it's finding someone new  
who will stay.

My vision of an ideal future  
used to be graduating from Stanford University  
until their admissions committee  
emailed me a rejection letter;  
now, it's graduating from UNLV.

My vision of an ideal future  
used to be getting an MD  
and treating patients  
in my own medical practice  
until I found another career  
that I think will be more fulfilling;  
now, it's getting a PhD  
and making scientific discoveries  
in a research lab.

My vision of an ideal future  
will change several more times  
over the years,  
but I'm not afraid anymore  
of the changes that I will be forced to make  
or to make the changes that I want to  
because I'm happy now  
even though this present  
wasn't my past self's vision of an ideal future.



I wrote the wish on a paper,  
made it into a star,  
and put it in my tiny jar.

I'm in an ocean full of fallen stars,  
balancing myself on delicate paper  
that could burst any minute

The star I wrote for you on the first day,  
was under my feet and crumpled by my heel.  
I unfolded it and it said, "Friends?"

Another star caught my sleeve, and it said  
your name and mine.  
It was one of the thousands in space.  
I wondered if it was boredom or infatuation.

After sifting through the wishful stars of me and you,  
One star cut my finger and it said, "I'm not mad."  
The light seeped through, and I reached it,  
as I crumbled the star under my heel.

I climbed, and climbed, and climbed  
through messages of you and me.  
My pleas in colorful paper.

The stars scratched me or held me, sometimes  
they didn't let me go.  
They were sharp,  
folded in haste.

I crushed one last star  
to get me to the peak of the papers.  
Unwrapped by my efforts, it said,  
"Please don't leave me."

Something hit my head,  
a star fell again.  
I looked to the glass, then to the lid,  
the slit I made with my utility knife.

Stars have fallen here for days.  
This one said,  
"Forgive, because it was my fault."

Another hit my head,  
This one said,  
your name and mine.

It's almost time to get a new jar.

# Stars of Paper

ISABELLE GARCIA



# Still Poetry

Reese Darko

Sickness spreads her wings like wildfire  
Simultaneous slow decay  
Waiting game  
Disintegrating every body inside out  
I'm tired, I'm okay

Hanging onto words I say delicately  
Afraid they might out me  
Reveal magicless scribbles posing desperately  
As creative word counts and clever manuscripts

Five to six lines at a time  
My mind is distracted  
Extracting only little bites of my true thoughts

I am less poet than human these days  
Finding ways around vulnerability  
It hurts too much to express directly  
So I dress her up pretty

Refine her curls softer, more easily managed  
No one has to know of these frayed ends slowly coming undone  
Too damaged for anything but to be cut and forgotten

I struggled to wake up the other morning  
Mourning the loss of my fire  
Sickness' spreading like water  
Prose smudged in salt splatter



Thank you for listening  
Admittedly, I'm not even fully awake yet

Clear my throat, choke on lost words  
Pen my antidote  
I can face this pain in silence

I don't feel so much myself  
Just a shadow of my former fires smoldering on the shelf  
Pages I've not shed light on for some time

My heartache echoes in unfinished conversations,  
Futile concepts, and failed accomplishments

They say  
Whatever doesn't kill you makes you stronger

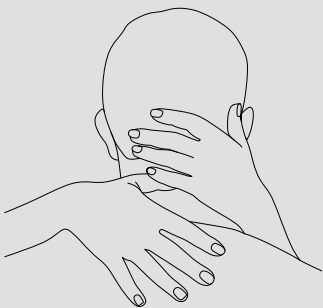
Well, I've held out a little longer than I should  
Just to show the world I'm good  
It doesn't hurt anymore  
Perhaps, I'm pretty sure  
One day my flames might return  
'Til then, I'm fine





# Let Go

Selina Soria



We started to talk again, but this time I didn't recognize the man behind my screen.

I didn't know how to talk to you. Do we reintroduce ourselves? Do we go by our last names?

We are not familiar. Being strangers again, wrecked my soul. You stated mid conversation, "my birthday is coming up."

I remember.  
You may not have a recollection of who I was all those years ago, but I remember.

Like the night we met, I can still feel my mouth going dry and chaotic butterflies taking up Space.

I remember the lust filled moments we stole late in the night. The way your eyes crinkle when you give me a toothy grin, because I said something silly.

When we held each other tightly fearing to be the one to let go first. Because our acts of love turned into a mistake no one wanted to admit.



I remember when you were head over heels for me  
one week.  
Two weeks later those feelings dissipated.

I knew there were many words left unsaid by us both  
but you wanted none of it, you still didn't want me.

Silence again

Shorter this time. You tried to be present through my grief but  
again, so many words left unsaid. This time we knew it could  
never be. Friends or otherwise.  
Six years more and radio silence, I wasn't strong so you had to  
be.

I kept breaking my own boundary.  
You either had strong vigor or you were showing  
me I was meant to be nonexistent to you.



Now, I don't know why my attempt worked this time except  
it was not in my favor. I don't know who you are. You're not  
the boy I met over a decade ago, you're a man now. I'm not a  
lovestruck sixteen-year-old, I'm a mother now. But you  
wiped the memory of me and hoped I had done the same.

Again, I chose to leave words unsaid,  
Instead, I replied, "I remember. April 21st, right?"





I'll order hot tea  
knowing I can't finish the pot  
by myself  
and you will pour it into our cups  
because you're younger

I'll ask for chicken feet and  
see if you want pork buns  
and I'll smile,  
watching you heap chili oil  
onto your plate  
and I'll pass you the soy sauce

"One order of steamed pork buns"  
I eat one, you have two

"One order of shumai"  
You eat two and place two on my plate

I chew slow and steady  
as you pass me my half,  
making sure I always got my fill  
even as you devour  
You'll order my shrimp noodle  
because I almost forget



And at the end of the meal,  
I'll pack up the leftovers of your half  
ask for shrimp noodle to go

the cart ladies will ask me where you are  
see the empty seat in front of me and  
click their tongues in confusion

I will hold my tea cup for warmth,  
wishing it was your hand

knowing,  
9 minutes away, you sleep in today  
and maybe tomorrow you'll come  
and see my ghost too



when your bestie says  
"facetime me" but it's that  
kinda call

CHARLIZE COLLE FERNANDEZ

i think people must hate to see my name  
when i call their phone.

you listen to me cry about how i am  
    unlovable  
        undeserving  
    unalive  
even though you picked up not because you care  
but because you are afraid of what will happen  
if you don't.

you must hate having to deal with me.  
(i'm too much.)

so i cut away the parts of myself that are  
    unpleasant  
        unbearable  
    unhappy  
to please the people that i wish  
would find me good enough for them to  
stay.

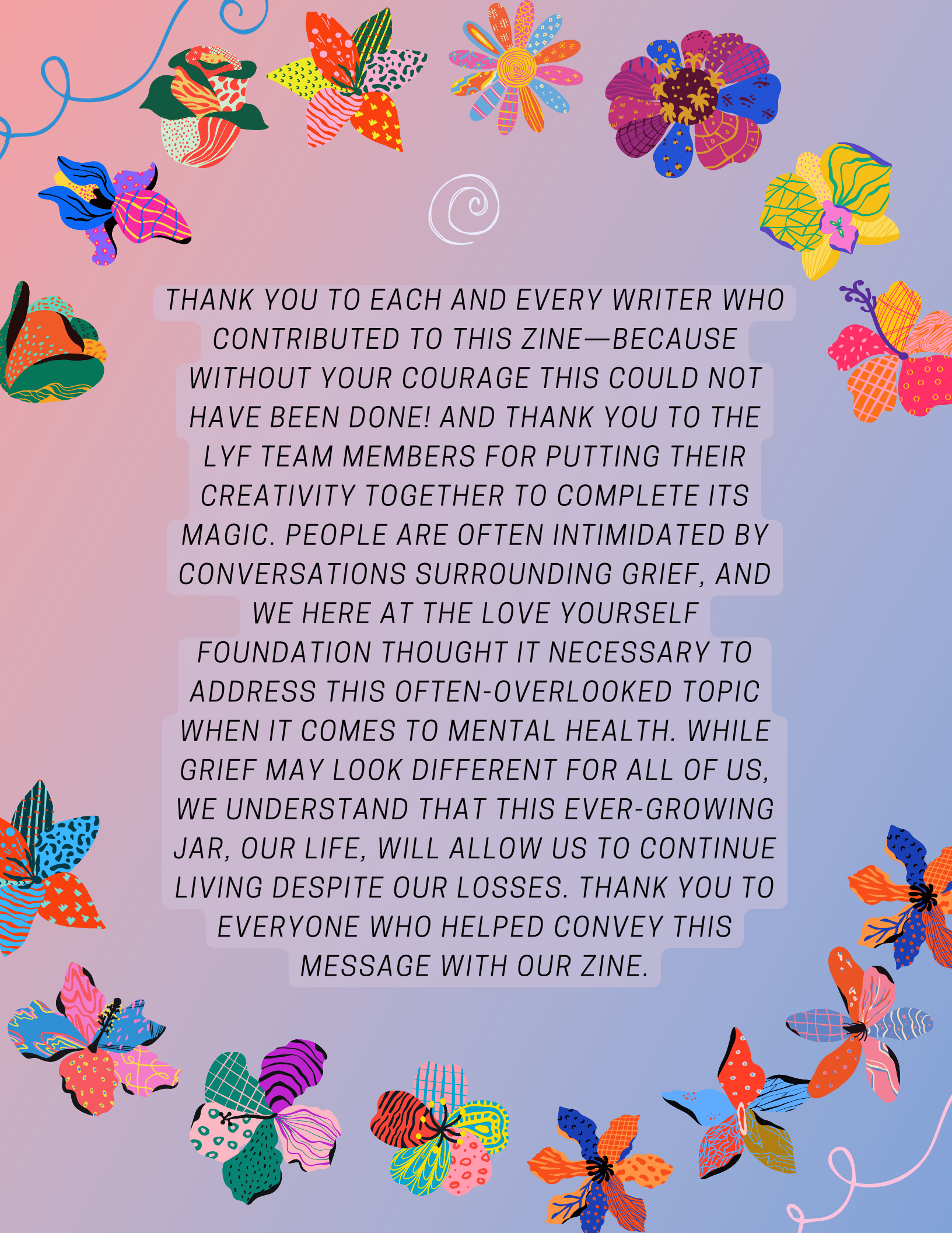
but you leave me anyway.  
(i'm too little.)

"i must not be worth the effort,"  
i tell you.  
"i must not be meant to be alive,"  
and you hang your head in your hands  
like you are sick.

i'm sorry.  
i don't know how to be anything else other than a burden.

(there's a certain grief to knowing  
i will never be enough.)



A vibrant, multi-colored border of stylized flowers and swirls surrounds the central text. The flowers feature various patterns like polka dots, stripes, and plaid in shades of blue, yellow, orange, and pink. A white swirl is positioned above the text, and a pink swirl is at the bottom right.

THANK YOU TO EACH AND EVERY WRITER WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THIS ZINE—BECAUSE WITHOUT YOUR COURAGE THIS COULD NOT HAVE BEEN DONE! AND THANK YOU TO THE LYF TEAM MEMBERS FOR PUTTING THEIR CREATIVITY TOGETHER TO COMPLETE ITS MAGIC. PEOPLE ARE OFTEN INTIMIDATED BY CONVERSATIONS SURROUNDING GRIEF, AND WE HERE AT THE LOVE YOURSELF FOUNDATION THOUGHT IT NECESSARY TO ADDRESS THIS OFTEN-OVERLOOKED TOPIC WHEN IT COMES TO MENTAL HEALTH. WHILE GRIEF MAY LOOK DIFFERENT FOR ALL OF US, WE UNDERSTAND THAT THIS EVER-GROWING JAR, OUR LIFE, WILL ALLOW US TO CONTINUE LIVING DESPITE OUR LOSSES. THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HELPED CONVEY THIS MESSAGE WITH OUR ZINE.

HERE AT THE LOVE YOURSELF FOUNDATION, WE  
ENCOURAGE VULNERABILITY, TEAMWORK, AND  
INDIVIDUAL CREATIVITY. OUR TEAM HAS DISPLAYED  
EACH OF THESE WONDERFULLY IN COMING TOGETHER  
TO MAKE THIS ZINE, AND WE'D LIKE TO  
ACKNOWLEDGE EACH MEMBER'S EFFORTS IN ITS  
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TEAM CREDITS

BACK COVER PAGE

SELINA WELLS

MEI-MEI MIJARES

PERRI MCGILLIVRAY

LORAIN GARCIA

LEONARD BRATTOLI

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MEI-MEI MIJARES

PERRI MCGILLIVRAY

HEATHER ZENI

CHARLIZE COLLE FERNANDEZ

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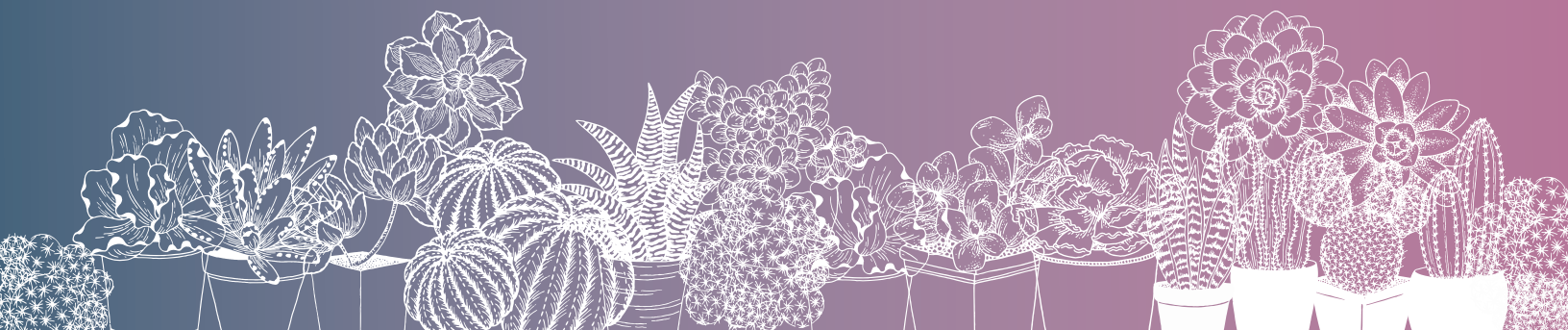
CHARLIZE COLLE FERNANDEZ

CESIA CORDIES & MIRIAM LACHICA

CESIA CORDIES & MIRIAM LACHICA

SELINA WELLS

EDITORS: CHARLIZE COLLE FERNANDEZ, LORAIN GARCIA, & MEI-MEI MIJARES





# The Jar Gets Bigger

“Grief - n. the anguish experienced after loss” (APA Dictionary of Psychology). Although normally associated with the death of a loved one, grief can be caused by the loss of anything that held emotional weight for you, whether that is a failed relationship, a missed job opportunity, or important plans that didn’t pan out. We all process our grief differently, but the one thing we do share is a common struggle to accept what we have lost and move on from the pain.

A popular misconception people seem to hold is the belief that grief is supposed to fade over time, but that’s not usually the case; we simply grow around our grief. Imagine your life as a jar with all your life experiences sitting inside taking up space. As you grow, so does your jar, until the grief that once took up so much space is just another part of your ever expanding glass container.

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