

*My Better* by Dee H.

It is summer and I am the most alive thing that I can see and touch. I know it because I can feel a nearby sparrow and its busy vibrations rush into me, piercing my breastplate, and curl itself into the shape of my heart.

I know because when I inhale, I intake visions of the beginning of the universe, and when I exhale, another beginning is there as if the air were laced with pixie dust.

My genesis is not made of loose particles, foreign elements or weightless bodies; she's sturdy, maybe yellow, the surrounding acreage so green and complimenting that you'd think green was beheld and named for the first time right here, at my home.

When my dog welcomes herself on the front lawn I will have to keep myself from squatting down next to her, because the deed and mortgage statement will not reflect enough ownership for me. So instead, I pluck out a hair and bury it, making it all mine. I'll let the soil stain my shirt and bury that, too.

When my partner sees me standing topless at the foot of our porch, a warbler will shoot through them, too, and sing its unchanging song of safety.

We will be harmless, not because of a tendency toward offense, but rather because there will no longer be a need for defense.

"There is no harm to be had here," we will cheep to each other, and when it does inevitably come knocking, we'll invite him in for dinner, give him a quiet place to rest, then gather him up and onto the street for collection in the morning.

I don't know what my lover looks like, but I imagine their face as a supernova that never fully burns out.

We will bubble with so much kinetic energy that our cells will threaten to split, like ice that is suddenly water, then gas, our love for one another so immense that it even squirms for room in its metaphysical form.

The first thing I will buy for the house will be windchimes, and they will give the Pavlovian a brighter footnote beneath its definition. When the breeze adds a glimmer to the earth's tune, I will know that I am home, and that this little bubble of bliss is all mine—not borrowed or rented.

Here, doubt will float out of my open windows like dust—like the dead waste that it is.

Here, my stomach will never fall unless I've just jumped really high.

Here, I will dress for work snoozily, and will adorn my collar with the affections my friends ascribe to me when I am not around.

Here, the sudden rushes of suicidality will curl up and die in my garden and will be replaced with the prick of a thorn, a splinter, an insect sting, and all of the fortunes to ensure every wound's healing.

Every last one.