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## My Love Letter to Nepantla

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# My Love Letter to Nepantla

Anel "Bell" Escalera

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Thank you for being my home,  
A place my body can rest.  
Soon it will decompose  
And my bones will build bassinets.

This bridge I call home,  
Where my soul is naked.  
It is star shaped like yours.  
*Es color de café como el tuyo.*

Beware of the trolls.  
They are old and white and have powdered wigs.  
They hold a decree of who is allowed,  
I don't keep my ID in this liminal space.

I have already detained myself.  
You have detained me  
They have detained me  
I have detained me.

I hope one day to grow wings,  
For legs are too heavy.  
Legs require thoughts and forgiveness,  
And I am a vengeful bitch.

I pray for a strong breeze,  
From the South to push me North.

They don't like me down there,  
Do I like it down there?

"I am a *Nepantlera*" I go to say.  
The thorns in my mouth I call teeth  
Do not allow me to speak.  
Or is it the broken spears of my ancestors?

When I was younger I dreamed of a place,  
Somewhere all others were the same.  
My star shaped soul matched yours.  
Your dimpled language was mine.

And now I am here.  
Too scared to build a house.  
Bones are fragile,  
And I fear this bridge may give.

The weight of my tears flow,  
They flood the bridge and overflow.  
They crash into the foundation,  
Eroding the calcium columns.

I'm tired.  
The toll to cross is my star soul,  
And I will soon run out of points.  
I will soon have to choose.

*No soy de aquí ni allá.*  
Stuck.  
This bridge is my home.  
The in-between.

**About the author:**

Anel "Bell" Escalera is an queer Chicana and community organizer. Bell was born and raised in the Bay Area where she currently lives. Her lived experience as a queer Chicana as well as her experience navigating higher education inform her creative work.