

TYGR: Student Art and Literary Magazine 2018-present

Volume 2021 | Issue 1

Article 35

2021

Inheritance

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Recommended Citation

Degner, Alexandria (2021) "Inheritance," *TYGR: Student Art and Literary Magazine 2018-present*. Vol. 2021 : Iss. 1 , Article 35.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/tygr/vol2021/iss1/35>

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Inheritance

ALEXANDRIA DEGNER

The way the cage of my mind captures my words,
Holding them hostage on my tongue, as
bitter as Aspirin on a canker sore
Lost words and alphabet soup fall onto the
pavement.

The way they ask why I won't say anything,
why I won't participate,
As if I could explain an empty mind to a
mass of matter teeming with
Thoughts like ants to an apple core.

The sweltering heat of blazon words, sticky
rice paper pages in my fingers
In the rainbow glow of a stained-glass
window, a booming voice:
Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit
the earth.

Sitting in a pew in Mary Janes and long
stockings, I wondered if I would
Ever feel the burn of passion like the
preachers I listened to,
Wondering if I could ever speak machine
gun fire.

Praying out loud felt like a body bag of
anxiety around my breathing corpse.
Girls my age bled from their mouths while I
sat in the bathroom stall,

Twisting the knife in my heart so that I bled
straight from the source

The more I wanted to feel, the icier I
became.

The more I wanted to talk, the less I did.
The more I wanted to stand up, the more I
was trampled.

In the sweltering heat of blazon words,
sticky rice paper pages in my fingers
In the rainbow glow of a stained-glass
window, a booming voice:

This book points to the way, the truth, the
life. There's a reason why words are so
powerful.

Waking up to lined pages, there was
machine gun spewed across the paper in
front of me

A prayer for the girl zipped inside the body
bag,

A memoir for the alphabet soup she spilled
on the pavement.

Meek. Easily imposed on, submissive, and
gentle.

I held my lines of machine gun fire up to the
light. I inherited more than the world itself.

I had finally inherited my voice.