



2021

Element

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Recommended Citation

Villanueva, Michelle (2021) "Element," *Floodwall Magazine*: Vol. 1: Iss. 3, Article 2.
Available at: <https://commons.und.edu/floodwall-magazine/vol1/iss3/2>

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Element

Element 1

at the dinner party I
was the sparrow who called
outside the window come forth
beloved of sky and dirt briefly
while the line blurred
breathing blurs the line

all along the tree
reaching forth with tree
hands held element of sky
as though the dancer
were the same

and promising
through its primeval glow
star and horseshoe
temple and temple spawn
wonder and inevitable gaze
while the squirrel

acorn love pats the earth
redeem with your palmprints
redeem from all the fibers
we are sentient, tendril-stretched
breathing

Element 2

with the flower
she still searches
casting out beauty
for a handful of dirt
kneading light-starved tendrils
where forbidden hands reach

the book says we learn
being from the trees
she replies my beloved
whispers his heartbeat
like they do

when the firmament breaks
with your sadness
I'll be with you

when time breathes in element
I'll be with you

when trees fail to reach you
I'll be with you

awash in starlight higher
than the dirt waiting for you
breathing your ether, always
to the end of the age

Element 3

to count the strands of time
passing the tree scraped
its prophecy rattling
light-soaked lilac awaits
breathing cold ether she said
my beloved dwells there
shining, warming my skin
with science-stained limbs
she is the voice of one
crying out in the garden
make straight the element

lying back she inhales
mystery shifting form
breath was the medium
liquid, viscous clouds
birds gaze down upon her
hands move aside the grass
stretching with each exhale

wider than the sky
closer than the dirt
widening still

About Michelle Villanueva

Michelle Villanueva is in her second year of study in the MFA in Creative Writing – Poetry program at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She received a J.D. from the University of Wyoming and a M.Div. from Bangor Theological Seminary. She is also in the process of ordination to the Episcopal priesthood. Her poetry has been published in *The Red Rock Review*.