

# I Stand On The Line

Kae Tempest

I draw down from the well where it gathers  
Time is a river that carries and buries  
If you wait for the right time, you'll never be ready  
But sometimes every cell in my skin feels too heavy  
We all know something's gone wrong  
Looking for convenient scapegoats to blame it on  
With all the problems that we have to contend with  
Why are trans bodies always on the agenda?  
I'm alive, thirty five years dying to breathe  
Was on my knees, fighting panic at the back of the stage  
Looking for salvation in the crowd  
Trying to hold it up, but I couldn't hold it down  
I was swimming but the waters were rising  
Terrified if I told the truth and stopped hiding  
And said what I couldn't bear to say to myself  
I would sacrifice everything I'd made for myself  
My family, my friends, the people who felt my music, would all leave  
It was a belt round my neck  
It was too big to look at square on, it kept growing  
I'd known it forever but I tried to stop knowing  
Thank god, for the multitudes in us  
The younger selves that will not give up even when we're inclined to  
If you turn your back on the light for too long  
The light doesn't die, it just stops trying to find you

I stand on a line that goes back  
That goes back to the dawn of my kind before that  
Before that, to the dawn of all time  
That extends, that extends  
To the end of it all, where it begins again  
I stand on the line that goes back  
That goes back to the dawn of my kind  
Before that  
Before that  
To the dawn of all time  
Going in, going in  
To the end where it all begins

Up from the rubble now, love is the muscle I train  
I walk myself home in the rain  
I know it hurts you when they look at you strange  
Misgender you intentionally, use your deadname  
When they point blank refuse you, call you confusing  
Assault you in the street until you're hardly moving  
I adore us, I do it all for us  
Our warmth is a portal  
We're awkward and graceful  
The place we are from is eternal  
And what we embody is healing and perfect  
Resilience  
As long as we're getting killed for our differences  
We have to keep living, keep living through it  
Thirty seven, going through a second puberty  
Out in the limelight like please, nobody look at me  
I'm looking for myself, all I'm seeing is the bitterness  
Coming my way when I'm using the facilities  
And how many strangers will I upset today with my existence?

Skip through it I guess, keep resisting  
The T's putting hairs on my chest, spots on my chin, my emotions are not what they've been  
I'm just trying to cause an effect  
When I pause and reflect on the years spent exhausted and wrecked  
I just want to go back, put it all on the deck  
And say child, just keep going, keep drawing your breath

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