

# For I Am Fearless

An Anthology of Short Stories and Poetry

By Cat Webling

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## SAMPLE PAGES

*Excepts from Between Spaces and original pieces for the anthology, as well as original art.*

## Creating Between Spaces

Between Spaces is my earliest still-available collection of poetry. This was written while I was working in a bookstore in my hometown. In fact, the cover of this work is a photograph I took just outside the door of the store in Perry, GA. The lovely little cobblestone street with its classic main-street-style shops always struck me as beautiful, and I found that I adored how it looked in black and white.

The name came from one of the poems included in the work, "Between Spaces." This poem was inspired by the idea of liminal spaces. "Liminal" is defined by Merriam-Webster as being "of, relating to, or situated at a sensory threshold; barely perceptible or capable of eliciting a response," or "of, relating to, or being an intermediate state, phase, or condition; in-between, transitional." So, it follows to reason that a liminal space is where you are when you're on your way somewhere else. This might be a physical place – an airport, a bus stop, a 7/11 just off the highway – or it might be an emotional one – the days before you graduate from school, your final interview for a new job, deciding to move in with a partner.

I've loved the idea of liminal spaces since I learned of their existence, oddly enough, through a Tumblr post long since lost in the depths of the website. The post showed pictures of different liminal spaces during times when they were completely empty and commented on the fact that it was somewhat unnerving to see these places so still, and more unnerving to stay in places like that for too long. These places, different blogs decided in conversation, were meant to be passed through, and so your brain doesn't like trying to process an extended stay there. It's jarring. It's not supposed to be.

I've spent a good portion of my life in liminal spaces. I've traveled overseas often enough to remember the international terminal of Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson airport well, and domestically often enough to know that the Denver airport is too long to traverse comfortably between flights.

More importantly, though, I've made lots of decisions that left me emotionally in-between; I've pursued a chancy career (more than once!), quit jobs because I felt unvalued or morally compromised, and moved halfway across the country to be with the man I love. In each of these cases, there's a moment just before you commit that's utterly terrifying. You can see that everything is about to change. You can see where you might go next. You can see the plane and boarding has begun.

Between Spaces is a celebration of those moments that we tend to forget about in the aftermath – those moments of "not yet." Here's to remembering our liminal spaces.

## Sitting there outside the door

Sitting there outside the door  
I wonder if there's something more  
I could have done to keep my place  
Within the room I dream to face  
As my foot tap tap taps the floor

The hall is silent as the night  
I try to be calm with all my might  
As the clock ticks forward, on and on  
At the same time I wonder where time has gone  
Did I do something, was I wrong or right?

I can hear footsteps, moving around  
Normally that'd be a calming sound  
Yet my heart decides to race  
A bead of sweat rolls down my face  
Suddenly my eyes are glued to the ground

You can do this, you've done your best  
I tell myself, just the same as the rest  
We're all playing just the same  
The same routine, the same old game  
Yet still the heart thumps on in each chest

The sound of a click, watch the handle turn  
I can feel my stomach churn  
The creak of the hinges and  
The door opens, we all stand  
I can't bear to look, can't wait to learn

## The Familiar's Ode

Sometimes I wonder  
If you were sent to me  
Created from the flickering sunlight  
That fills that old farm in summer  
On a hot day when I had no hope left  
You trotted up  
As if to say, "you're late,  
Let's go home."  
You were strange then and are strange now  
With your loud voice and small frame  
We thought you but a child  
And yet in the year since  
You haven't changed  
You still roll for me when I approach  
And follow me wherever I may go  
You came to me perfect  
Playful, quiet, calm, silly, cuddly  
Willing to wet your fur with salty tears  
And make up for it with laughter  
It's strange  
I don't know if I could have picked out  
A better friend



*Image via Poetry2Art*

## Spark

The fire was comforting, in some ways. Erdin had always thought of fires as gathering places. Fires built in the massive feast halls of kings were the same in huts on the edges of the poorest village. They came to life with magic mutters the same way they did with flint and steel. Fires signaled survival; they were warm and bright, keeping the horrors of the night away.

His fire tonight was small – a few sticks and fallen logs that wouldn't be missed in a snowy paddock not currently occupied by the livestock of a farmer who didn't know he was there. Erdin shifted and put another log on the flame, stretching out his bedroll beneath him. How funny, he thought, that something so dangerous could be so beautiful.

A spark flew out from the embers and landed on the back of his hand. He was thankful that he'd removed his gloves. The linen would have burned immediately, and he hadn't much of a chance to get new ones. He watched the light of it dance on his scales before it fluttered and went out.

In the back of his mind was the constant reminder that a normal man would have jumped and cursed at that. Yet here he was, watching red scales glow in the low light. He tried to stamp down the bitterness welling in him before it could surface and ruin his fireside comfort.

Erdin settled down on the bedroll, stretching out to his full height. He listened to his joints pop and felt his muscles extend as far as he could send them. Scales shuffled under the heavy shirt and vest he wore. Horns scraped against the dirt where they peeked out over the thin pad. The ache of the day, the cold and walking, slowly melted as the warmth flooded into his muscles and down to his bones.

It was good to feel relaxed for once. He didn't have to worry about whether he'd locked the door, or fear someone walking in whose scream would echo in the night.

He looked up at the stars above him. The night was cloudless, so different from the stormy weeks of his travels, and it was beautiful. He could see swirls between the pricks of light that stood out from the velvet black and darkest navy. What were those swirls, he wondered? Where they trails of magic lining the sky? He liked to imagine they were the tracks left by the heroes of legends – mighty warriors who saved worlds from destruction. They might be the remnants of spells that felled cruel gods or brought back loved friends from the brink of death, perhaps even from his very grasp. They might be a god's blessing on the party, bringing them into the heavens to oversee their home even after their time had ended.

He imagined himself rising to that level. His spells earning praise for bringing comfort and joy, the flames that leaped from him nearly without effort becoming a beacon of community and advancement. He could almost hear the joyous cheers of crowds as he came into town with a group of adventurers, victorious from whatever mission he'd set out on.

Still, Erdin couldn't summon up any faces for those adventurers. He couldn't add words to those joyous cheers or imagine his name from any of their lips. Even as he thought about it, the details wouldn't come; they were too far from what he knew.



He watched the sparks fly up and mingle with the stars as the dream faded. He'd never be a hero, he thought. But he could be a good man. He would have to be.

The fire sputtered out as he drifted off to sleep. The dancing light seemed to caress him before it settled into its own slumber.