

Quivering Tongues

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**Abstract**

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Quivering Tongues is a collection of poems that examines the notion of history—real and imagined, personal and public—in order to create an elastic identity through different stages of life that is about as tangible as the White Rabbit in Alice in Wonderland. The methodology used for sectioning the pieces is chronological in appearance, based on life stages. The act of ordering is part of the framework used when repurposing and finding new meaning in old ways of understanding.

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# Welcome

Here                    the  
                              frosty  
                              way  
                              our hands wash  
                              the way

the way  
                              our clothes  
                              wash

the way

This is the way

This is the way

Come                    come out  
  come out

## **The Pool of Childhood**

## Made To Be

Actively resting, I imagine my window  
as a box of curiosities where I can watch  
the neighbor watch his gardener bend over  
while his wife is in the kitchen watching the  
clock go by. Shifting weight, I wonder what  
makes him whole.

Passively engaging, I wonder what makes me  
a hole, a hole for thoughts to fall through and  
if I'm lucky, I capture them in time before they  
vanish but where do they vanish to the sky bottom  
or the sea top where they can no longer  
make me whole.

## Stitched Heart

The raggedy legend of the  
huggable button-eyed  
loopy yarn red haired  
striped sock wearing  
apron loving legend of  
how one came to be

Then there's Andy

## What Dreams Are Made Of

Let me order my Shirley Temple while tens of months go by with beautiful picture books and fuzzy television sets boggling my fragile little mind in order to find a way to my lunch pail where I drag it proudly before it orders me to sing with glee as Strawberry Shortcake collides with Smurfette, but not to worry because Malibu Barbie tears their eyes out. But it is okay because I'm allowed to watch movies rated mature because I know it is not real only imagined because this is what dreams are made of. Rambo and Commando are my heroes while I turn my Bible from Adam to Eve as I imagine the snake slithering up the tree with an apple in its mouth and my mind gets lost in Sunday school as I contemplate who really gets whose rib and when exactly does this happen because I can't quite place it.

Let me order my Roy Rogers while Nick at Night delivers a dose of Donna Reed and Leave it to Beaver so I feel extra special since my home is their home and their home is my home in the land of My Little Pony which is extra special to me but not as special as my collection of Cabbage Patch dolls because no one could get them. But my parents got them for me before you, so now what does that mean if Timmy never fell down the well but Lassie fell down the well. What I mean to say is that I do believe and I'm glad Noah saved all the animals because I love elephants and puppies and I couldn't imagine my Flintstones without Dino or my Scooby Doo without Scooby Doo but wait a minute because the ark would have to be quite large to fit everything and when exactly did that thing set sail because I can't quite place it.

## Bath Water

she looked down

while she was talking

and found that

she was

shrinking

but  
still in existence

in  
another moment

## My Furry Friend

The  
Rabbit

White

shared

with closed eyes

dull reality

and cries

## Yellow Brick Road

Pardon me, would you have any Grey Poupon? To go alongside a serving of Rolls-Royce roads for us all? The eighties declared that poverty sucks. And so'd my dad and my mom. And so did I. I know this because the poster told me so when I was little. It was hanging in my parents' bathroom. But poverty does suck, right? I agree with the best selling poster in history. Don't tell anyone. Poverty sucks and so does Grey Poupon.

## Angel Strength

Her  
angelic motives  
growl  
in  
fireproof  
chambers  
down south  
with  
other  
inhabitants  
gathering  
in the inferno

## Cannon Ball Run

In order to have a getaway to heaven I need to know my design which I think will be settled over a nice tea party with my empty cups where my parents will tell me it is okay that my Carebear strives to be the sharpest tool in the shed even if it is not because working hard is what pays off most of all and I agree as I hop away on my Pogo Ball to have some privacy as I wonder about how I can be sure to get in heaven because it would be sad if I am left behind while everyone else gets in. In class I heard that can happen and it makes me squeeze my Glowworm harder to light my way down to Fraggie Rock.

## Doll House

The moon

glittered like silver coins.

you'll see

the children

through a

half-open window, Cold, tired

but thankful

to be home

## An Appendage of Sorts

You promised to tell me  
why it is you hate

It is a long tail

## Inbound

Got turned around at the gates of heaven  
by a sniper who winked at me.

I winked back

And fell through the clouds

End All Be All

nothing to

remember!

she... She felt that

to dream that she...

came

to be

## Private School

Curiouser

she

forgot how to  
speak



## Hello, My Friend

Rub-  
Three men  
there?  
the  
maker,  
jumped out  
to  
stare

## **The Youth Quadrille**

## Math Class

If I tried to peer down from my hazy atmosphere, I'd be younger than I thought with a mission to terrify and amuse while turning into a big fireball like DragonballZ. I'd be able to ascend to the moon's surface and send home images of lazy pooches and fantastical stardust that reflected a new image of me before I'd shoot to the sun and turn on the cooktop as I boiled myself a cup of chamomile tea so that I could sleep happily and without worry of death, disease, and living in a fog down below where teachers tell me I smell of Satan. But instead I floated to Mars, hoping to discover semi-compacted snow and ski bunnies where I could learn how to snowboard and possibly slingshot myself around Venus boosted by a turn past earth because of an event that only occurs every six hundred years where I could explore the origins of life and commend myself for being so special since there's only one of me and I already understood how my life began, which was enough for me so I built a new mothership to get me back home, smelling Satan free, as I laughed all the way home to a family who loved me.

## Incomplete Badass

Images captured in my mind streamlined the floodwater of language as the words failed me or maybe it was my imagination that failed me as the rover discovered new craters where my letters spiraled out of control into a pattern of brilliant blue equations that involved only vowels where the impact of devastation could only be seen with a high resolution lens. But my identity was rolled into the wonders of the sky as I daydreamed about stunning storytelling where the remnants of language were left behind waiting to be swept up and repackaged for my mind to beg for more misunderstandings so that I could better misrepresent myself for all to see.

## Tweet Tweet

Holding broken anonymity as it flashes different silhouettes to the world reflecting new forms of friendships and communities that can easily be manipulated and stripped bare to only a few which expose dirty secrets and polished histories all with a click of a button in a fractured sense of self while the icy blocks melt into another place and time attracting like-minded individuals into sorted categories engaging

engaging characters where selfies and groups begin to merge into another form of reality with virtual worlds melding into realisms of our making and blending the fragmented authenticities where something exists where it doesn't and nonexistence is the only form of reality in a world inside minds and spaces developing the only way to be

## Disillusionment

Hollow! is stranger  
demand the work  
of the word, of the  
language of the user.

Ordinary! is exciting,  
thrilling as the words  
dance with one another,  
fight with one another

Complete! is silence  
when the noise stops,  
the words slow, and  
the sentences end.

Rest! is impossible,  
lethargy for the weak,  
minded in this stupor  
of accomplishment

## Puffing Away

Who are *you*?

at present

I can't explain myself

confusing

being so many

is

very

## Inklings

without

some authority

I'll make

her

wanted and

accustomed to

conquest.

## Balanced

Very tired on the bank, considering the pleasure of trouble,  
she led the loveliest among those but could not see that things  
indeed were really possible. In another moment she found herself  
to be very well.

## As If...

You take the red pill and you stay in Wonderland and I show you how deep the rabbit-hole goes. So OK, you're probably thinking, "Is this, like a Noxema commercial, or what?!" But seriously, I actually have a way normal life for a teenage girl. It was this man that freed the first of us and taught us the secret of the war. Dionne and I were both named after great singers of the past who now do infomercials. Human beings are a disease, a cancer of this planet. You are a plague. And we are... the cure. Hello. That was a stop sign! I totally paused! What is real? How do you define real? If you're talking about your senses, what you feel, taste, smell, or see, then all you're talking about are electrical signals interpreted by your brain. Here's the four-one-one on Mr. Hall. He's single, he's 47, and he earns minor ducats for a thankless job. What that man needs is a good healthy boinkfest. Unfortunately, there was a major babe drought in our school. The evil trolls from the math department were actually married. The system controlling our lives. I imagine you know something about virtual reality. You look like Pippi Longstocking. Well, you look like Forrest Gump. Who's Pippi Longstocking? Someone Mel Gibson never played. I know what you believe but I think this is a mistake. We're rushing him. He's old. I'm afraid he might pop. No, she's a full on Monet. What's a Monet? It's like a painting, see? From far away, it's OK, but up close, it's a big old mess.

If the virtual reality apparatus, as you called it, was wired to all of your senses and controlled them completely, would you be able to tell the difference between the virtual world and the real world? Something told me not to discount Miss Giest. Well sure, she has runs in her stockings, and her slip is always showing, and she always has more lipstick on her teeth than her mouth. God, this woman is screaming for a make-over. I'm her only hope. Unfortunately, no one can be told what the Matrix is. You have to see it for yourself. And as soon as I get my license I fully intend to brake for animals, and I have contributed many hours helping two lonely teachers find romance. Did you know that the first Matrix was designed to be a perfect human world? Where none suffered, where everyone would be happy. It was a disaster. No one would accept the program. You mean to tell me that you argued your way from a C+ to an A-? Totally based on my powers of persuasion. You proud? Honey, I couldn't be happier than if they were based on real grades. Every mammal on this planet instinctively develops a natural equilibrium with the surrounding environment. But you humans do not. You move to an area and you multiply and multiply until every natural resource is consumed and the only way you can survive is to spread to another area.

## Barrier

Clean our tongues of indiscreet sin as our imagination grips wild  
and fantastic tones of invisible sounds that can't be heard only seen  
inside the boundless minds no one holds dear

## Unsaid

the  
scar  
whispers

pretending  
hard to remember

## Believe

scar

a

powerful

world

## Busy Bees

licking

I

cried

again

We

won't talk about

such a subject!

## First Supper

Language leaking detached admiration with misbehavior meeting  
the chaos of equality that threatens personal fiction where self  
flight originates with crumbling obligation in an aggregate of chief  
pettiness deep in the caverns of the appropriated hierarchy of a  
spiraling staircase of learning that overshadows the dogma of  
happiness

## Clearly Misunderstood

Litter the language. Scatter the word.  
World shift and shape less with  
commands. Define sounds to  
letter a song. Hear the  
subtlety. Miss the  
charge. Exploit  
space to  
destroy  
equality,  
power  
for  
1

## Summer Camp

Catastrophes in their lives breed chilly incubators while heroism  
fails in a

roar

Nightgowns swirl around while forgiving and swapping their  
histories in a

moan

Herculean weakness whisks these revelations and mysteries for  
them in a

wail

Slammed intentions distract their theological hostages when  
defeated in a

sob

## Costuming

The mouse

seemed to wink

I daresay

which

seemed to

hurt

her

Stamped

Funny

fancy

girl

ignorant little

Down, down, down.

## Around the Word

Beginning stories  
to predict  
the history of  
yesterday  
is ending  
today

## Parts Unknown

To know

uncertainty,

To reason

reluctance,

the stain of identity

grasping the indefinite

understanding the mysterious

the sorrow,

certainty is buried

deep within the depths

of hidden

compulsion

## Seen But Unheard Smithereens

I don't not believe in in the mystified  
deMystified being of where I don't  
belong Belong to you, to me behave  
or you misBehave, of the irrelevant  
way you look at me...look...look...look

But I don't pretend to know the silence  
of the unKnown or known pink and blur  
I mean blue parts of the hidden places. Places  
where you can, Can I be silent, For you You want  
a way to look at me...look...look...look

And I don't imagine more of an unimagined  
way of misUnderstanding With more red pieces  
to fit inside my pink wooden bits allowing. To allow  
you to be raw, Imagine, bubbles tinting  
the way you look at me...look...look...look

## Re-treat

a little irritated,

she drew  
herself

and

puffed away

## Curiosity

Drink me

and see whether

wild beasts

will

burn



## Come Again Soon

little  
wonder  
the world

is gone,  
nothing shines

all night.

in the dark  
you  
could see

the  
curtains  
shut

in the sky.

## **The Adult Hole**

## Melting Pot

My heart is an elephant in the room stapled. No wait. Trampled on the ceiling. Bold is real bold under the semblance of a milk bone biscuit where the kitchen is open and a signature entrée is fishing for a thousand pound payday where I capture the imagination of a mafia connection where after all I was found guilty of perjury. Well maybe not perjury. Just fighting for survival while the nation or individual is struggling for an identity. No wait. That's my identity where the so called underworld is concerned where my condition of freedom is that I leave my imagination and never return. Struggling to put my language piece by piece together where we make sure we don't destroy my evidence. No wait. Not evidence. My history. Where a long restoration is in order to return my mind back to a former glory I no longer recognize. But there is so much out there to be found and items to dig up my mind and trample in the earth where packs of dogs deliver optimal absorption into my new world.

But my heart is born into a genetic point of what I no longer wish to think about without my imagination because I like pink. I don't like blue. No wait. I like blue and I like pink. I like red too. No. I love red so what does that make me in the eyes of the questioning who want to place everyone in a nurture or nature area of existing in the role of action movies battling romantic comedies where I see many different shades of being where I'm told I'm designed. No wait. Hardwired to see the definition in the red-orange spectrum so that I can bring fruit to my family for survival where no one wants to eat the wrong color. That is what I'm good for without my imagination where I can embrace prominent ideas that are an atrocity to who I am as an individual where I'm told I'm buying up the world. No wait. I'm not buying up the world. My people are buying up the world but I don't know who my people are unless I have my imagination where tremendous power is an introduction to my old world.

So I ask if my heart is healthy enough to bring my imagination back to me where I can take action because this is a new day all across America. No wait. Across the globe where a conventional line of thinking is nothing more than a way to look at someone with no imagination where someone only looks at my score and not me. It's time to be built where this place is allowed to beam me up. No wait. Beam us up as a collection of people who understand that language does betray what the imagination can create while a ferocious fight of memory and influence fail. No wait. Infamous ways of being so that a new history is formed within our world's history indulging in millions of pounds of tarnished recollections where imagination is at fault for creating new identities where I want. No wait. I need to understand in order to be complete in a world of retention and disbelief if I can't hold onto my imagination in my new world.

I'm told that my heart is as healthy as my imagination which I no longer have. No wait. I never had an imagination as a new threat of my zombie self begins to emerge in a new way that is unpredictable and dead to the nationwide way of existing while the suction delivers impulses of conventions that I no longer grasp onto. So I hold onto the language that begs to create a memory. No wait. An imagination where my undead self melted to explore the meaning of pink and blue and red while I fall in love with me. No wait. I fall in love with us because we never fight about anything because there is nothing to fight about when the imagination is concerned. No wait. When language is concerned to match someone up with somebody who has their sights. No wait. A site where people are armed and ready with imagination and language so that people can pay attention and count the number of jumps when my brain responds to fear. No wait. When our brain responds to fear we worry about our unpacked memories to build a new imagination that will do nothing but destroy observations in my new old world.

## Theirs Camouflages

Dropped and danced  
counting measures of kindness,  
while digressing so wholeheartedly  
with evictions and forbidden donations

Stumps dispensing highness with a  
simple touch of younger favorites  
offering nothing and everything within  
the rarest form of hating

## Incredible Space

Another muzzled encounter  
with open arms, churning the  
nonsensical into sensual but  
the mechanical to cursory  
while the minds quickly  
reconcile on the other side  
of—

Love.... lace

I.

Richer than

a Red Room of Pain

fingers fail My

so I

I call

alone,

daunted

I push

Being good

II.

Red Room of Pain  
raises his pleasure  
making um

my

Eyes

lift slightly

Pinky Swear

A White Rabbit

burning

time.

just in

## Yesterday

I borrowed my history from Mermaids: the New Evidence  
and fanciful realities from Tim Burton  
Bored my man into a bottle,  
but triumphed when he came out like a genie

Woke up as an adult in Moonrise Kingdom  
only to take a step back and remember  
I didn't wake up in this world alone,  
Mr. Clean Mr. Clean

I let my fingers do the walking  
and wound up right back where I started,  
but this time nothing would shake  
me to the ground

So kiss a little longer, make it last a little longer  
and feel the silence of living  
and hear the lines of laughter  
as I melt in your mouth, not in your hands

## Whoever Killed Corporations

Most always presumable tremors sufficed in deep frowns, fingering mournfulness trickery and loveliness, distracting demoralized sleepiness correlating ignominious moves with consumer demands but costuming normalcy and profiting from sunlight in havens of kissing. Prototypical onlookers in marketplace chambers with beardless androids herding the shoppers who refill and refuel mixtures and twinkles within the confines of Hershey castles and Clorox pastures. Childhood dreams hide along the graphs and charts masked as illusive camels and cheetahs reflecting the species of desire and need all in order to falsify while cracking open a nice cold Pepsi

Inconsequential workers pepper the globe persuading and thrusting liquid forward chasing doubtful dreams and forsaking longtime lovers as if a timer of passively migrant ghosts would reappear and patch their world back together again. Nowadays hopelessness camouflages itself as industrious outbreaks, reaching for the unattainable often under the cover of darkness while spotlights shine on the DOW of ever changing sameness. The toxicity of containers blazing with emblems of hazardous material exposing each liquid's corrosive potential creates a plume of interactive fizzy stuff that diverts the particulars into a murky mess of digestible lameness

Anytime candidacy is buried by different people in various places truth is stolen and begs to be forgotten by organizations where every penny is a prisoner and ambiguities program a workhorse while frothing sweeteners and suitors befriend happiness in poverty. As precious rituals are born by hordes of executives who react to reports churning like butter and mangled beyond recognition while honesty goes missing and heads begin to roll. Phones are ringing with criers declaring fire drills will save us all in the order of consumption and marketplace predictions barely visible to the naked eye. Since golf swings save the world and discovery of old treasures are bought and sold it is the coroner who holds the most striking job of all as the insides of us are endlessly preserved by the bubbly stuff

## A Gentleman

a  
dame has lost her  
fiddle stick,  
And knows

a doodle  
is  
master  
with

a doo,

her  
master's found  
her shoe.

Cock a doodle doo,  
with you,  
While master fiddles his  
dame.

## Methodology

meaning in

the verses

would

be

pointing to the tarts

## As Pavement

I took you to your favorite place  
where the beautiful mistake  
changed our lives

The pebbles against your cheek,  
where you've gone somewhere deeper  
to forget where you've been

Unable to see where you're going  
you fight what you've inherited  
as the dirt pulls you down

I heard your cries as the  
muffled tread tried no more  
and our road in life ended

But a new one began  
and where we get to go is  
calling out our name

## Buyer's Remorse

But there's  
nothing

that can't be lived

without  
and there's  
nothing

that can't be lived

within

## Logic

thinking of

dreaming

about

eager eyes

looking

## Good Evening and Good Night

Lastly,

through all her riper years  
she would gather

with many

dream of Wonderland

the



## Notes:

Sources of inspiration from life and “Cock-A-Doodle-Do”, *Alice in Wonderland*, “Rub-A-Dub-Dub”, “Mulberry Bush”, *Harry Potter*, “Twinkle Twinkle”, “Owl and the Pussycat”, *Fifty Shades of Grey*, *Clueless*, “Hansel and Gretel”, and *Matrix*

## Artist Statement

Quivering Tongues is a collection of poems that examines the notion of history—real and imagined, personal and public—in order to create an elastic identity through different stages of life that is about as tangible as the White Rabbit in Alice in Wonderland. The methodology used for sectioning the pieces is chronological in appearance, based on life stages. The act of ordering is part of the framework used when repurposing and finding new meaning in old ways of understanding.

My work addresses the fragility of our society when only certain members acquire decision-making and dream-making abilities, which is why Alice in Wonderland plays such a significant role in Quivering Tongues. Alice is determined to buck the traditions, and she dares herself to imagine another way to exist, while she reconciles what living in this world means. The sensible nonsense that Alice embraces is similar to what I explore in Quivering Tongues.

The concept of making sense of a world that is nonsensical resonates well with the erasure form that often appears in this project. The idea that imagination can be born or freed by using

language constraints set by others ties in nicely with the tension that is found between power, language, and dream-making abilities.

While my work examines what constitutes such notions as consumerism, femininity, religion, language, and love, it never leads too far astray from the rabbit hole of indecision that we are all faced with when attempting to make sense out of nonsense, especially when guided by consumerism.

How a person grows up, where a person grows up, and when a person grows up influences how a person fantasizes or whether they are even allowed to dream. Pop culture is one of the factors that shapes the idea of inventiveness, but the people behind the scenes, molding that idea of pop culture, are also the ones who give and take away the power of imagination. One of my pieces, "What Dreams Are Made Of", challenges the innocence of childhood where religion, language, and consumerism often battle for a child's dream space.

The idea of growing up with the American dream and consumerism, which built the dream, is a marked pattern in my work. The ability to weave erasures and my poetry to create a cohesive voice became an interesting challenge that allowed for my

work to evolve rather than stay stagnant. A strong narrative weaves through each section, while I playfully exploited the notion that consumerism drives imagination, and the corporations that control consumerism guide pop culture.

I value the significance of pop culture in our society as much, if not more, than I value what is regarded as the intellectual way of examining given topics or ways of thinking. However, I think it is only fair to highlight how pop culture has been manipulated by consumerism. This manipulation leaves individuals on a constant pursuit of finding happiness, finding themselves, and making meaning out of non-meaningful encounters, which is why Alice lends herself in such a meaningful way to the work.

I demonstrate the cyclical nature of power, language, and a fanciful existence by beginning with where it all began. The first section is the children's section, followed by the young adult section, ending with the adult section. The sections are a loose guide, and often topics overlap, but specific questions will arise: Do we really need to grow up? What is considered young adult versus adult, and why are some nursery rhymes dealing with topics such as abuse and murder suitable for younger readers? Is there such a

thing as individuality when pop culture helps dictate what we read, watch, and participate in? And is that so wrong?

In order to examine these questions, I allow myself to find inspiration that ranges from common pop culture references to fantastical middle grade and adult bestsellers as I mold the language to fit the story I want to share. The language at hand is only limited by my imagination and the incessant need to make sense out of the nonsensical and create nonsense out of the most sensible. Rather than dismiss such literary phenomenon as *Fifty Shades* or *Harry Potter*, I place high value on works that define a particular moment in popular culture, which allows individuals to escape, shift their sensibilities, and expand new ideas to fit reality.

As Alice investigates the trauma of change in Wonderland and struggles to find comfort in logic, she begins to delve into the discomfort of absurdity to compensate and get situated. Alice continually strives to solve puzzles that aren't solvable and that is akin to life and the cycle I attempt to expose in this work.

In addition to pop culture and consumerism molding language and imagination, I examine the inconsistencies of womanhood and femininity that are threaded through society. The expectations that are placed on both women and men to uphold certain traditions

are dissected in various pieces. For instance, “Melting Pot” pays homage to the constant barrage of social expectations that women face, which are often communicated through consumerism and shaped in pop culture to build a collective identity. The intentions of the work are not encouraging a certain viewpoint, but rather allowing for femininity to be as complex as it actually is. Nothing is black and white even if we are told it is.

Each section is organized cyclically beginning with: the me of all things, leading to the community of things, and ending with a repurposed way of engaging with things—in the form of erasures. Working with many different texts ranging from nursery rhymes to middle grade and adult bestsellers allowed me to shift and tease forms, language and spaces, allowing for the intent to be interpreted in infinite ways, while also engaging the text in rigorous ways. The inability of language to convey certain messages is also powerful insofar that the language stops short and allows the imagination to take over, which is equally important in my work.

Erasure is a vital component to the project. *Darkness* by Yedda Morrison introduced me to a new way of engaging with texts. I was more comfortable with writing and playing with linear narratives.

That more traditional method is the process I was familiar with and had practiced for years. The idea of erasure freed my own uncertainties and self-doubts as I allowed myself to work with already established texts. My intention when working with repurposing texts was to give a voice to the unheard voices, liberate the unseen connections, and provide new life and meaning that was buried in texts that have been seen time and again. What it also wound up doing was giving my own voice a stabilizing force as I moved toward writing the prose, shape, and lyrical poems for this project.

The prose poems and lyrical poems that are included in the collection bring an unexpected twist to the project. My initial intent with *Quivering Tongues* was to focus on erasures, but as the project developed and a stronger voice began to emerge, I decided to free myself from some of the initial project constraints.

Once I allowed myself to take a more active role in writing both prose and lyrical poems, along with erasure, the project began to take on a clearer direction with consumerism being linked through each section, beginning with the children's section. By starting with the very basic language often found in nursery rhymes, I permitted myself to analyze the various meanings that lie

within the text while performing the act of erasure. This process tethered me to playfulness throughout the entire work because I was able to create so many meanings with so few words. I was also able to use this playful tone in some of my own prose poems, which helped to create an intriguing thread for me to engage with throughout the project.

The playfulness and simplicity of nursery rhymes allows the poetry to be just as simple or equally complicated when placed among the sections about white rabbits or corporations that kill or are killed. I enjoy creating narratives using erasure techniques that retell a story, allowing a minuet between the poet and original text to transpire. This dance between the two also flows into the rest of my poetry, allowing for fluid movement from one poem to the other. It is because of this movement that I was able to expand so easily into other given topics.

When I began working on the young adult section, I wanted to strengthen the notion of identity as it relates to language, religion, and consumerism. The uncertainty that is often associated with being a young adult relates well with the hardships of language, the inadequacy of language, and how that connects to identity. Finding one's identity is often at the heart of the young adult years, and

embracing both erasure and other forms of poetry appeared to tell the story better than if I chose only one or the other. The prose poems, along with additional erasures, solidified the section and tied to both the childhood and adult sections.

The adult section is a bit of a contradiction. It is there to not only confuse but also highlight the importance of the other two stages of life and the search for answers that may never come. The playfulness is still abundant but so are the underlying concerns that have been haunting the narrative throughout. Within the adult section, similar topics are examined and still no answers are gained, which is why I felt *Alice in Wonderland* is so vital to the overall feel of the project.

I'm fascinated by the ghosts that language leaves behind, but I also feel those same ghosts are present from childhood forward, camouflaged in various ways, that haunt individuals for a lifetime, leaving both positive and negative pieces along the way. It is an interesting concept that I delighted in exploring. I enjoy playing with the tension that erasure provides between poet and reader as I repurpose language for my own means. Erasure allows me to sift through the remnants and create a new form, a new story, but I realized I wanted to provide the same experience with my other

poetry and attempted to make a connection throughout each section. The White Rabbit is a consistent presence that offers a surreal viewpoint throughout each phase within the piece, signifying the constant chase of things. For every person that thing is different and might never be attainable, yet the pursuit to understand never ends.

The merriment of exploring, rupturing, and creating *Quivering Tongues* in order to harness the power of language and explore the inadequacies became an obsession that furthered my own poetic growth. Being able to work with topics such as consumerism, wealth, religion, language, and love while spanning the many stages of life was a fascinating experience. Harnessing both the power of language and its inadequacies allowed me to create a narrative that conveyed a playfulness, heaviness, and rascality while presenting a diverse body of work.