

Sanity is a pretty thing to taste.

Camilla Sechi

Prologue

Present

'Anger can eat you up, from deep inside you, if you are not careful.'

'It will consume you until there is nothing left.'

'It will eat you alive.'

I know.

I have a bracelet made of salt around my right wrist. From it, a lucky charm in the shape of a dark eye hangs, light as water.

It wasn't a gift, and I definitely wasn't born with it, I woke up one day and it was there. I haven't been able to take it off since. Even my other self has it, in white, a reflection of mine, the real one. A mere empty shell.

I can make my emotions come out whenever I want, if I want. I avoid the sadness I have stored in my sunflowers, but I relive the happiest of my memories more often than I should. Guilt and fear curse me, allowing me a few moments of freedom every so often. As for anger, I don't get to choose.

Anger can corrode you. It burrows deep within your bones, twists itself around your veins. It eats you alive, it takes over you. I have heard it all.

I truly began fearing my fury after I turned twelve, when I allowed myself to be scared. I dressed in green every day I could, I tried dissolving the bracelet in water. Nothing worked. I wear it to this day. Even my reflection tried to get rid of it. She pulled it until her skin came off, and bloodstained it black.

Past

For a while, everyone at school asked me where I got my bracelet from. No similar ones exist. I obviously couldn't tell them the truth, so I lied and said a friend had bought it for me abroad.

It was weird at first, but I have definitely gotten used to it. It's exactly my size, it doesn't strangle my wrist, but it's not so loose it moves up and down my arm every time I move. It smells like a summer holiday by the sea, and the eye is the same shade as my own. Even my mother liked it, claiming she used to have an identical one when she was my age, in green, but ended up losing it years later.

'You stole it and painted over it, didn't you?'

Fiction

Section Editor:
Clare Fisher

Editorial Team:
Hannah Voteur

*The University of Sheffield's
Creative Writing Journal*

Sanity is a pretty thing to taste.

Camilla Sechi

Years have passed and I still have the bracelet. It grows when I grow, readjusting itself to keep on fitting around me.

I never questioned its existence or purpose until I met the shadow that embodied my fears. She noticed one night after tucking me in. Her hand of snow reached for the eye but recoiled in pain after barely touching it.

'What is it?' I asked her. She shook her head.

I asked again, and still nothing.

I began screaming at her to tell me. I knew she felt something, how dare she not tell me.

'You can't keep secrets from me. You are only a *part* of me, but I am *you*.'

But she wouldn't budge. She ran away, not even finishing her song, and didn't return for a week.

We never spoke of it again.

Present

I now know why I wear the bracelet. It isn't just a piece of jewellery, it's a capsule for my anger.

My heart is filled with fury, constantly tipping over to water my charm. It coats my skin and veins; it has replaced my bone marrow. It is all I can think about, and I don't want to.

I think of past fights and I scream, a particularly awful contender wins at Temporary Monarchs and my bracelet glows. I frighten my own fears, my reflection begs me to cover the mirror, when in the past she would tear the blanket apart.

I cannot go on. I'm confined to my room, if I leave it gets worse.

I am being eaten alive.

Epilogue

I'm going to get this thing off me no matter what. I have already tried cutting it, dissolving it, and even surrounding myself with *actual* lucky things, hoping it would disintegrate or something.

It can't be indestructible; what kind of bracelet *is*? Maybe the scissors weren't strong enough, maybe the water had been too cold.

Fiction

Section Editor:
Clare Fisher

Editorial Team:
Hannah Votour

*The University of Sheffield's
Creative Writing Journal*

Sanity is a pretty thing to taste.

Camilla Sechi

I decide to go for a different approach: tearing it off my wrist. I remember my reflection, how her skin had peeled off but the bracelet had stayed. But maybe she only needed me to do it first.

I begin tugging and feel every inch of my skin scream. Teeth form on my wrist and sink in, holding on. The more I pull out, the more of them form. I keep tugging despite the pain, the blood, the breaths that became shallower and shallower. All I need is to pull harder and it will all be over; I will soon be free.

But I bleed even more. The bracelet cements itself between remaining skin fragments, now I couldn't even move it. Desperation starts to take over, and I remember we keep a chainsaw in our shed.

I flee my room, my left hand clasped over my wrist. I can't bleed and pass out now. I need to do this first. I run outside, into the forest my back garden had turned into. I run past the blades of grass that reached my navel, the place where I had buried my porcelain doll days after receiving it, until I reach the shed at the end of our property.

Back in my room, I close the door and put pillows beneath it so my screams won't carry. I lay my arm on my armchair, strapping it into place with a belt, bit down onto another, and turned on the chainsaw.

I can hear my reflection pounding on the mirror behind me, trying to stop me. But not out of concern. If I lost one hand, she would too. If I felt pain, she would too.

I begin, just below my bracelet, I didn't want to cut off more than necessary. I bit down until my teeth shattered and worked until I collapsed.

I woke up hours later, with streaks of dried blood, and a new bracelet encircling my arm, beneath where my wrist used to be. The wound had stitched itself back together, leaving a scar resembling bite marks where the old bracelet used to be.

I could feel it breathe.

Fiction

Section Editor:
Clare Fisher

Editorial Team:
Hannah Votour

*The University of Sheffield's
Creative Writing Journal*