

# AUNT CHLOE

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## 2 poems

*by Taylor Alyson Lewis*

### **Portland**

The ferns parted to reveal small birds, perched  
and watching with eyes swiveled and hungry.  
The bridge that split the aviary swayed  
away from the force of our boots. Your eyes  
held living light and me all at once. All  
at once, the sun spilled through the middle  
of us; the toucans threw their beaks at one  
another. The artificial sky wept;  
a blushing bride whose feet were on the coals.  
My knees caved in: on wood, then on themselves.  
“Warning!” The canaries called clear across  
the glass. “Are you well enough to cherish?”

## **Every Time I Lie on the Beach I See Blood in the Water**

Did you see me

Loving Ocean

when they took me

Could you touch me

Could you watch me

Underneath

a liquid calming rose inside me

spewing out as vomit

Retched this reception of your love

which bathed me

which made my body clean

You mixed my blood

with your blood

Then you exposed

the violence

I saw you sloshing at my feet

a liquid fear I named

supremacy

When I first saw your expansiveness

my bowels released

yet I knew I would soon be home

Yet I knew I would soon be

in a place my children would call a  
difficult home  
a home filled with shifting salt  
You lapped against the hull of my anguish  
when you bathed the body of my suffering  
whispered my fate to me  
made the pulsating roots of my scars scream  
I watched the sacrifice of our enslavement  
cake around the corners of my mouth  
A memory I could not speak

**Taylor Alyson Lewis** is a 2018 Spelman College graduate (and unapologetic Scorpio) from Atlanta, Georgia. While at Spelman, she focused on English and Comparative Women's Studies. Taylor prioritizes intimacy, fluidity, and queer and trans/gender nonconforming Black folks in her work. She is currently pursuing an MFA in Creative Writing at Rutgers University-Camden.