

Spaces Between

By Annika Sage Ellis

It ambushed me, one day

One perfectly innocent morning

And just as plain as any other,

I brought my tea to the porch

Sat down in my chair

And like the crack of a whip

The strike of a match

A slap uniquely human

An ache in my soul cried out

*My God, I wish I wasn't a woman*

Though the sting has since faded

It still brings an ugly splotch to my cheek

And tears to my eyes

The ghost of a scar of a wound

That I never knew needed healing

And now, as I comb through my past

I wonder, how much of me was sobbing?

How much of me slogged through the days

Thinking I was as everyone—as every woman—

When instead I was being cut and cut and cut and

Never knew the owner of the knife

Is this a cry not seldom heard?

Or one expertly ignored?

By lack of language, by a fault

In words, in hearth and home

How does one describe *the absence*

Of a feeling never known?

What is a *body*?

What is a body if not a vehicle

For the mind and soul to direct

If one is astray, the other will

Swerve to correct

But a one-way street is a trench

Walked a hundred thousand times

And I am so deep within my own

I wonder

If the ache I hear is worth it—

Divulging from this mile-deep road