

University of Mary Washington

## Eagle Scholar

---

Student Research Submissions

---

Spring 5-6-2023

**goddess of.**

Megan Childs

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholar.umw.edu/student\\_research](https://scholar.umw.edu/student_research)



Part of the [Poetry Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Childs, Megan, "goddess of." (2023). *Student Research Submissions*. 535.

[https://scholar.umw.edu/student\\_research/535](https://scholar.umw.edu/student_research/535)

This Honors Project is brought to you for free and open access by Eagle Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Student Research Submissions by an authorized administrator of Eagle Scholar. For more information, please contact [archives@umw.edu](mailto:archives@umw.edu).

goddess of.



goddess of.

*megan childs*



*of bodies chang'd to various forms, i sing:  
ye gods, from whom these miracles did spring,  
inspire my numbers with coelestial heat;  
'till i my long laborious work compleat:  
ovid, metamorphoses*

## **table of contents**

cityscape: hades and persephone	1
fire tongued apollo	2-3
imaginary boyfriend as aphrodite/truth as poseidon	4-5
prayer to dionysus	6
absent athena	7
the marriage of zeus and hera	8
cult of ares	9-10
hestia means home	11
artemis as solitude	12





## **cityscape: hades and persephone**

the city wakes in early spring,  
women laced in frilly gowns bloom down sidewalks  
overgrown with moss that stains their feet bright green.

downtown, gravestones crumble and sink into soft soil.  
the earthworms mingle with the marble slab for a  
souless woman and her soulless son.

children with their toes buried in creek-sand push toy  
soldiers on toy boats towards the outlet, wading in  
knee-high when a vessel is intercepted by lily pads.

one child twists an ankle in a ditch that leads down  
to the underworld, and the dead claw at roots and dirt,  
trying to reach her.

shady trees curl themselves over a picnic lawn, and  
their leaves flutter down in swirls and brush the cheeks  
of sunburnt teenagers reclined on lush grass.

clouds darken and grow fat with rain,  
shading the city and damping its flame;  
the city closes up.

## **fired-tongued apollo**

sun-scattered beams  
reflect  
off warped mirrors and  
bound  
into tired eyes that  
scald and melt  
from the brightness  
deployed  
by my charcoal tongue.

now, my eyes are open and i'm seeing  
shock-horror, an audience of one,  
watching purest white bubble before  
drip-drip-dripping down grim faces.

a new skin forms after the drying period,  
marked with cobalt, emerald, dusk gray that run  
from blooming irises. pupil syrup dulls the hue,  
the sockets narrowed in a glare, even now,  
sultry lashes dance in the joy of remaining unsinged.

bile does its heavenly work and blocks my throat  
from attempting comedic relief or tearful apologies.  
light is meant for moderation, but my mouth is  
sunburnt.

vexation, i learn again, is a pestilence wrought by  
phoebus me so i call my hands asclepius and they cover

my mouth, right before left, until my teeth bruise my  
gums cobalt, emerald, dusk gray.

**imaginary boyfriend as aphrodite/truth as  
poseidon**

when you first kissed me i had heart-shaped fruit  
snacks in my jeans pocket;  
we split them over tangled legs, golden hair falling over  
our eyes.

iced coffee in spring and in love with locking eyes  
across the room,

you reinvent romance when you take sips of night air,  
your head to the stars.

i invent a new word for your shade of red,  
match my lipgloss shade to the blush that spreads  
across my cheeks.

we rip the glass out of windows that don't open and  
hardly notice the blood, now  
fountains filled with sour pomegranate juice.  
we dye our skin ballet slipper pink.

you add beat to my heart,  
long walks downtown show us hidden spots to carve  
our initials and  
we laugh at our age, walk the boundary between the  
cobbled streets and the river.

i knock myself over and

water corrupts my lungs  
and  
nobody lives to tell you this  
but  
the ocean is dark like loneliness  
so  
i prick my finger to attract the sharks.

## **prayer to dionysus**

please watch over the party.

please watch over the starving girl in white linen  
and the girl wasting away in the downstairs bathroom.

please watch over the friend who isn't a friend at all  
and the girl who wants to be sexy, just this once.

please watch over the smeared lipstick and smudged  
eyeliner  
and the girl who can't tell sleep from unconsciousness.

please watch over the memories of the girl who lost  
them  
and the girl who forgets her lexapro in the morning.

please watch over the delusions of grandeur  
and the girl with raw gaps in her memory.

please watch over the sharp cuts from soft hands  
and the girl that wakes up hollow.

please watch over the girl that cannot watch herself.

## absent athena

your voice is the set of wind chimes that my neighbor  
hangs from her covered porch that sing in my head as  
i try to sleep through heavy winds

and your voice is the memory of the wind chimes that  
buzz in my ear when the storm calms.

i'm a much too colorful floral arrangement wrapped  
up in your vanilla cream tissue paper

but on a lazy saturday i'm meringue that melts on  
your moistened tongue.

sometimes, i can remember where on a page i saw the  
words but i cannot remember the words –  
similarly, i look for you where i last found you but  
forget how it felt to be there,  
trapped under your nail like dirt.

i speak ho-pe in two syllables, splitting the word in  
half, severing the head from the body before i can  
choke it out.

i am scorned by athena at the acropolis every anxious  
sunday; she calls me “stupid girl” so i must

i cloak myself in the identities of other women,  
the women that you love, and i mourn

the loss of my brain, i scorn your wit in battle,  
your heart slithers down my throat.

## **the marriage of zeus and hera**

if women are made from the rib of man  
no wonder i desire them,  
my side empty and aching  
like hunger pangs

and in the dark  
any lusty blonde could  
have been born on the  
other side of the bone saw

*if women are made from the rib of man  
no wonder he seeks another,  
searching for bodies like fuel  
when i couldn't fulfill him*

*and in the dark  
he creeps into our home  
like a criminal  
doused in amber perfume*



## **cult of ares**

the battle begins in my mouth,  
lemon-lime cruelty i spit out  
like snake venom,

dancing on your skin  
and cutting through to  
brittle bone, breaking down.

bloodlust is hidden by  
soft skin and dull teeth,  
not sharpened to kill,

but to deceive.  
i regift words from my sister  
to you and watch you flinch,

pretend not to feel the  
adrenaline rushing down my  
arms to my hands.

*remember how it felt?*  
strike, nausea, tears.  
my door almost off the

hinges. sobs that became  
dry heaving onto carpet.  
hands darkened red.

who could alter a mother's love?

*if not me, who?*

i sit on my hands

and hope my words sting like war.

## hestia means home

dull parquet squeaks and dirties socks already worn down to holes in the heels but i cross the threshold and drop it all to the floor anyways: coat, bag, second skin. the air is warm and it dries my skin to a tightness that i rub out with my thumbs while garlic stings with the nose and stains our 99-cent plates and suddenly unfolding the blankets is a labor so i tuck my face into my sweatshirt and smell taylor swift's signature scent. sometimes i giggle at the thought that i've created a life. in this house, camaraderie means gossip and our voices flutter like linen on a clothesline while porcelain mugs clink and the couch is sticky with cherry coke and the cheapest wine at target. bailey scoffs because i delight in wiping up the mess we've made and i scoff because it's actually the mess *she's* made. our hearth is laughing at the *golden girls* even though we understand none of the references and one of us drawing a hangman on the whiteboard as the other watches the sizzle of our dinner on the stove. i follow the sound of purring to the cat resting on top of my discarded college sweatshirt and she chirps hello.

## **artemis as solitude**

girl sits by an open window and allows cold  
air to stain her cheeks red. her hair  
dampens her shirt and all too aware  
girl finds that she's floating a few inches above her  
chair. her phantom is crouched and lapping at the edge  
of the river, a maiden with a bow in her back.



*i'm about to crash into the water  
gonna take you with me  
i'm high voltage, self-destructive  
end it all so legendary!  
charli xcx, "crash"*

