

2022 Wind & Water Writing Contest
Honourable Mention
POETRY

When I Rummage in My Mind*

By Kimberly Stinson

I learned a new word today—lacuna.
It's an odd word.
It could mean, a scaly fish from deep in the sea,
or a sunny locale to long for on a cold winter night.
But never would I have thought it was
my word.

Bright light bleaches the ink from my page.
Blinking, I sit back and ponder filling the unfilled spaces
—the lacuna in my life.

With Virginia and Sylvia, I'd like to dance.
No, not just dance, I'd like to balter
with sheer abandon until breathless.
Afterward, we will pluck words and mustard yellow petals from the muck,
as I learn how to breath myself into the world.
A nubivagant siren's song beckons,
as turbulent eddies of air show me the way.

Blinking, I find my upturned palm held fast.
A wrinkled fortune teller with
soothsayer's steel in her grip
tells me my past.
I writhe and fight to wrest my hand from hers,
as I choke on the runny mixture of tears and snot
Of my own making.

Blinking open gummy eyes, I hear Virginia
say to a milky white snail, "*Think of things in themselves.*" *
Beside her, Sylvia heaves stone after stone
to reshape some unseen flow.
Over and over, she whispers,
"*I am.*"

Arms outstretched and eyes unfocused,

I spin and spin and spin, blinking hard to clear the
smudge of women and snail,
the rush of air mutes time and deafens all
but the wingbeat of approaching black.

Days and decades whizz by
spitting threads, through sharpened teeth,
that my scarred hands cannot grasp.

Blinking, I sit up spine straight,
Eyes wide, I finally understand.
“I am,” and I can,
shift my, “*aspect to the sun.*”

The bleached page reappears now, and
words of all sense and size
flow into fresh unfilled space—
Nearby, a tiny white snail disappears
in a blink.

* Virginia Woolf from *A Room of One's Own*.