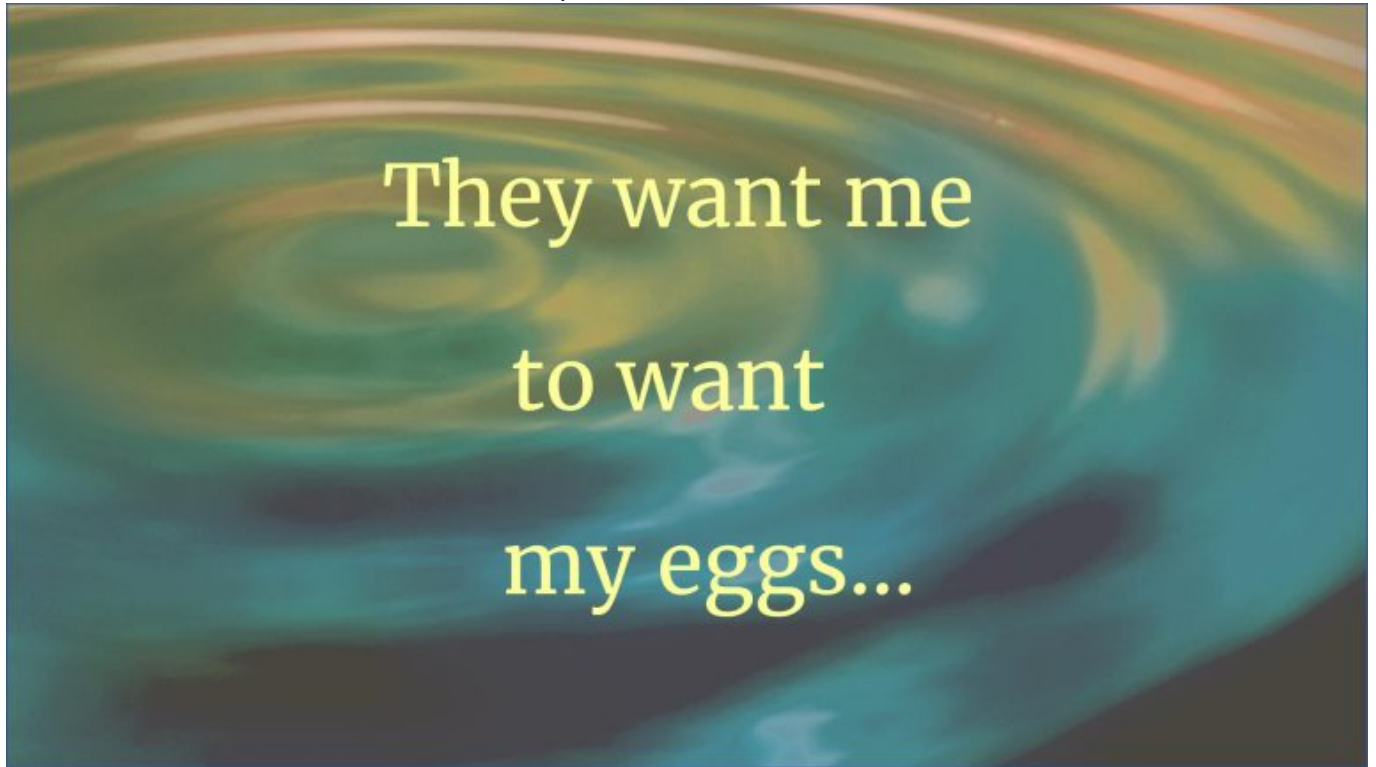


Harvest

Category: Poems

written by Allison C. Harrison | May 24, 2024



In early morning appointments,
the doctor's coat reeks of cigarettes
as he moves closer,
says "Scoot down,"
inserts the probe.

They want me to want my eggs
in case the treatment takes them—
to hold fast to the dream of a child
with my dimples and dark eyes.
To hold it closer than what I know:
my own mind.

~

At home, while roommates watch a movie,
I hold the needle a breath away from my skin,
try to summon the dream,
but push through still unconvinced.

~

On the table in the dark room
with the surgical spotlight,
my belly ripe but stomach empty,
the doctor interrogates my uterus

with wand and needle.

Too-sharp instruments
pluck seeds
from artificially swollen tissue.

I cry out
when the pain pierces through the anesthesia.
The nurse squeezes my hand,
says "I'm sorry, we can't give you any more."
I stay awake.

They wheel my gurney to a small room,
strap an oxygen mask to my face,
watch me for seven hours
and finally admit
when I do not recover.

I do not recover.

~

A week after my release, I call for answers.
"Something to do with you being
so sick," the doctor says.
"But did you hear the good news?
We retrieved twelve."

~

A decade later, I still know
what I knew at twenty-two.
I do not want this harvest
picked out of fear, at too high a price.

Will I cultivate forgiveness?

Eke it out
a little more each year
like pure salt that can be raked from the sludge
only after years of wind and sun.