

little infinite

Poetry for Life™

Voices

INTERVIEW WITH COURTNEY PHILLIPS OF
COURTNEYPHILLIPSSTORYTELLING



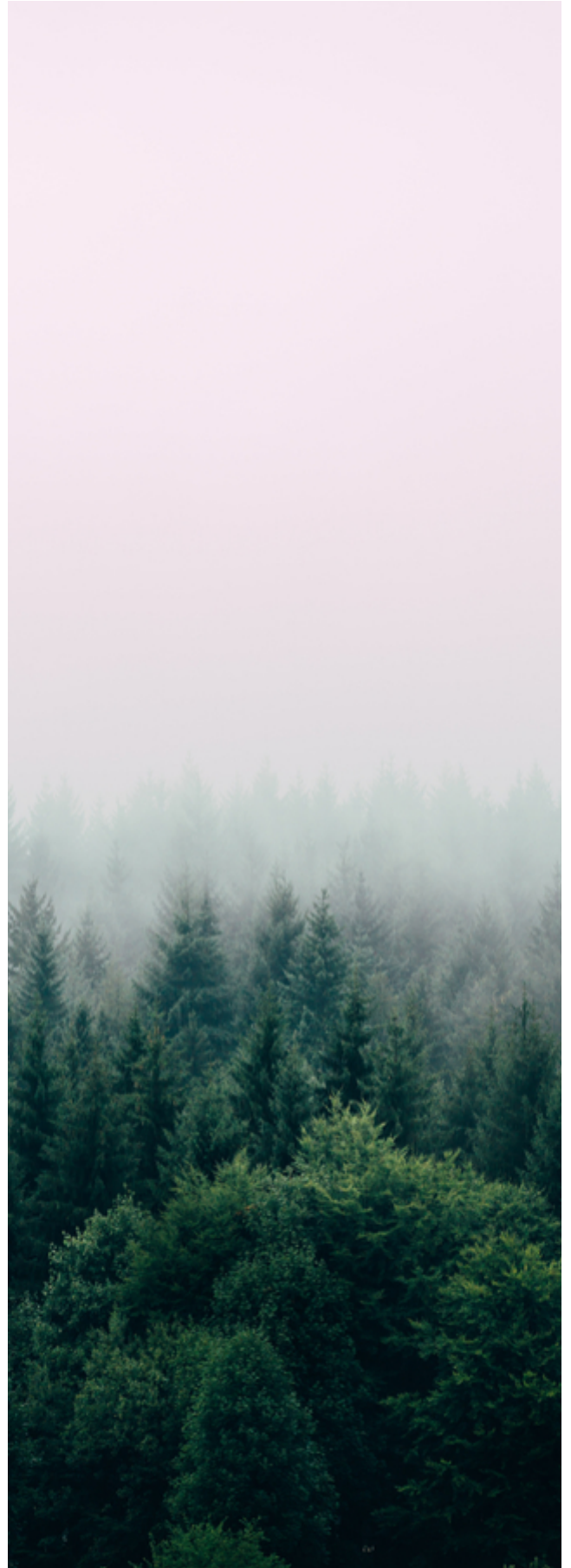
One-trick heart.

Courtney Phillips of

@courtneyphillipsstorytelling continues to live her truth through publishing real af poetry. This 22-year-old is storming the poetry world one page at a time, she now has four published books. We love Courtney's poetry because it's so relatable and transparent. She is brave in her transparency with mental health and growing pains. Getting to know Courtney was especially enlightening because of her spunky go-getter spirit. What more could we ask for?

Phillips is talented in a deeply magical way. Her poetry and eye for design make her collections and Instagram profile a treat to scroll through. Phillips also competes and performs poetry slams and has us SHOOK. She lets us in on advice for poet's who are intimidated by slam poetry, some of her most unique writing habits, and her experience in the poetry community.

She leaves us with a note that sums up our experience getting to know Phillips appropriately **"Pick up a pen today. Remember to be kind. You're amazing. You're alive."** Enjoy getting to know Courtney just like we did.





Interview by
ASHLEIGH ANGEL

little infinite: When did you know poetry would be the writing outlet for you? Introduce us to your journey to poetry and how you got to where you are currently.

CP: Hello there! That's a long story that I would be delighted to tell. Thank you very much for asking. Pull up a chair, if you'd like.

It all began with me, in my early teens, never really reading or writing at all. Then, like a sunrise over the horizon, I was shown the light by my friends. I was shown 'Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief', and I couldn't stop. I was buying books left and right, and at the same time, my high school English class began asking for us to write short stories as assessments. Everything sort of just... aligned. I started to really enjoy reading. I would read a book in four hours and not even hesitate before picking up another.

My English teacher, Mr Meadows, read my writing assessments and immediately told me that my short stories had a lot of potential. He said that I was writing at a high level, and that I definitely had a talent. I really enjoyed it! I went from only having small memories of writing when I was a child, to scoring perfectly with my stories at school and having fun while doing it.

I kept writing and reading. I compiled a lot of those school assessment short stories into my first book, which, at the time was called 'from mystery to darkness... and all else in between', and is now known as 'through shadows, from shadows'. I was 16. I'm 22 now.

Continued

little infinite: When did you know poetry would be the writing outlet for you?

Introduce us to your journey to poetry and how you got to where you are currently.

CP: There's a lapse in my memory, after I finished high school. I had so much trouble with my mental health that I stopped basically everything. I don't even remember what brought me back to my pen. It's like having a book, but I'm missing pages. Sorry about that. But we all struggle. I still am.

In a whirl of depression and agoraphobia, I took a small online course on writing, to try and at least do something while I was at home. This was when I was 20. I decided to write my second book of short stories, 'makeshift voices'.

Again, time passed, and I looked for another course. I found one [online course] called, 'What is poetry?'. It was free. I had no real knowledge of poetry. When I started, I told my best friend, "I'm just giving it a try. I don't think it's for me."

Then my life changed.


From there, it's a blur of words and taking more chances. Doing things to just give it a try. I held poetry's hand once, and I haven't let go since. I joined Instagram thanks to the very same friend that gave me Percy Jackson – funnily enough, she changed my life again. I will never be able to repay her.

But now here I am, I've written two poetry books, have three more in the works, and I am constantly experimenting and growing my writing. Poetry has been one of the best things to ever happen to me.

li: What is your creative process like? If you could dish on the "weirdest" or the most unique part of your writing process, what would it be?

CP: I've been told by my best friend that the weirdest thing that I do is that I *hardly* edit anything. I write a lot in the spur of a moment, in the spur of an emotion, so I often don't go back to it.

My writing process is basically me having an idea and dropping everything to write it down on the nearest phone, laptop, sticky note, or paper. It's like a baby bird falling from the nest, but suddenly knowing how to fly – that little bit of a scramble before you feel free again. Like something's built up.

A watercolor splash in the upper right corner of the page, featuring a mix of orange, blue, and red hues. The text is written in a black, cursive script over the white background.

*"It's a blur of
words and
taking more
chances."*

-COURTNEY PHILLIPS
@COURTNEYPHILLIPSSSTORYTELLING

Poetry Preview



you skipped a button on your shirt
by accident

i'm sure

but it exposed me to the hole in your chest
that you have been hiding

so let's undress

and be together in truth

love my scars

and i will admire yours too

COURTNEY PHILLIPS

Storytelling

"There's a lapse in my memory, after I finished high school. I had so much trouble with my mental health that I stopped basically everything. I don't even remember what brought me back to my pen. It's like having a book, but I'm missing pages. Sorry about that. But we all struggle. I still am."

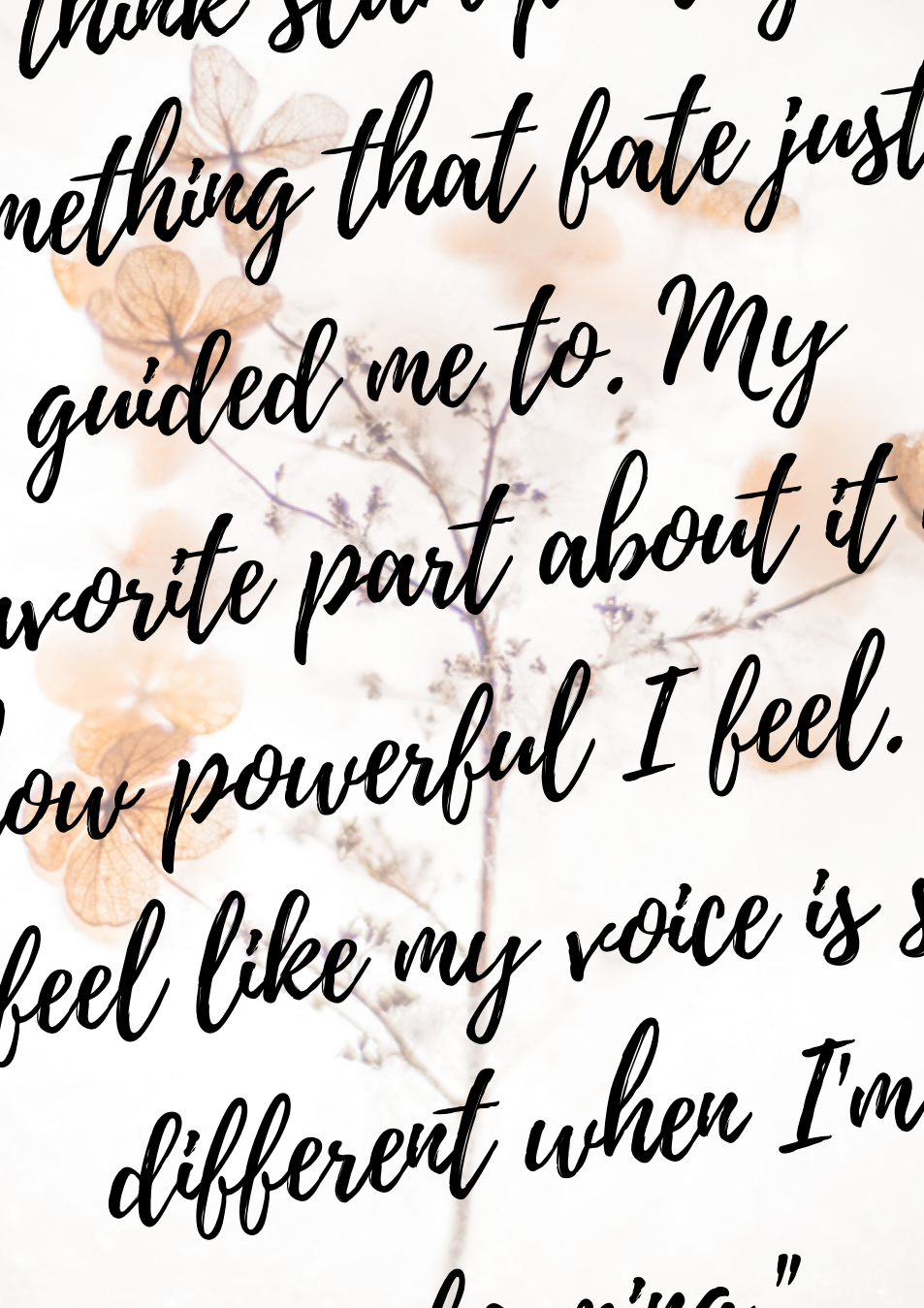
li: You perform spoken word poetry pretty frequently. How did you transition from writing poetry to performing it in front of people? What is your favorite part about slam poetry?

CP: Oh, yes! I perform at least once a month, at the moment. I've only done it three times; one of those being a ten minute set. My local bookstore, Harry Hartog, holds the slam.

Surprise surprise, it was me going out on a limb and giving it a try. I like to say that I live out a pretty planned out life, but now, thinking about these answers, I'm pretty spontaneous! I just had a random feeling to give it a go, because I'm trying to expose myself to as much as possible to fight against my mental health issues.

The transition happened pretty naturally, thankfully. My first slam, I had no idea what a poetry slam was, no idea what kind of things people would be reading. I just picked one regular poem of mine and read it. It was far too short to what you would usually find at a slam. I went home, a little self-conscious but filled with inspiration. Watching people's performances immediately acquainted me to the flow and rhymes and rhythms that are more commonly finger snapped at. At 11pm that night, I wrote a piece while lying in the dark of my room. It just spurred out of me completely out of nowhere. I performed it the next month and got first place. I think slam poetry is something that fate just guided me to.

My favourite part about it is how powerful I feel. I feel like my voice is so different when I'm performing. As someone with not much self-confidence and anxiety issues, to be able to go up there and feel confident, and that my work is good, is really special to me. A very close second is the whole community of it all – being able to watch other people perform, have so many writers in one room, is what completely drew me in in the first place. I've never felt like that before.



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li: If you could advise a poet who is intimidated to attend a slam poetry reading, what would you say? What do you wish you knew when you started performing?

CP: Just go for it!! I know that that is definitely easier said than done, but you don't know if you don't try. Remember to take steady breaths, perform a piece that you're proud of, and take care of yourself! No matter your skill level, poetry slams, at least the ones I've attended, are so welcoming.

Perform something that's a few minutes long, find your groove, find your style, keep going back for more. That's what I wish I knew. You're not just reading poetry, you're performing it. Let it flow through you.

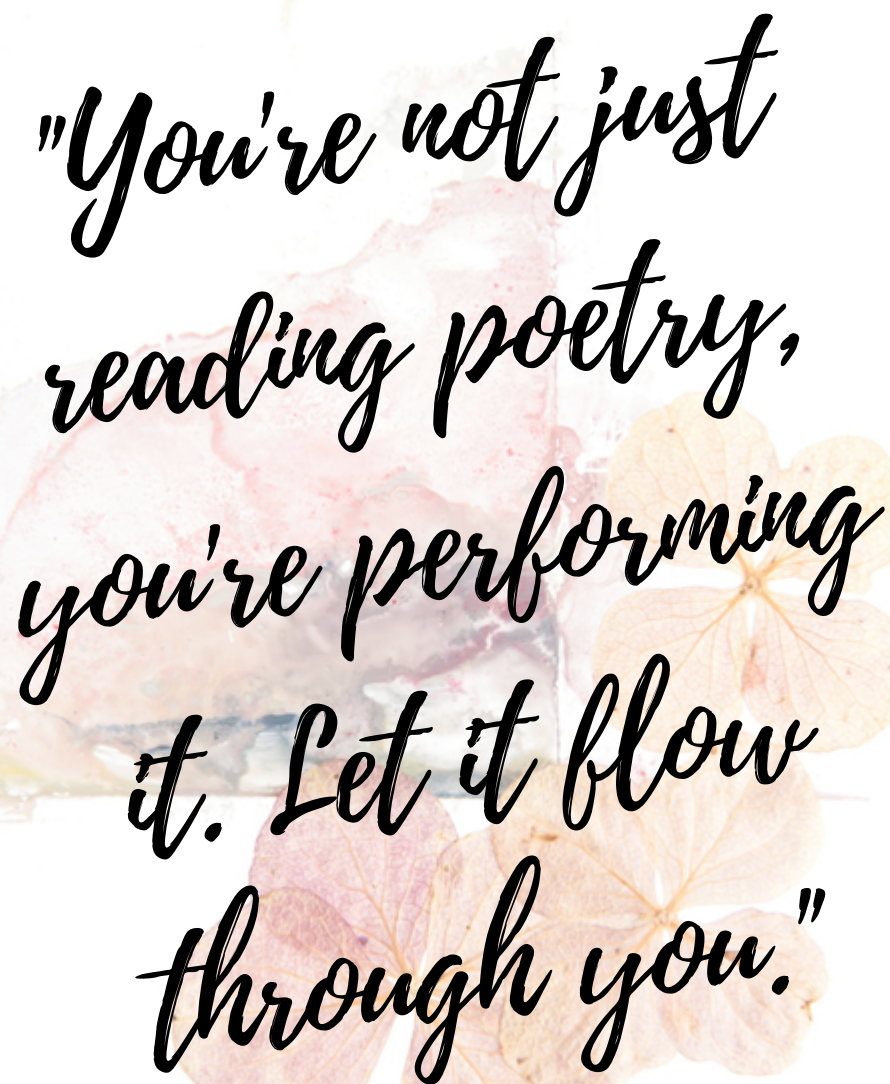
li: Your poetry has a very strong sense of personal style. How did you figure out your aesthetic as a poet? How have your designs and creative evolved since you started writing?

CP: Oh, you think so? Thank you so much! I've never really thought that it did. There are so many poets on Instagram that have this kind of style that, as soon as you see a post, you know that it's theirs. I'm aiming for that.

As for my aesthetic – with words, I just kept writing. For my Instagram layout, it was a lot of trial and error and making sure I'm creating what I want to create, not what someone else wants.

I've gone through a lot of themes and learned a lot about the Instagram analytics – all of the not-fun stuff. I just decided to do what I want and express myself. I've definitely gone in a lot of directions, but I'm happy with where I am now. Incorporating my photography with my words is really fun, as well.

"For my Instagram layout, it was a lot of trial and error and making sure I'm creating what I want to create, not what someone else wants."



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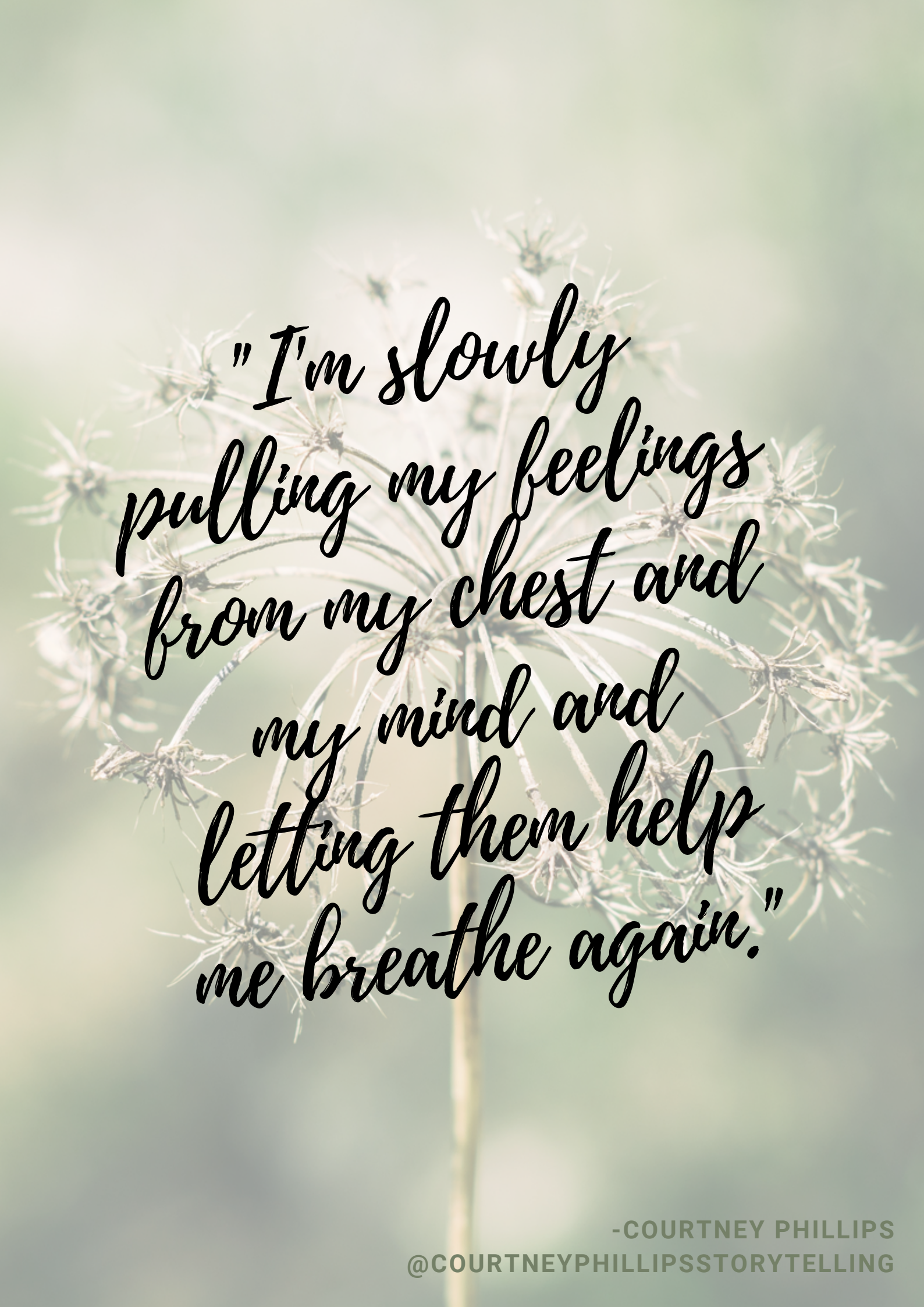
-COURTNEY PHILLIPS
@COURTNEYPHILLIPSSTORYTELLING

li: What is the most surprising aspect of the poetry community online so far? Where do you hope to see the community go as it grows in the next few years?

CP: So many things!! Most importantly, the immense amount of talent and kindness. I've met so many wonderful writers, and wonderful people online. At first, I was too scared to message anyone at all. Scared of all of the strangers. But now I'm lucky enough to have so many friends that genuinely enjoy my company and my writing, and I adore them all so much as well. Another quick mention is the sharing platforms and communities, like Little Infinite and Pen & Pendulum. These communities are so valuable to creators, and I am so grateful for them.

I hope we can grow even bigger, that we can watch small accounts grow into ones that are loved by so many. I hope Instagram as a platform can change, so those who deserve their voices to be heard, can actually be heard. It's so much of a fight just to get your poetry seen. I wish that could be easier, especially for those just starting out. Because when you're starting out, you can be so discouraged if no one is liking or commenting on your work. That's what a lot of people hold on to. I hope we can remain kind, and I hope that people remember that the most important thing, before followers, are the connections we make with each other, and being proud and happy with the words and creations we are putting out into the world.

"I hardly edit anything. I write a lot in the spur of the moment, in the spur of an emotion, so I often don't go back to it."



"I'm slowly
pulling my feelings
from my chest and
my mind and
letting them help
me breathe again."

-COURTNEY PHILLIPS
@COURTNEYPHILLIPSSSTORYTELLING

li: You have four books, 'through shadows, from shadows', 'makeshift voices', 'remember me in the details', and 'please and thank you.' How has your writing process evolved since putting together your first book vs. your most recent?

CP: I do! Thank you so much. And they'll all be coming out as collector's editions before the end of the year, so make sure to check that out, please! Absolutely shameless plug, my goodness.


If you haven't noticed, I really don't plan things very much. My first book was just a compilation of short stories that I wrote for school. So I just put them together as best as I knew how, which wasn't very well. Then, years later, I remastered that book, and I released *makeshift voices*. It was basically a set of stories that I really set my heart to on telling. I don't really remember much of the creative process, but I do remember sitting with my grandmother, listening to her talk about her experience as a child. There's a story in that book called, 'home', which is based on one of her true stories that she told me. That's pretty special to me.

I try something different with each book, I think. When I made my first book of poetry, *remember me in the details*, I decided to couple all of the poems with my own illustrations, which was really cool to create. I don't have that much drawing ability, but it was really therapeutic to sit and ponder on images that match the poems nicely.

As for 'please and thank you', that one was a very unique experience. Basically, I wrote poems for six months. Whatever I wrote went into the book, without editing or review. I wanted to make it the most honest and raw portrayal of myself that I could make.

My book that is coming out on the 22nd of November, 'do you have a second?', is different entirely again. It's a self-help book of gentle reminders, being published through Eleizer Tristan Publishing. I've self-published all of my books before this, so the process of putting this one together has been really new. Being able to work with editors and formatters and everything like that, instead of having to do that myself, has been nice, but also so nerve-wracking. It's turned out really well, and I can't wait to give it to the world and see if it can help them smile.

As for all of the books that I've working on now, 'DARLING', 'clear water', 'her,', and 'remember me in the details, li: letters with no return address', I'm following a more structured and scheduled approach to make sure I give myself time to plan, write, and edit. I want to make them the best that they can be, and I'm so excited.



*"I wanted to make it the
most honest and raw
portrayal of myself that
I could make."*

**-COURTNEY PHILLIPS
@COURTNEYPHILLIPSSSTORYTELLING**

li: What do you think is the biggest change in you as a poet is since your first book? What is the most challenging aspect of being a poet that you have come to realize so far in your journey?

CP: My quality of writing has changed so, so much. The more I practice, the more I realize that I have an ability with words that I'm so grateful for. I've started writing prose, slam poetry, and long form poetry, and those have been absolutely freeing. Practicing and moving from the basics to try and find my own individual writing style has been a big journey of self-criticism and self-love. For as long as I am writing, I am growing. For as long as I am writing, I am learning.

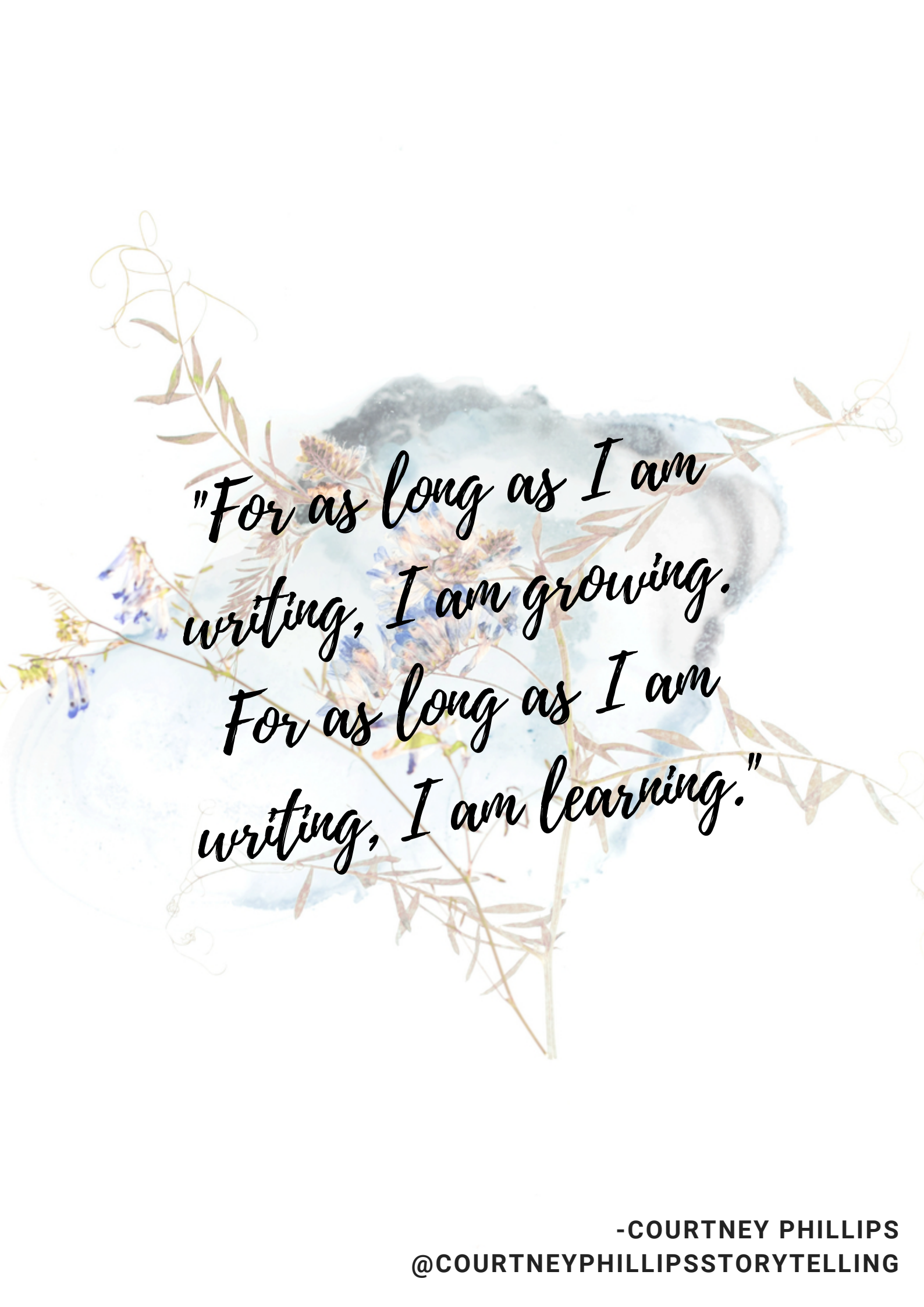
li: If you could recommend one resource that has helped you during your poetry and writing journey, what would it be? This can be a certain app, website, book, podcast, journal, etc.

CP: I will, always and forever, recommend Lulu.com. It's a self-publishing platform that is completely free, easy to use, and can even get your work onto retail channels like Amazon. I've used it since I was 16, with my first book, and I'm still using it now.

li: Which types of poems do you find your audience responds to the most? Have you found this influences the content in your poetry? Why or why not?

CP: Well of course, Instagram will always have a soft spot for very, very short poems, with content that is easy to relate to, like love and heartbreak. Funnily enough, I've started to dislike my shorter pieces a little bit, because I know that I have longer and better quality writing that doesn't get the same amount of attention. I don't really want to be known as that poet who wrote one line that anyone could have written.

I try not to let that influence me, and I still post what I want to, with short poems sprinkled in. I know I have a lot of followers who enjoy my short poetry, as well as a lot of followers who enjoy my longer pieces – I'm just grateful that they enjoy my work at all.



*"For as long as I am
writing, I am growing.
For as long as I am
writing, I am learning."*

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li: What does "Poetry for Life" mean to you?

CP: What an interesting question! For me, when I think about that, Poetry for Life is writing to feel alive again. That's what I do. I'm slowly pulling my feelings from my chest and my mind and letting them help me breathe again. Poetry can be such an incredible source of healing. Poetry is alive.

And just to sign off! This isn't really an answer to a question, but I would love to thank you, Little Infinite, for inviting me to do this interview, and for everyone who has read this little journey of mine.

Pick up a pen today. Remember to be kind. You're amazing. You're alive.

"Poetry can be such an incredible source of healing. Poetry is alive."



*"Poetry for
Life is writing
to feel alive
again."*

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Poetry Preview

and this is a month
i now hold with pride
that i am no longer scared to hide from
(even if i am visible
for just a moment
for just this page)

my love
even if just a newly found friend
an acquaintance
a welcome stranger
i s l o v e i s l o v e i s l o v e

swatched in every colour
and reflected alongside others
the one's whose skin has worn it for lifetimes
the one's whose love has tried to be dulled or
changed to monochrome

through bruises
through scars
through words
through sparks
through mourning

and even if my colours
are still trying to find their right hue
i find pride in my artistry
i find pride in june

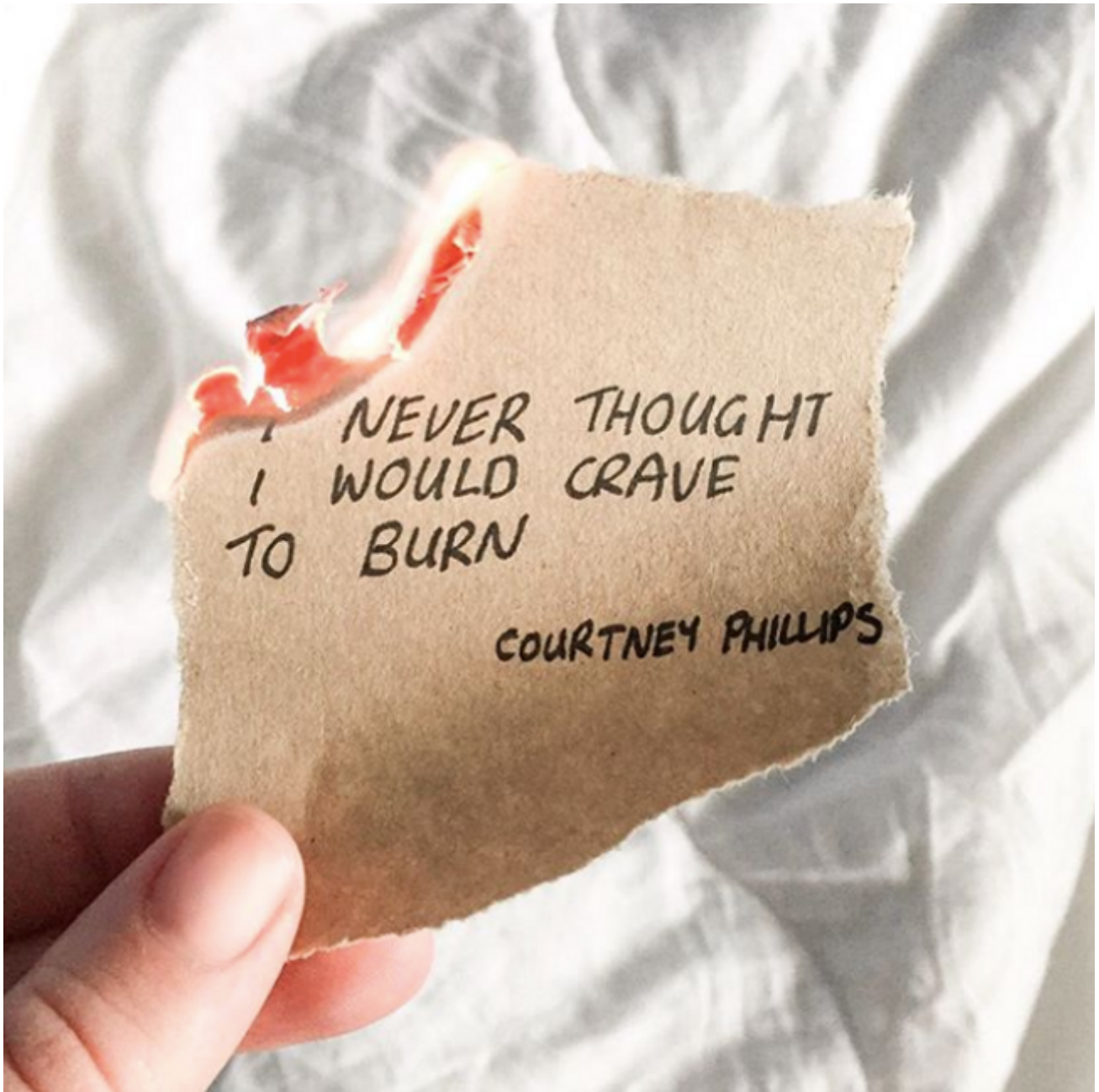
COURTNEY PHILLIPS

C. Phillips

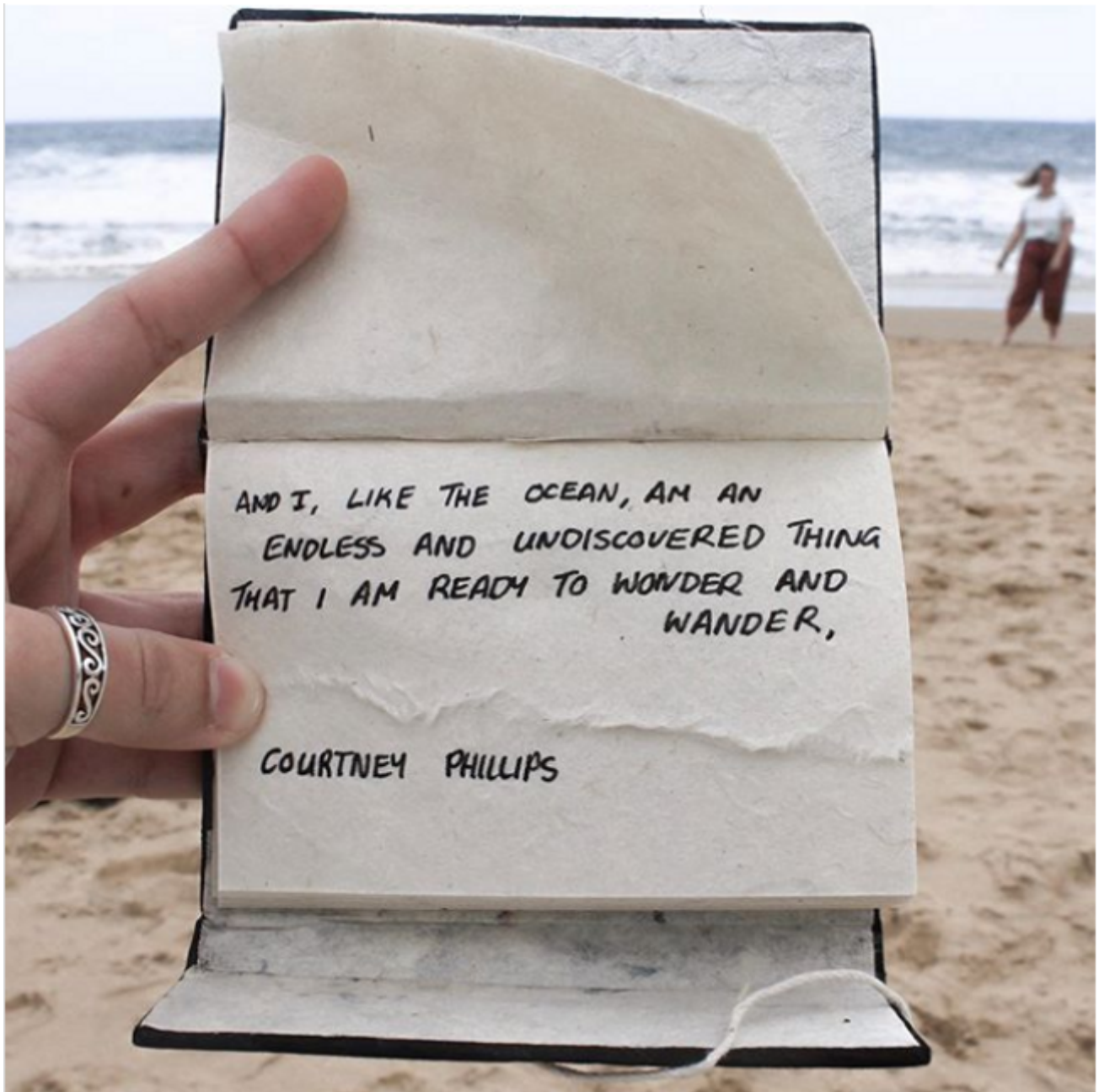
Poetry Preview



Poetry Preview




Poetry Preview



AND I, LIKE THE OCEAN, AM AN
ENDLESS AND UNDISCOVERED THING
THAT I AM READY TO WONDER AND
WANDER,

COURTNEY PHILLIPS

Poetry Preview



do you know what it's like
to look into the mirror and see eyes
that aren't yours?

sad eyes
empty eyes
eyes pulled open by shadows
when all they want to do is close

those eyes cause me to stare
questioning why they look that way
searching for answers
but they can't speak

they are said to be windows to the soul
but if they look like this
what has happened to mine?

COURTNEY PHILLIPS

Storytelling

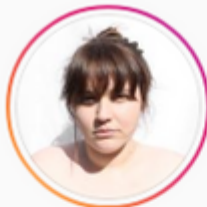
Poetry Preview

*i speak so much of stars
but there is an*
INCOMPREHENSIBLE MAGIC
held in
FLESH AND BONE

COURTNEY PHILLIPS

NEVER MISS COURTNEY'S POETRY.

Follow Courtney on
Instagram!



courtneyphillipsstorytelling

Follow

333 posts 7,866 followers 172 following

courtney phillips
chaser of the sun
one-trick heart



if lost, please return to neverland



you can find links to my Etsy store, my books, and my website, here ↓

linktr.ee/courtneyphillipsstorytelling

Followed by littleinfinitepoetry

favourites



my books



grateful



Q&As



lockscreen



events



milestones



POSTS

TAGGED

the flame is not in the moment
it is in you
i think it's just all you

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you cut me like a weed
when i thought i was a flower

COURTNEY PHILLIPS

