

## **Bloom**

Celebrating Elgin's 2nd Pride Parade  
by Aron Ryan

Rainbows

don't fall down from heaven;  
no, we rise from earth  
to sky. We bridge the gap between

human and divine

with kites, balloons, rainbow flags  
raised high - not one color,  
we're infinite flowers blooming in our  
Eden: garden made sublime  
by variety. Pink, white, and blue  
like cherry blossoms kissing  
a cloudless sky. Blue, white, and gold  
like forget-me-nots as tiny  
as raindrops. Brown like our earth  
cocooning seeds yet to sprout.  
Black like our sky cradling stars  
yet to shine. Every stripe  
holds a story, a voice, a light  
guiding us home.

We  
rehome rainbows -  
tie-dye shirts  
and pride wristbands,  
colorful capes  
and rainbow hijabs.  
Even our skin  
tells a story; whether henna or ink,  
our tattoos bloom into  
who we are, who we were, who  
we become.

We  
are becoming  
ourselves  
when we fight for more  
than ourselves,  
more than our own patch of land,  
our lone picket-fenced  
garden. We take a knee, we take a stand  
for every child's future to be bright  
as stained glass windows.

We  
are wholeness  
from  
pieces.

We  
are beauty  
from  
brokenness.

We  
are kaleidoscopic,  
letting light  
shine through our stories.

We  
shelter our colors  
in ourselves,  
like the rainbows held  
in a hummingbird's  
wings, only seen when sunlight shines  
through our feathers. Our wings  
our hearts beating so fast it's almost impossible  
to capture in photographs. We seek  
something sweet to fill our hungry bellies. We nest  
these hummingbirds in our chests  
and yet, we are taught to keep them caught  
in our ribcage. Ought to starve ourselves  
of nectar, this sweet love blooming for another  
and ourselves. Sometimes, starvation's  
our only option, lest we're kicked out of our nests  
before we can even  
fly.

Elgin Pride

welcomed me home

after I lost

mine. Sanctuary for every bird

singing in my chest,

for the boy and girl and every hue in between,

for blooming and wilting, love and grief,

for the years I could've lost if I hadn't believed in the almost impossible -

how my hummingbird wings hold rainbows,

how this tiny heart beats over a thousand times each minute,

how it gets better in time. Life isn't one nest,

one family dinner. It's every flavor yet to taste,

every meal yet to savor

with good company, with queer community,

with friends to fly alongside

we soar.

I am not alone, not anymore,

and I will keep my heart open for yours.