



# ALCHEMY FOR CELLS & OTHER BEASTS

...

Maya Jewell Zeller AND Carrie DeBacker

**ENTRE RÍOS BOOKS**

www.entreriosbooks.com

Seattle, Washington.

**Alchemy for Cells & Other Beasts**

Maya Jewell Zeller, Carrie DeBacker

Text Copyright ©2017 Maya Jewell Zeller

Art Copyright ©2017 Carrie DeBacker

ISBN: 978-0-9973957-3-0 (paper)

First Edition. ERB 005.

Printed in the United States by Edwards Brothers Malloy.

Art photography by Art & Soul Photography, Seattle, Washington

# ALCHEMY FOR CELLS & OTHER BEASTS

— — — — —  
Maya Jewell Zeller AND Carrie DeBacker



**entre ríos books**



## CONTENTS

---

Upon Finding Out They Were Wrong, the Scientists Had a Good Long Chuckle / 9
little spell with chest x-ray / 11
The Waiting / 12
Spell for Addressing Turtles / 15
Psychosomatic Is a Matter of Opinion / 16
little spell for diagnostics / 19
Floating Museum of the Doomed Blue Sphere / 21
little spell with a ship on its back / 25
“i need large electric oven roaster...” / 26
Spell for Remaining Calm / 29
Dirge for a Temporary God / 30
little spell hungry for milkweed / 36
little spell with the head of a boar / 39
little spell for conjuring boar / 40
little spell with chest x-ray (2) / 42
Spell for transcendence / for conjuring finches / 44
little spell for kestrel hovering / for x-ray & mothering / 46
little spell for conjuring a new season / 48
Spell for Conjuring Order: <i>Pleuronectiformes</i> / 50

Spell for conjuring flood plains / for marrow & pollen / 52

every rose has a tea cup: tiny spell for a chipped heart / 54

Spell for Not Describing / 57

Alchemy for Cells & Other Beasts / 58

little spell with chest x-ray (3) / 61

Notes - 63

Acknowledgements - 64

About the Collaborators - 65

Audio - 66

*Tiny green moss collector*

*Sweet tiny green moss collector*

*Remember you could catch fire ...*

—Mariee Sioux



Upon Finding Out They Were Wrong,  
the Scientists Had a Good Long Chuckle

My moons are roller-derby moons.

Think of Saturn,  
or another sad little planet—

plant yourself in it. Is it still myth,  
with your feet in its mouth?

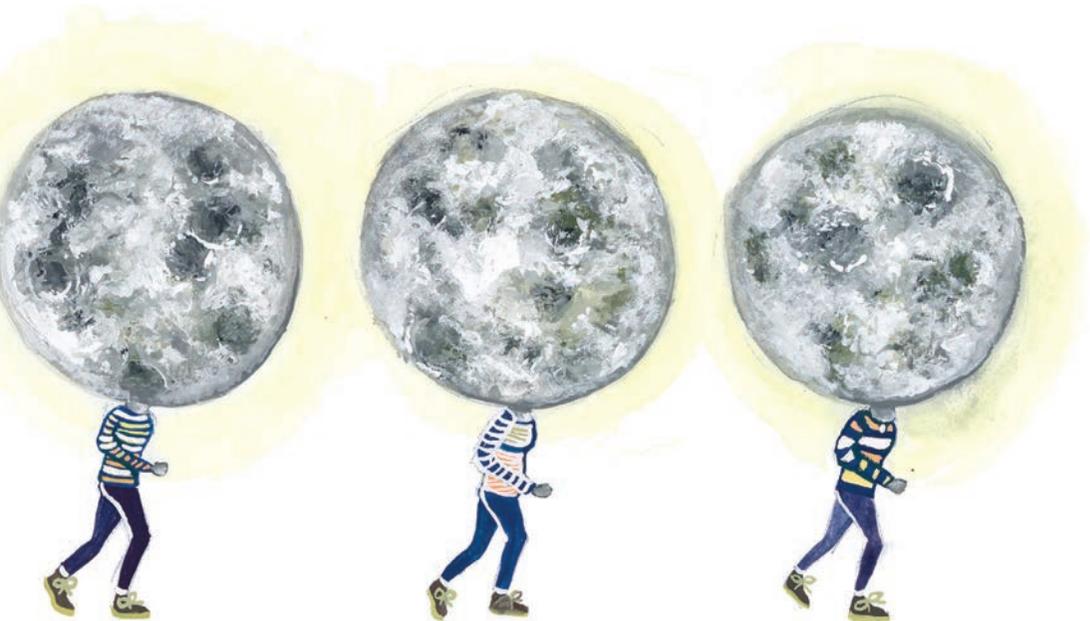
Plant yourself, your wheeled heels.

Am I an irregular satellite? A minor planet?

I am thinking of Pluto, its brief stint.  
The mountains and plains of Pluto.

When you planted in me, I said okay,  
I'm out here in this Kuiper Belt, waiting for science  
to catch up.

I said, sure, America, come on in.





little spell with chest x-ray

sweet girl made of dust & water / please  
leave jewelry at home / wear open, loose  
clothing / this will not hurt a bit / possibly we  
will ask you to don this gown / you are going  
to experience a small dose of ionizing  
radiation / you will not feel it at all / but  
possibly you will see the way we see / in  
shades of gray / possibly the plate will be  
cold / like the ocean floor / we will finish  
quickly / like a blossom opening / on a  
beach / on a very warm planet

## The Waiting

It was not the hour of red-flecked birds.  
It was not the hour of wood smoke.  
It was not the hour of the exquisite chirping of trees.  
It was not the hour of ice cream, guitar, or warm bricks,  
ice skating, of neon celebration. This was no hour  
for a child. I put on my black mask  
and walked into the mountain. I pushed right through the stone.  
I wore a necklace of furred insects, emerged in a forest,  
stepped into a boat, I rocked inside with seismic proportions.  
I drew a knife from my belly, plundered the lake. I put on my wolf head,  
my girl arms, my quiver of bodies. I put on my blood  
and it put me on. I was a scrub grub. A cold bug. A sharp blade.  
A self reaching into a self, a hole. It was my hour of fluttering hands,  
hands like wings, hands like a red streak. The red streak  
was me. There were no birds. The trees sang a dirge.  
I dipped my head into the bile, pulled it up with my name,  
like a tongue, clenched between my teeth.

