

## **A Call to the Elders**

By Julia McKeown

Butch baby,

Dyke starlight

Transexual Transylvania

Denizens of the in-between

Breadcrumbs of oil and glitter

Turned blood and breaks of bone

Is there a spell for this?

For pulling the light from the cracks

Calling the vanished back

Wrapping the still-here around me

Like a cloak that whispers home

That whispers safe from the storm

I am afraid and tired

No one at this sleepover looks like me

Understands my names

Can you pick me up please?

Please, I skinned my knee on sharp words

Do you have some bactine?

I got lost in the woods looking for, something  
And returned covered in burrs (in best intensions)  
Do you have some calamine?

I need help fighting on this side of the horizon line

Lately, it feels like gender's the one fucking me

Please, still be breathing, somewhere  
Please, tell me we make it past forty

Give me your hands, your faces  
Let me play with your wrinkles

I am hungry for them  
For time, for touch

For smiles stretching past the sympathetic  
For ones whose hope still shows  
The tug of sadness around the mouth

That comes from unexpected survival  
From the luck of the draw

Please, I am cold

I am heavy on the horizon

I am struggling to find a home

On this side of the River Stix

Where someone looks like me

Knows my names