

2024

Dear Body

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Recommended Citation

Dunkle, Iris Jamahl (2024) "Dear Body," *Nelle*: Vol. 7, Article 14.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.library.uab.edu/nelle/vol7/iss2024/14>

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Iris Jamahl Dunkle

DEAR BODY

1. this is a blurry love letter.
[See examples in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.]
2. For so long you have been my far-off star;
the sword I swallowed [made of fire?] and walked on.
3. And you scarecrowed the pulse of my mind.
4. There were days when electricity could thread
your pulse awake and you'd bloom
like a goddamned peony [See Elizabeth Bishop's "The Fish"].
5. Body, let's be real, I never trusted those raves of force.
I knew you'd sink back into being a sheath, something to shed—
My poisonous snake.
6. I'm writing to tell you, those little nerves you wove back into my legs
like new galaxies are my new true loves.
7. And those webs of muscle they've constructed that carry me
are my beloveds.
8. I am walking into the new year like it is a starving ocean
not knowing if you, body, are my master or servant
[See Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*].
9. Dear Body, Dear Body, Dear Body—I promise this time not to forsake you—