Identity Crisis
by Mary Kate Fitzpatrick

I.
I heard that your name was buried centuries ago due to the holiness it bore,
Human mouths defiling it with their blasphemous tongues,
Worshipping your name as they commit heresy,
Driving your true namesake underneath the ground into the core of the Earth
Or maybe into the skies of heaven where you reside-
Anywhere out of reach of our sacrilegious devotions.
I heard that you were a clockmaker,
Creating the universe with precision and design and beauty and art,
Until the seventh day and you let it
tick, tick, tick away,
Even when it turned into a bomb and exploded evil and love into one,
indecipherable mass of existence.
I heard you were a sadist,
Forging the world into creation so that you could stand cold and detached
While your children grieved and agonized and died,
Taking more pleasure in the pain of non-intervention,
Even with your omnipotent power.
Apparently it was more fun to watch your creations destroy themselves,
Pour salt on the slug and watch it burn to death.
I heard that you were an artist and a masochist,
Painting the world in splendid shades and sublime sunsets,
Gusts of wind and honey-suckled fields,
Your masterpiece completed by an Adam and an Eve of starry studded night.
Destruction of art and the art of destruction were synonymous to you,
Allowing you to see the beauty in the desolation of your perfected creation.
I heard that you were many and I heard that you were one,
Blue-painted godheads and elephant tusked creations proclaiming your divinity,
Dark-skinned prophets clutching to scribbled down words of subjective truth,
Cherubic babes with milky white faces and glittering eyes,
Earth Wind Water Fire,
The gravity that holds the world down in place,
The inertia that keeps us moving, changing.
I heard that you were love,
In its purest, indefinable form,
The adoring Father to the entire universe.
Cherishing our miniscule, meager lives,
Holding us all so tenderly
In the palm of your kaleidoscopic, light streaming hands.
I heard that I am just like you,
Created in your image to reflect facets of the divine-
God, I hope I am.
God, I hope I’m not.
II.
I learned love by the book.
Ancient text and the word of God
Teaching me that,
Love is patient,
Love is kind,
Love turns me into solid salt,
Love drowns me in a flood.
Scripture read like story books-
My mother is Eve,
And I,
Her bumbling bundle of original sin-
I hope I have made her proud.
I have learned how to love humanity as God did-
In fire and brimstone,
With a sacrificial love that has left
Innocent blood on my hands,
Spattered across the sunset sky-
Stained inside my heart like a branding punishment
I never asked for.
The tower of Babel has fallen-
I’ve torn Joseph’s coat,
The colors have faded and all that remains is
The sad, threadbare truth.
Tell me,
How can I speak blasphemies
When I don’t even know God’s name?
III.
Perhaps stars whisper age-old secrets to each other in the dark.
Maybe it is God’s name echoed off their lit tongues,
Their luminous breath caught in exclamation at the truth of their own murmuring;
The title itself bursting with revelation and shimmering with grace.
Perhaps the sun knows His name,
And etches it in golden light.
Silent and shining it is written in cursive script,
Detailed calligraphy made entirely of sunbeams-
Sometimes I think I can feel its soft burn on my fingertips.
Perhaps winter winds howl His name,
Roaring His essence with all their might,
Infuriated by humanity’s inability to listen.
They sing a heartbreaking song,
The one that hums with the knowledge that
God deserves better.
Perhaps I hold God’s name in the soft of my palm,
Deep-set crevices willowing together so purposefully it seems
Like the engraved bark of a tree-
Like the initials of someone loved eternalized.
Perhaps they spell out all of the answers I’ve been looking for,
Perhaps I only have to learn the language.