

A Collection of Poems (3)
By Catherine X Li

Little Black Ring

It wraps around my right index finger, but not too constricted or tight. A crescent window appears if I push up, close enough against the bone. Discovered on sale at a dubious Asian online store, but my sister just can't resist a good deal when she sees one. No bumps and scratches on the smooth and glossy surface that reflects slivers of blue and orange on stone-hard black, stainless steel black.

It's thin and light, but when I drop it, the metal clacks with the table similar to the satisfying sounds when a bucket of coins is turned upside down.

Even when off I feel a band engraved on my skin, like it had never left. When I put it back on, the circle is crisp and cool on clammy hands.

Passing time I tap my ring against the cold metal laptop back, hoping that the clink and clank would fill in the dreaded silence.

IRL to Online

We used to walk in linked arms
fingers enclosed tightly shaped like zeros
grins forming into visible smiles
soft fingertips on hard blistered palms
from swinging too much on monkey bars
when then we would break apart
some dashing ahead kicking up dust
others gasping for breath to keep up
finally one left behind whose face says
hello to the dirt ground

Today, we hold hands through digital screens
strings of 1's and 0's tie us together
like makeshift bonds
that can burn in the matter of
seconds with an easy click of
a red little button

Confusion and Hypocrisy

It's surprising how fast the feelings of euphoria quickly wither to distress,
tunnel vision clouds you from what stands in front.
A concoction made to save, but only given to those who pay.

The requirement to receive help is to first experience pain.
Surprising how AC makes the earth warmer when it's meant to cool.
Try to find the answer before you realize your mistakes,
why is it so difficult?

Ironic and confusing to wrap one's head around
all the mysteries that engulf us in waves.
Don't listen to liars,
talent is required before hard work can pay off.

The world is revolving, yet some humans remain in place.
Stubborn and unwilling, compromising isn't a thing.
You'd better try to fix your issues before helping others
unless you want to be buried in painful struggles.