

MEGAN HARTFORD

Alive

Be proud,
for thou art not death.
Thou rest and sleep,
but pleasure must flow.

Men of bones,
desperate men,
dwell,
and shall be no more.

Thou shalt.

ABOUT THE POEM & AUTHOR

“Alive” was created from John Donne’s “Death, Be Not Proud” (1633). About the poem and the process of composing it, Megan Hartford writes:

I stepped out of my comfort zone when I chose to use John Donne’s 1633 sonnet, “Death, Be Not Proud,” as my source material for this poem. The poetry I choose to read for entertainment tends to be contemporary works by female poets. In seeking out source material for my found poetry, however, I like to choose texts that challenge me in some way, that push my creative sensibilities. In a shorter piece like this sonnet, I highlight the words that stand out to me intuitively and see how they fit together. Is there a story to be told with these words? What is their connection? Once I have identified these words, I play around with them and let the story or theme emerge organically. In creating the poem, one parameter I give myself is to keep the words in the order in which they appear in the source material. For me, having these rigid boundaries actually helps me to be more creative. In this way I’m able to cut a path through the piece that leads me to my own story.

Megan Hartford lives in Manhattan, Kansas, and can be found online at liminal-space.org. Her work has also appeared in *The Sun*.

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