

AN
UNSPOKEN
THOUGHT
CROSSES
MY
MIND,

DARE I SAY

one imperative
forty two



Sara Chong
yeaaaaa!
2026

DARE I SAY

You asked me
about that faraway look
in my eyes —
already somewhere else.

An unspoken thought
crosses my mind —

dare I say.

I have died
a thousand deaths,
each an abyss of grief,
blue from walking through
lifetimes —
where relief
was mistaken for release.

Dare I say.

Night after night
I pray for luminescence

whilst my limbs stand
like menhirs,
guarding
a single amber flame.

Dare I say.

Dare I say.

My body is a temple of light.

Then you asked me
about peace —
not over there,
but here,
your hand upon my heart.

Dare I say.

Dare I say.

And —
I dare say —

I am not made of stone.

Janice Sim
July 2026



Jeremy Fernando
thoughtless time
2026

MARIGOLD RAPARE



Marigold Rapere was composed and arranged by **Michael Kearney** for this issue of *One Imperative*.

To listen, please go to :

<https://thesymbolicorder.bandcamp.com/album/marigold-rapere>

Michael Kearney – Guitars

Durnin Martin – Bass

Patrick Maher – Drums, Hand Percussion, &
Drum Machines

Recorded at The Bunker, Tachikawa

Engineered and Mixed by Michael Kearney

TWICE

I

I grieved twice.

Once,
when my father
became part of everything
I could no longer reach.

And again,
for my aunt,
whose memories
began following him.

II

So I mourned
a life that ended,
and another
that slowly drifted away.

Sometimes
it's a slow evening,

light leaving the room
so gently, you don't notice
until you're standing
in the dark.

III

Grief
taught me
to stay.

To listen
before the silence.

To sit
a little longer.

To hold
a hand
before it slips away.

IV

For memory
is a fragile thing.

Love,
perhaps not.

It remains
in the warmth
someone leaves behind,
long after
remembering
has gone.

Mars B

July 2026



Janice Sim

Chrysalis

July 2026

COLOR OF LOVE



The fall rips through the sky
with rain falling washing away
all the beauty that's left of colors
Flowers Shelter small things
like hideaway places

like getaways of cities
for creatures responsible to desire
they pollinate
they pollinate love in the colors of orange
the color of love
they enter the bloom
as if entering a Buddhist temple
in quiet prayer shaking the outside world
they teach us how
we too can pollinate love
and I see them
I feel them unbothered
in the little sanctuary of a bloom
They fill their minds with the Music of their own
wings
They Meditate

Meditate

to the goodness of something

that tastes as good as a leaf

sweet as bloom nectar in the sweet moments of
solitude

Leaving behind

A miraculous distance between sky and a
relentless storm

Maria Kranidis

October 2026



THOUGHTWORK

The sun stitches itself into the morning as if to mend
the night's frayed edges, a thought's scuffed thread
snagged on an inside fold, not quite a knot,
the raggedness of dreams burning a crimson
scratch behind my eyes. If unused hours could twine
the ache of unsleep with the palm press of truth

against the boned branches covering my pulse, then truth
might bud from the keloids and grafts cut to mend
one species into another, wound with jute and nylon twine.
What is truth but technē spun into a thread,
ready to weave, to twist, to dye into umber, or crimson,
or simply to fray or to snarl, refusing to knot

unless a conflict of lines intersects to the stop of a knot,
a maze releasing to what's done or the loose ends of truth?
Sunrise or sunset hazed into short rays shine crimson
in the horizon's crease dulling into clouds, shifting to mend
from shape to form to seam, each rainstorm a thread
within threads, lightning the needle that energies twine

into "I can't, I won't, I was," bleeding the twine
until my fingers slip, raw-rubbed between knots,
skin roughening the parallel, clutched threads,
tiny markers of failure and effort, small truths.
There are no tears to the touch, no tears to mend
that will lift out or pull down the heart flaring crimson

through surfaces, feather through needle through crimson-
hemmed cuts. Grief is the cat's cradle I twine
with thought's fingers, my thumbs unable to mend
or undo my head from the crossings of knots,
from yesterday's jumble of remnants and truth,
nothing tangible except for the light that threads

from the window to my cheeks, the thread
of a lost eyelash curled to couch the rough crimson
where my skin erupts, expelling toxins and truth.
Should I sigh? Should I curse? Should I pull apart and twine
this muddled spectrum of ends and strands and knots?
If I cannot remake my nights and my stars, why mend

a pattern into false truths, why scrabble at threads
that refuse mending, or crimes of the sons
that continue to twine like a moebius looping for naught?

Gina Rae Foster

October 2026



Jeremy
Fernando

paint me

a portrait



Jeremy Fernando
baby van goghs
2026

CONFABULATION

Setsuko Adachi

Darlings, I am ready to leave reality. I might have already said that to you because we do love confabulating. But I do not remember, and that is the essence of this note. I think it is better for us to accept my forgetfulness before I forget I am forgetful. The time we have to process this fact might be slim. It may be rougher for you than for me. I can forget; you can't. Our relationship has always centered on talking together, sharing what we have been up to, what our minds have been cultivating, and wishing the best for each other. And, most importantly, letting each other know that we are there without fail to support each other. But when I depart reality, I will not be reliable. I can't hold myself accountable, even now, when I recount past events; I forge new realities because my memories don't recall everything. They stay as true stories in my mind until my memories come back. When they do, I feel nerves coursing through my face, red, flaming heat almost bursting my cheeks — I think more and more in emotions these days.

I have a premonition that I am at the threshold of extreme forgetfulness. I will arrange for a cognitive test after this. You will have to witness me becoming unreliable and incapable in real life. Half a year, give or take. Darlings, no need for you to give me the “I am sorry this is happening to you” hugs and pats. You need not try to ease my fear and panic of living in forgetfulness. (I am contradicting myself here. I am writing this by hand in the hope that future me will be able to read this over, identify that it was the past me who wrote it, and trace the confabulation concept I had for us.) No worries, I am ready to move into the world of memory loss, and thrive in it. I am prepared because I had a mild epiphany five, six years ago, when a rheumatologist misdiagnosed me with a terminal illness, which I did not have, and implied my prognosis was ten years. It offered perfect timing. I took the initiative silently, without consulting anyone, revised my mindset, and realigned my life so I could part life without remorse. I minimized the time I gave to work, both physically and mentally. I allocated it to live in the excitement of being engaged in creativity.

My proposition to you, darlings, is simple: let us confabulate when we meet, as usual. Our exchanges about each other's real lives will no longer be the same. I can't offer you lasting support. So, its nature will have to change: You don't need to correct my stories with what actually happened, but help me push my creative boundaries. Let me weave stories. You can chime in whenever. Ask for clarification if you are lost or give false information and see what happens. With your encouragement, I am sure my love for details will produce unheard-of fables. They should be relatively easy to understand and make sense since the significance of 5W1H is deeply drilled into me. If you see me struggling, you can take over, fill the gaps with even wilder creativity. You give shape to the unspoken thoughts that cross my mind. Dare yourself to say the unsayable. Let stories take stimulating turns and we can get high on our creative energy. The stranger our stories become, the better. It is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Once we have enough stories from our confabulations, compile them into a book. You can even use this note as a foreword or afterword.

I have gotten too elated about my prospect. I need to remind you, darlings, this is only a suggestion. You need to know I do not want to keep you from pursuing what you want in life. The time will come when you find yourself as candidates to be unpaid 24-hour caregivers. I, the recipient, want to call myself a caretaker, but there is a contextual screw-up in the word *caretaker*; I may not have the right attitude toward you, or the ability to make the right decision on the matter. You will have to make the right call for me. When you do, please bear in mind the person I want to be, which is the person you already know: I put my darlings first and foremost. I support your initiative to pursue what you want in life, even if it means risking your own lives. Please, do not let me be otherwise when I no longer know who I am. I thank you in advance for keeping who I am.

I feel very lucky and loved.

Thank you.

October 2026



Jeremy
Fernando

au jardin des délices
(pour Octave Mirbeau)

2022

AN UNSPOKEN THOUGHT

one that I said *ah*
even thought had come to me
though really from dear

Janice Sim it were
an unspoken thought crosses
my mind, dare I say

that from her 'Dare I
Say' which I dare say has been
inscribed into me

Jeremy Fernando
August 2026