

## What to Count

### Alise Alousi

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Sound. Alise Alousi sounds her words to arrive as cadence, as music, as magic. Sounds easy, until you realize how large her collection of eye teeth would be if she traded her secret with other poets. A Kresge Literary Arts Fellow and the recipient of awards from Knight Arts Detroit and Mesa Refuge, Arab American Alousi works at InsideOut Literary Arts.

#### *Poetry*

*Were you inspired by myth, religious texts, redacted promises  
from the Elements of Style? Was there a view from your window  
triangle of blue between thick branches?*

*Did you squeeze your eyes closed until colors transformed  
into birds of prey? Open the book to a specific page,  
circle every seventh word?*

*Was there an impediment of your own creation, a pain  
below your heart, a way you chose not to breathe, a rock  
you put between your toes?*

*Anecdotally, could you say it was a miracle,  
the way the words washed over you,  
bathing your face in light?*

MATT SUTHERLAND (July / August 2023)

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