

## Barbara Ruth

### Sides

I never thought it would end like this. You  
on the other side of a door and me  
with no key. I dare not, cannot push.  
It opens so easy for your side.  
All you need is to to turn the knob. My keyhole espial reveals  
your hands  
still at your side.

I never guessed it would end like this. Me  
full of hate and bruised ideals.  
I believed we would find  
a way  
to be friends  
that we'd always  
come out  
on the other side.  
I thought we were destined to walk side by side  
one step  
at a time. I couldn't imagine impairment of gait, didn't know  
what mobility aides to use, where to find,  
how to name what was needed.  
I didn't expect to be learning these lessons this young.

There was much we never discussed. So much I never took into account.  
I never thought it would wind up so unwound  
symptoms still uncharted,  
lands we have no names for  
lands we travelled and called them  
home. We  
never acknowledged  
how wide the ocean between us  
how deep the chasm  
and the two of us  
on opposite  
opposite  
sides.

**Barbara Ruth** is an old, arthritic, tree-loving, hypertensive, lesbian, epileptic, fibromyalgic Potawatomee, Ashkenazi Jewish, Welsh, chemically hypersensitive, neurodivergent daughter of Yemaya, spoonie, writer and photographer. She lives in San Jose, California USA in abundant poverty with one woman and one cat, both adorable. Her work has been published extensively in feminist, lesbian, queer, disability and literary venues.