## MARSHALL, CHERYL KAYE

## Cheryl Kaye Marshall

Age: 16, Grade: 11

Home School, Birmingham, AL Educator: Emily Marshall

Category: Poetry

## I think I'm evil

There's a part of me that's evil.
A self-sabotaging cynical part.
She likes to slowly wrap her fingers around my throat.
Squeezing,
Until my throat is closed and no air,

Enters or Exits

She makes my reflection a stranger.

She terrifies me sometimes.

Sometimes she just sits,

Looking innocent,

Making me think there's no way she's real.

Then her eye twitches,

And I know she's ready to scream,

"Be Perfect!!"

Sometimes I cry and sob and yell for help.

Sometimes I fight and throw punches, refusing to be devoured.

Sometimes I give up.

Sometimes I allow her to beat me.

I may calmly unwrap her fingers from my throat with no emotion,

But she doesn't leave.

She just rips out her needled knuckles and begins her next process.

Her next phase.
I wonder if she will keep me up tonight, leaving me exhausted.
Or will I sleep too hard because it's an escape,
Causing just as much exhaustion.

I want to be like the heroines of my favorite stories, **Uncontainable** 

Fearless Adventurous

They float around me, telling me to
Try again.
A year ago,
I fell from my throne.
It took me a long time to get the courage to climb.
I was almost there.
Somewhere along the way, I

t r i

```
p
                                                                                                  e
                                                                                                    d.
                                                                                          Clumsy me.
                                          Now I'm staring at the ceiling with my skull cracked open.
                                                                                     And she's back.
                                                                                            Laughing.
                                                                                     How do I fight?
                                                                            I guess I can never stop.
                                            The women who I want to be like are far from perfect so,
                                                                  Why can't I give myself any grace?
                                                                    I visualize myself as being brave.
                                                                            Why can't I just do that?
                                                                                            But NO,
                                                                                          She's back.
                                                          I have to be perfect, yeah, I get it already.
                                                                                    I'm so confused.
                                                                          Why am I attacking myself?
                                                                           Why can't she let me rest,
                                                                                 Just for one second,
                                                                                              Please.
                                                                           She hates seeing my tears.
                                                               "You wanna cry salty tears?" she asks
                                                                     As she pours it into my wounds.
                                                  I just hope these pages don't become tear stained.
                                                         The ink on the pages can't run, or I will too.
                                                          It's keeping me stationary and slightly calm.
                                                     She can't attack me when the pen is in my hand.
                                                                          I wonder why it scares her.
                                                          Maybe I'll figure that out later but for now,
                                                                                             I'll write
                                                                                           And write
                                                                                                  So
                                                                                                  She
                                                                                                Stays
                                                                                                Away
                     The look of terror, now in her eyes
                                                                                    numbness in mine
                                            It feels like someone is pushing on the inside of my brain.
                                                                                    Trying to get out.
                                                                                 I can't keep writing.
                                 my emotions laying out in front of me
The imagery of her
                                                                               = too much to handle
                                                                                        Simple math.
                                                                  Her fingers are on my throat again.
                                                                                        Her delicate,
                                                                                             Perfect,
                                                                                               Little.
                                                                                        Uncalloused,
                                                                                              Fingers
                                                                               Are so stinking strong.
```

I want my hands strong, but not smooth and delicate like hers.

p

I don't know how she fights with them.
She doesn't fight dirty.
She's well-rehearsed, polished, and graceful in the art of destruction.
She's perfect.

And she knows