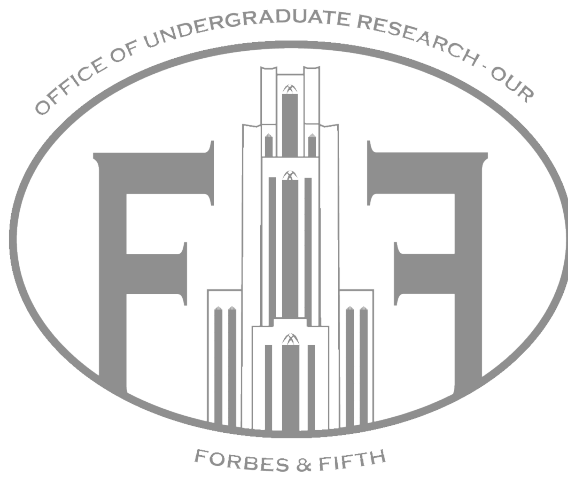




MARY SHERMAN

Mary Sherman is a time traveling, void leaping ninja — just not in this particular universe. In this universe, she only ninjas on the weekends, when she’s not reading, writing, or cuddling cats. During the week she passes as a sophomore studying Ecology and Evolution at the University of Pittsburgh. Her dream is to study pizzly bears and other arctic hybrids, while publishing nifty, creative things on the side.

FORBES & FIFTH



Gravitationally Speaking

Gravitationally speaking,
Particles are lonely little creature things
Made up of parts that
(always, always, always
even when we swear we don't)

Need each other.
It's like family, with electron children.
And happiness is only ever obtainable when
You have the correct number of
Fledglings
To push from high places.

But usually,
Your children are not enough
Never enough,
Not good enough, not controlled enough
(I swear, I swore
on graves and lives to try my very best)

Or there are too many to grip tight
So they leave like pups
With noses pressed against ground and
They don't look back.

But they wag their tails
In farewell.
(the noose loosens to a necklace,
hangs limp like scar tissue)
Or maybe your family is one of the lucky ones
The noble ones and
Everyone is content.

FORBES & FIFTH

And there is uncertainty
In the way we measure
(every)thing(s),
A subtle sense that
The whole is not what it seems,
(not really whole when
lonely feelings gnaw on bones)

But unraveling mysteries
Requires them to be totally denatured.
You can say either where we are going
And not where we are,
Or where we are
And not where we're going.

(just like I don't know
if I loved or hated my father)
There is also the duality of
The assumptions that what has
Happened will repeat
If people do not learn,

(we discover many things,
like how to twist words as knives
or the percentage of skin to show
when all we want is victory,
but the trick is to learn grander things)
And that this too shall pass.

The world keeps spinning like a top
Tilted on an axis to the side
But gravity keeps me rooted.
The atoms of the earth and air
Would miss the atoms of my flesh and blood

If centripetal force plucked me up
Threw me away
Like the unimportant strings of proteins and nucleic acids
I know myself to be made of.

(I cling to them
like Psyche's desperate claw for purchase
on a secret lover's skin)

