

Days of 2006

by

Maria Petasi

She must've been five or six,
her feeble frame clinging to the paint
of those chipped, old, rusty bars
separating her present from the past.
On most days, the more the paint would
flake around her short legs, the harder
it seemed for her tiny hands to let go.

She must've been five or six,
but the closest thing she knew to friendship
had left her already, and the kindness of strangers
would always overwhelm her when they'd ask:
Are you standing here all alone?

In the vastness of the playground,
she must've cut an insignificant figure,
added there by chance, fallen, almost like
some Icarus, almost like an accident.
Day by day, break by break,
time would seep between her palms;
the pebbles below her feet morphing
into grains of sand inside an hourglass.

She must've made a pitiful sight,
though she'll never really know what it was
that made the girl with shiny, brown eyes
approach her as if she wasn't a stranger.

Maybe she knew something about melted
wings or flying too close to the Sun,
maybe she'd fallen too. And falling
was all they'd know; as if *friend*
falling off their tongues was inevitable.

She must've been five or six,
already too old for a long-lost nursery,
and too young to be bound to the past;
thus, floating somewhere in the middle.

Poet's Note

“Days of 2006” is a poem about the uncertainty of new beginnings as well as the impact of friendship in one's life. Though the poem's starting point may be the year of 2006, its essence does not reside in the past. Viewing that past through a magnifying, yet distorted lens of memory, this Cavafy-esque attempt invites the reader to consider the ever-present question of existence. If it had to be summed up in one line, “Days of 2006” is a poem that delves into the experience of being lost and, most importantly, found, at the tender age of ‘five or six.’