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By Ashwika Vanam

They told us language was fixed—
twenty-six letters,
rules you follow
or break.

But there was always something extra
curving at the edge of the page,
looping into itself
like it refused to end.

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Not a word, exactly—
more like a bridge.
A reaching.
A refusal to stand alone.

I learned it early:
how to translate myself
into something easier to read.

Girl or boy.
Quiet or loud.
Right or wrong.

Pick one.
Stay
there.

But I have always lived
in the space between answers,
in the pause before someone finishes
the sentence for me.

I am this & that.
I am becoming & unbecoming.
I am the version of myself
I haven't said out loud yet.

There is a kind of courage

in not choosing sides,
in letting your identity

spill over the lines
they tried to draw for you.

Because the truth is—
no one is just one thing.

We are
contradictions
stitched together,
we are questions
that don't want answers,
we are stories
still being written
in the margins.

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That small symbol
holds more than it seems:
connection,
continuation,
possibility.

It says: you don't have to erase
one part of yourself
to make room for another.

It says: you can hold both.
You can hold all of it.

So I am learning
to write myself differently—

not as something finished,
not as something defined,

but as something open,

something reaching,

something that insists
on more.

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Even now.