

Lydia Swartz

Lydia Swartz makes things out of poetry, images, performance, and found audio. She was born in Seattle and has lived here for six decades. Last year she began to research spiders, because that is her approach to whatever she fears or hates. Then November 8 happened, and she began to see spiders everywhere. She's going to read today from her work in progress, a book of spiders. Lydia's chapbook, [Land of Lists](#), was a finalist in the 2016 Floating Bridge Press competition. Her [deck of shufflepoems](#) was published by Minor Arcana Press in 2014. She [proposed to her partner of 16 years](#) onstage at Gay Uncle Time in June 2016. In muggle life she is Kate Robinson, a marketing writer at Group Health.

Lydia blogs at [No One Tells You](#), keeps a [Seattle Spoken Word calendar](#), and jabbbers on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

THE SPIDER OF DEATH BY PERVERSITY

This is a spider about spiders together, trapped in a bathtub, with nothing to eat in the end but other desperate spiders.

Only the song of water speaks when you're dry from running, from binding blundering struggling salty flies, from swallowing miles of grainy silk the flavor of you only more so, from stalking or waiting or lining your trap with softness, from moving as fast as you can, which is slow, especially slow in long and hungry winter, from epic effort to not be the hungry one who drops off the wall, to not starve and wither, to not have to hug your empty dryness, to not go nonreflective and blind in the dark, unmourned by your sisters who died before, who already fed you, which is where and how you got here and now, when nothing is moving, where nothing is left to come to be eaten, where still there are so many sisters to eat or eat you and eat what there is to eat, not much, almost none, and too many, there has to be someone sorry, someone to watch and not eat your dry almost starving flesh, your shriveled palps flailing, there has to come someone to save just you, who you will let them hug their own empty belly, you will wait, will wait as long as it takes for someone to stop this or pay for this starvation, this thirst, this almost giving up, almost past making effort, but still you can stumble, cold and slow, toward a rumor of water, a silk-thin murmur of hope for water, a sliding down regardless, a disregard of consequence, no other future, no future at all without this water, no hope, unless it is water, potable, sweet as blood, a drop, a puddle, a dram, you can quickly make yours, your sucking stomach already lurching, your heart in its feeble urgency calls back to water's distant call, your arrival, your skidding stagger, thin, turning the page of your lung's book, arriving, dry, still dry and dry you remain, dry, cold, dry, no surface to hook your hair-hook, and now you, trapped, hungry and thirsty and trapped where you thought you had seen rescue, survival, being seen without being eaten.

It's over, you see that it's over, no water to drink that doesn't drown you, no blood, no sugar, no warmth to give your heart strength, and in the barrens, the desert, the shimmering mirage you believed, this certain and soon death, nothing but other starving spiders, who will not feed you enough to live, but nevertheless you will fight them, fight to the death, entrap them in feeble uneven silk and draw their puny flesh inside you, they will die and you will die but they will die first and you'll die with their taste in your belly, you'll win as your eyes stop seeing and your empty belly stills.

