

The Ballad of the Body

by [Angela Alaimo O'Donnell](#) in the [September 2023](#) issue

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For 60 years I have occupied
this cage of bone and skin.
My body has been every size,
a house to hold my spirit in.

At six weeks we were zygote.
My room lean as a bean.
My birthing was the antidote
to darkness. I was seen

in all my infant weakness. In one
year I could walk. The sun
and earth did their dance.
At two years I could talk

and have been talking ever since.
Now I have grown to here.
Together we are locked
in this same space, my dear,

still bounded by these shoulders,
still held up by these feet,
and though we're surely older,
it brings me joy to greet

this same face every morning,
this hand that holds the pen,
my jailer and my darling,
my enemy, my friend.