

## **The Ballad of the Body**

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

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.