

# Cave Dwellers

*by Maria Chiara Grech*

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Crouched in the cold,  
we filled caves with red handprints  
to let you know we were here.

We felt our hearts beat,  
stretched skin over hollow stone  
so you could feel it too.

Our fathers stared at the dark,  
saw gods in the shadows  
that lived there.

They spoke of a future  
that would never be ours.

Curious fathers asked,  
“Do you still have Rain?”  
“Do you still have Fear?”

The gods stared back.

Woman stepped forward.

“Does it still hurt to see  
your children die?”

“You speak of language.  
What word will describe  
a mother’s howl,  
as she holds a child’s vacant stare in hers?”

“Grief,”  
the shadows said.  
“You will step into the sun, and you will  
see sons in the gentle breeze,  
daughters in the wild things.  
And you will call it Grief.”

And so, they grieved.  
Weeping they gnawed at their flesh  
until hands held them back.  
“What do we do with this Grief?  
Where will we put it?”

“Hang it on the walls,”  
the ghosts said,  
“so it will be remembered.”