

## Everything Needs Fixing by Karla Cordero

**Introduction:** [The Slowdown](#) is a daily podcast hosted by poet Ada Limón. Every episode, Limón delivers a different way to see the world – through poetry. In just one turn of phrase, poetry can anchor us, or shift a moment, a day, or even a whole life.

Today we will approach Karla Cordero’s “Everything Needs Fixing” in the same manner as *The Slowdown*: by constructing a personal response to the poem to help us better understand the complexities that lie underneath the text.

**Directions:** Follow the steps provided below:

1. Read “[Everything Needs Fixing](#)” by Karla Cordero, paying close attention to the poetic elements and techniques the poet uses to convey their message.
2. In the space provided below, write a reflection that ties the poem to a personal experience and/or observation. This reflection should be more informal in nature than a typical analysis that focuses on the craft of the poem.

Your reflection should:

- Utilize a first person point of view
- Focus on a personal experience and/or observation that somehow links thematically or conceptually to the poem
- Recount your experience/observation as specifically as possible
- Dedicate the last paragraph of the reflection to a brief description of what the poem entails
  - *Example: Today’s powerful poem speaks to the release that can come after a relationship has ended. How sometimes it takes an ending to realize you’re just getting started.*
- **Consist of no less than 200 words**

An example of a full response is provided below:

*I’m Ada Limón and this is The Slowdown.*

*Have you ever been going through something hard and felt a sense of relief? Like at least it’s happening. At least a decision has been made. Whether it’s a move or a new job or a new love or even the end of love. There’s something there that is difficult to name, something like the elation of change.*

*I remember once sitting on a park bench with a friend who was going through a divorce and everything was so hard for her in that moment. I gave her an apple out of*

*my bag and she cried while eating the apple because she said, she had forgotten how to take care of herself, forgotten to eat.*

*A year later though, she was triumphant. There was a glow around her.*

*There's a Leonard Cohen song lyric that says, "There is a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in" — that's what she seemed like to me. Filled up with light. It's not that the divorce was easy or without its dark cavernous days of recovery, but it's that a decision had been made and for her that decision meant one thing: freedom.*

*I'm someone who has never believed people should stay married if they are unhappy. My parents are divorced and they are both tremendously in love with their spouses. I think sometimes the risk of falling in love is mirrored by the risk of ending love. Neither of them are for the faint of heart. I remember once finally ending a relationship that had been toxic for some time and even though I was sad, I was also lighter. There was no longer a voice in my head telling me that I was doing the wrong thing, telling me to have less fun being who I was.*

*Have you ever had a relationship that ended and afterwards, everyone tells you that they never really liked the person, or at least didn't think they were the right fit for you? That was that relationship. Here I was thinking we were a good match, and when we split, my friends basically threw a party. After that, I remember thinking for one brief shining moment, how good it was to be in my own skin.*

*Today's powerful poem speaks to the release that can come after a relationship has ended. How sometimes it takes an ending to realize you're just getting started.*

3. The text of the poem is provided underneath your analysis. With this text, use the comment function and choose three different pieces of the text that support/reinforce the content of your reflection. Then briefly discuss how those pieces of text relate to your anecdote. **Each annotation should consist of at least two complete sentences.**

#### Examples of Annotations:

1. *"The first line of the poem ('I met the woman whom I hadn't seen in years at a bar') reminded me of the beginning of my encounter with Janet. The interaction was so awkward and unfamiliar it almost felt like we had a strong connection and, ironically, a huge impasse between the two of us."*
2. *"This particular line stood out because it's literally what my mother told me before she walked away. Like this specific piece of text, her response was short, curt, which made the sting even more painful than a long-winded rebuke."*

## Personal Response

*\*Must consist of no less than 200 words. Additional examples may be found [HERE](#).*

## Poem

*\*You must include three annotations that elaborate on specific pieces of text from the poem that reinforce parts of your personal response*

### Everything Needs Fixing

by Karla Cordero

in your thirties everything needs fixing. i bought a toolbox  
for this. filled it with equipment my father once owned  
to keep our home from crumbling. i purchased tools with  
names & functions unknown to me. how they sat there  
on their shelf in plastic packaging with price tags screaming:  
*hey lady, you need this!* like one day i could give my home  
& everything living inside it the gift of immortality, to be  
a historical monument the neighbor's would line up  
to visit even after i'm gone & shout: *damn that's a nice house!*  
i own a drill now, with hundreds & hundreds of metal pieces  
i probably won't use or use in the wrong ways but what  
i'm certain of, is still, the uncertainty of which tools repair  
the aging dog, the wilting snake plant, the crow's feet  
under my eyes, the stiff knee or bad back.  
& maybe this is how it is—how parts of our small universe  
dissolve like sugar cubes in water—a calling to ask us  
to slow our busy breathing so we can marvel  
at its magic. because even the best box of nails are capable  
of rust. because when i was a child i dropped  
a cookie jar in the shape of noah's ark,  
a family heirloom that shattered to pieces.  
the animals broke free, zebras ran under  
the kitchen table, the fractured lion roared by  
the front door & out of the tool cabinet  
i snagged duck tape & ceramic glue. pieced each beast  
back to their intended journey. because that afternoon  
when my father returned from work i confessed  
& he sat the jar on the counter only to fill it with  
pastries. how the cracks of imperfection mended by  
my hands laid jagged. chipped paint sliced across a rhino's neck.  
every wild animal lined up against the boat—  
& a flood of sweet confections waiting inside.