



Image: "A Lonesome Border" by Carmella Dolmer. "You Don't Have to Choose" was written by Beth Copeland for *Rattle*'s Ekphrastic Challenge, May 2023, and selected as the Editor's Choice.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO CHOOSE

poem by Beth Copeland

Between the cube and the circle,
the container or the eddying drain,

the cardboard box or the manhole,
the collapsing star or the burning house,

the fiery floor or the raspberry arch that becomes a rainbow
after a thunder storm,

the missing door or the haloed saints that hover
in the Tuscan afterglow,

the embodied self or the shadow
holding your hand,

the green selvage of the world
where everything grows—grass, kudzu, weeping willows,

or the waterless well you might mistake
for an open window.

Yes, you have free will. Yes, you have a voice.
Not choosing is also a choice.