

Elizabeth Shanahan

9000 Shallowford Rd, Lewisville, NC 27023 | 828-817-0944
elizabethshanahan.com | elizabeth@elizabethshanahan.com

Our bodies. Our lives. Our thoughts and beliefs. There are few things in life that we can claim as truly and irrevocably our own.

And yet, so many of us wish for bodies different, better, stronger, or more beautiful than the ones we were given. We live in these precious vessels, the only ones we'll ever be offered, constantly wishing that we had something else.

Rendered weak, breakable, and painful by a genetic disease, my body is not classically beautiful. It is not strong or even healthy. It is a prime example of the sort of body that most of us would trade away if we could.

But it is mine.

We live in a culture that prizes health and beauty and celebrates them as moral triumphs. We are made to believe that if only we have enough willpower, we can achieve these things. That if we don't, then there is something wrong with us.

But our bodies are gifts, and they are the only ones we will ever have. I spent the last two months examining the whole, unvarnished truth that is me. I started this collection expecting to explore my experience living in a body that doesn't always work like it should. I ended up learning to appreciate my broken vessel for the blessing that it is. This deep knowledge of self has led me to the comprehension that I was *made*, not by chance or by accident, but by the divine machinations of a billion actions, a trillion choices, a hundred trillion thoughts that, together, have led to me being who and how I am, and knowing this I understand that in all my flaws there is a meaning and a purpose, and that I am fearfully and wonderfully loved.

I complete the La Mia collection knowing that each of us lives with small hurts and unhealed traumas that we wish we could show to each other. La Mia invites everyone living in that hurt and yearning to take the time to truly live in the

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uncensored truth of your own existence, to own the flaws and broken pieces, and know that you have come to this place to fill a purpose that only you can fill.