

BlazeVOX 2k9

Fall 2009

Sarah Smith Richards

On Sleeping Alone

Quos deus vult perdere prius demantat.

Iris says rose cannot understand
pistil and stamen
pistol and st. amen

a rupture in the cosmic membrane. amniotic flood. better build an ark.

Begin again.
I write what the dream tells me.

You were not in my bed tonight.
Right leg thrust crosswise
my hands feeling air
 how many molecules from your door to mine?
my hair wrapped around your pillow.

Alice and Emily fill in holes
become sleep sisters,
making love with disobedient dashes.

I am glad you are not here. (when are you coming back?)

I am round as a stovepipe
full as a pregnant belly
 babies to sacrifice
on the coals of Molech's smoldering testicles
 babies turning on spits and Hera won't save them
tender as breasts swollen with milk

I am not your Sarah.
I belong to jealous Hera.
and we, bitch goddesses, back to back
to the elemental corners, see all.

At night I am Greek
singing in my sheets.

My long hair is a veil--
You could not lift it.

.
My womb is empty--
I do not grieve!
My bed is empty--
I do not grieve!

I swell
slit the seams of your absence to
return to the Lady, un-rapt

The church bell wakes me on Sunday.
Iris in lamentation,
limp from the dream wrestled.

Food For Ketea

You resurface, drenched, from silt-filtered sea floors to rise,
swoop above the fog-capped waves and torment, so gently--
to deride the ruthless heart who expelled you, water-heavy girl
too determined to isolation .

In pairs we drifted through marine spaces, unsure
of where our sand-sooted feet should emerge, unknown of ways
One last diatribe eternalized for me since you've returned
Our palace of coral and gems—just glitter now.

Sickening sunlight from low-sloping circles of icicles to
puddles where mermaids drown (as they can) you circle above
my head in ringlets, converging on frailty and cruelty and all
the disparate sentences, conjoined words that begged for you,

Cried mercy when plunged as an iceberg into my heart when you left me
only bare-limbed and shaking, where in the company of the dead,
I had only to whimper, and then feel the flesh come onto bone once more,
whole-created and flung into your mind's marine, salt-water Sistine.

To swim onward, ever sinking downward, so fed on your ungenerous urges,
those paltry portions, miserably nursed until the milk from my chin
fell alongside my tears, pulled to the bottom as an anvil, as an anchor, to rust
sun-deprived and undiscovered until Poseidon's next rape.

From native rhythms I emerged, hair heavily stretched across the torture rack of my back
sandbagged, crawled once around your grave of a bed to kiss your form
and choke on sea foam, myself then drunken in the flood of the gulf.

Betrayed by my tongue, by my silence, with a mouth full of brine left only to
the blue lines between the yellow suns and memories like barbs stuck in so deep they
could not find a place to embed. Only my gills and fins, food for Ketea, when silence you took and down into a great well
of introspection I drowned, and without you, died.

Quietly as the vessel evaporates, goes the water out, first a trickle then a torrent,
loosed, as a sick seal pup bobs in the ocean before slipping under, now root and stem disengage from under water, now
toppled, as your anchor would have me, flat as a seam,
unzipped forever into a blue and purple diadem I hold only for myself.

Double-dutch

He has a limited capacity for repetition.
He has a limited capacity for repetition.
He has a limited capacity for repetition.
 The conversation loops.
He has a limited capacity for repetition.
He has a limited capacity for repetition.
 But my standard is different.
He has a limited capacity for repetition.
 When one does, they all do.

§

Faith is not a coping mechanism.
 The thrushes take priority.
If the tongue is the rudder, I need a damn good helmsman.
 Everything in my field of vision vibrates and sways.
 There will be no photographs of this detour.
A man who is an island offers no map, no row boat, no X.
 She doesn't have the code to unlock the music.
 Red-bellied woodpecker on the walnut.
 Do I have the flu?
 Blackbirds in the sycamore.
The bruise on my upper right thigh is purple and hurts less than
 He's smashing all the pillows.
He has a limited capacity for repetition.
 My coffee mug has only one ear.
 I'd rather sleep in the creek.
In my yard, a sapsucker sucking suet.
 I could be a curtain rod.
He has a limited capacity for repetition.
 Iris is more maternal.
My mirado is a black warrior with two hearts.
 Double the love, double-dutch.
 Finally beside the end. Sadly upstream.
 Ride away on my black dog.
 There goes my hero.
When the beetles crawl on me at night, he flicks them away.
 I only make the house shake a little bit.
 Phoebe on the flagpole.
 There is Pennyroyal oil over here.

I use the back of my hand to address a disaster.
So what if I sleep late on Saturday?
The southern moon contains an irony.

§

What will my blood show? Has it any lumps? Has it a memory? Does it recall the steak knife?
The shattered plate? The alley glass? The pocket knife? The scissors? The box cutter? The razor
blade? The coaxial cable? The broken flower pot? The letter opener?
Does the back my left hand recall the crush of cigarette?
Does my liver contain a chemical memory? Wash of Alprazolam, Zoloft , Lithium, Serzone,
Clonazepam, Celexa, Lexapro, alcoholic comas.
Is the refractory repetitive?

Feast of innuendo bright

core of the real now tangent to all longing
tentative steps to fill such space that skin
would tighten around middle extended
or index beckon each word drip from lips parted a space
and yet another to fill, sweetly offered
there her tongue massage the subject she swallows
breath each time the message comes

Phileagape

Uncountable good will
favorably disposed
that she might not feel judgment
applied or seized weakness to
prove that that she did is not
as she does as not in line
with yours, imprisoned as you are.

§

It's the fabricated word that invents
world as language renders all visions
expressive wherein our probable thoughts
contain their scream of imagination
predictably held where impulse
deposits what sound cannot hold.

One more poem for Alicia

Alicia made butter in the dairy
remembered history mostly as fat.
Alicia wore a beautiful fisherman's
knot round a fish tank room, serving up whiskey to friends
until attacked by the patrons, men who stalk
blonde women with big tits, so who am I? and
How long ago was that?
What remains of a wheelchair after lunch
rolls like a boat to a warm shore
where my legs are no longer broken
where the thick mud is the color of my hair
Beware, the current break dances in the Tagus River
Alicia planning a seat in The Wedgewood Room
runs the best restaurant in town, runs the bait, runs the net
runs my lunch hour, improved when done talking about
Alicia and seductive powers daughters describe.
So this voyage sounds like a typhoon to me, sounds like
Gravity, sounds like an incursion of
Alicia ordering expensive bottles of wine
to spinout or swim toward my death
I pointed to a dip in the floor near the door
Where a water cyclone spiraled down a drain
Someone ought to fix that
before I fall into Alicia
and the eyes of a photograph
drying under the house.