

Haley Wednesday

Noise

He couldn't hear. He'd become deaf to the truths that he didn't want to acknowledge. One of the most active listeners, but with this subject he still could not hear me. I had raised my voice on several occasions, mostly in frustration, but sometimes because I started to believe in the possibility that I might actually be whispering; that maybe everything I thought I was saying out loud, was only playing loudly in my head and not being said at all. The eye contact between us suggested that I was indeed speaking, those same lines that I had recited time and time again - breaking his heart [and mine] in a Groundhog Day sort of way. "I love you, but I can't give you what you want from me [sex]."

Once more the rush of guilt came flooding into my chest, drowning me. A person can't speak when they're below the surface, so we sit silent now with the white noise... the hum of the fan and the turning dryer clunking in the background. I can feel my throat tighten as I try to swallow the pressure that's building in my tear ducts.

When everything you have to offer is still not enough, what's a person to do? My gut turns, like the laundry in that increasingly loud dryer of mine. In an act of conciliation, the dog bellows one of her long grunts, cutting the tension in the room.

His attention turns in her direction, confirming that miracles are real; now cured of his selective deafness. Hallelujah.

He stands up to get a celebratory drink of water, places himself gently between the covers and says "goodnight". The next five minutes linger. I stare at the white, textured ceiling wondering if he heard me this time, or if we will do it all again tomorrow. Five minutes felt like five hours, my lassitude lulling me to sleep. I dream that the curse has been lifted...

but dreams too are not heard.

Socially-Distant Namibian Daydream

I pondered crossing the red line today-

The one that usually meets my feet with crimson flames of future regret,
melts my sandals into sand,
blistering my tired toes.

The red line that separates me from you;
Where your tired feet would meet mine,
and we would carve paths through concrete
with dough eyed stares and a broken clock.

The red line
that seems to have become thicker over the years,
and miles longer.

Am I the pest to be excluded by this scarlet stroke?
To remain on the north end with only faint dreams
of sinking my sandals into southern soil?
I could smell the richness of the half-mens from lines edge,
a wealth to which I would spend my life indebted.

To whom this may concern,
on the other side,
please speak to me your cautionary tale.

I beg of you. This cannot wait any longer;
The length of the line grows,
as does my need to cross it.

I,
on the other end,
grow weak,
much like my tired feet,
and
skeptical that this red line will protect me...
skeptical that boundaries are made for my safety.

I'm having crazy thoughts.

It occurred to me today,
that this cardinal vein
is possibly nothing more
than spray paint on the floor.

Can you believe this?

I quickly dismissed the idea.
The other cattle here on the north side
have expressed to me my eternal punishment,
should I dare cross it.
To accompany death and damnation,
would be a wealth of uncertainty
richer than the perfume of southern half-mens.

Deeper and darker than the color of my grief,
are the lenses of blue that shield my vision
of the red line.

To see is to question.
To see it to desire.
All I see now are shades of blue,
no crimson flames to fuel my fire.

My tired feet will never meet yours,
across the red line,
instead they tread with certainty
on pathless pavement.

Maple Grove

And just like that, I was blinded by her light.

Unable to see the heartache behind those kind, emerald eyes. Below, in the depths of the spring, her metallic blue nail polish caught the sun [and my attention]...Blue like the sky that day, small sections peeking between billowing clouds, clouds which created a sense of timelessness as the moment consumed me.

Those glimmering toes delicately skimmed the bottom of the pool. I couldn't take my eyes off them, much like a fish to a shining lure. Her arms waded along her sides, floating in near silence; no noise except the loud bass of her heartbeat. Right here, right now, she seemed truly free. The water made her feel light, untethered to the heavy weight of the life she had left behind 50 miles south of the state line.