

Marjorie Sadin

Pigeons in Union Station

Inside the railroad terminal, pigeons bob their heads.
You and I have hot pretzels and coke in the food court.
Over twenty years, we've been friends.
I met you when we were both on Thorazine
Overweight and spaced out.
When I told you my diagnoses you were bowled over—
It was the same as yours!
When I OD'd on Klonopin— you visited me every day in the psych ward.
And brought flowers and food.
You and I are now different people.
We love to watch the pigeons strut and bob
Even though they are trapped in Union Station
The way we were.

What Happened at Vedauwoo

A visit to Laramie, summer 2014.

Scaling Vedauwoo,

I kept saying, "I can't do this," still climbing.

Got on a sheer cliff and lost my balance.

My hands were slipping, couldn't find my footing.

My sister was beneath me, held me up from falling.

She got a bulging disc.

Blamed it on me.

Said I was acting helpless—it was an act.

Said Vedauwoo was a metaphor for our relationship.

Now she won't speak to me.

Won't ever believe me again.

I should never have climbed Vedauwoo.

I lost my balance.

Now I've lost a sister.

Kettering Hall

Apple blossom petals covering the sidewalks.
Kettering Hall at 6 AM in the morning--
early for my Calculus class. It is still dark.
I am in love with a male dancer named Eli.
I do Tai Chi and hope to see him between classes.

I take creative writing classes and write one poem about Eli.
I take long walks in the woods alone. I miss home,
eat in the Natural Foods dining room next to a boy
with long blond hair who gets ten page letters from his girlfriend.
He slits his wrists.

Eli has many girlfriends. I am just one.
He has dark curly hair and a slender physic.
I play old Joni Mitchel records
and sing along with them. For my birthday, I imagine
a surprise party. I go home instead, smitten with Eli.

When I get home, I do Tai Chi in the living room, and I talk
incessantly about Eli.
I start smoking Marlboro cigarettes.
I write three letters to Eli and he returns one at the end of the summer--
"A letter to a letter from. Maybe I needed some kind of help?" He signs it
"L, Eli".

But now I wake early to apple blossoms on my walk
and I wait for you to wake up.
We hold hands on the couch and make love
in the afternoons and love is something very different
from what I imagined those mornings in Kettering Hall.

Now it is just you and I and I don't have to be drunk or unhinged
to say I love you And I don't do Tai Chi anymore,
but you are in my life, and petals still cover the sidewalks.

The Ascension of the Sun

Fir trees lift their arms in Hosannas.
Mountains and valleys misty eyed break
into dawn.

I take for granted the flowers and the leaves.
I trample on dreams.
Still the dawn eyes me.

What am I here for?
A movie screen encounter?
A kiss or a shrug?

When I awaken, the sun rubs its eyes.
The wind sweeps the grasses.
I am alone.

Morning is a dress rehearsal.
I forget my lines.

Evergreens rise.
The sun begins its long ascent.
I am an afterthought.

My Blustering Father

My father is ninety-one.
A whale—big, blustering.
My mother passed away six years ago.
She was his Ahab.

She hid in a closet with a bottle of Jack Daniels
till Father came home.

And then he really got mad.
He would blow like the whale.

“I don’t love you,” she would tell Dad.
It stuck like a harpoon.

Now that he is free of her,
he takes it out on me.

I am not his wife.
I am his child.

Ninety-one leaves little time.
He can only frighten me awhile longer.