

I'M THE MAN WHO LOVES YOU

Poems

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A GHOST IS BORN

Hissing news opens for ensuing
cow spotted and I get it
from the colder coffee leaves
browns and blacks, I get it
from my sins just to get what I like
the looks of as in a dedication
of hatchets to all things wooden.
One feature of the door was
a well-oiled hinge beaten to a creak
by husbandry's action that carries
us across a locking leaf, elapsing
me into me into I unto thee,
thysself or not. Trust us not
to torture our prisoners
and other non-methods
of the train that relocates
flesh pounds on steam
where another soldier stayed
beneath his ruby-red grief.
Peasant toads alert the roadside
reeds, then underside words wind-
whistle leap frog games, selfsame
to surely topple. Parked hybrids
of the world unite
the value of a heart upon
a flapping flea's breath
guaranteed pre-death,
the most real and alive
perfect engine in brief.
In the tulip of sleep, tulip or street,
we worried without far to part.

A RETURN TO ROADSIDE NATURE

Likewise, we take earthquakes
and the occasional passenger
for granted, don an epileptic
shirt to see which seizures
bring what vision. I, in tandem,
disappear at all costs in case
of rapid-fire statements. Entering
Brownsville, Lumber County,
a tiny dot on the Ohio border,
our car is flanked by wild moose
and plastic folding chairs.
Birds eat our nests as we build
them. On their communal branch,
stealing belongs to sharing.
Local ladies of the tougher skin
keep it middle-of-the-road,
middle-ground, middling,
and the post office inhales,
exhaling letters like seedlings.
Knobby-kneed days follow
paths among the daisy patch
street-pebble sparrows teach
us to dine on sparingly.
Lately the genius of envy lies
in receiving—bring me movies,
bring me grace and finger green
string beans for a pinker
return to the grassier leaves
flowering beds and flowering

A SOLUTION TO SCIENCE, IN PART

The thin portrayals were leaving me parched,
and time was the only game the children bothered
to fill the streets with anymore. A disappearing ink
fell upon us, even with our blotters at the ready,
so that not all hours passed into clouds of
shortening shadows;
the rare ones stuck to our ribs, by our sides,
and gave us weight. Our feet held firmly to dirt
while our heads dreamed escape in the skyways.

And just like that: every special simulacrum
wanted its fifteen minutes of fame;
the scorpion threw out the dead guinea pig
in disgust, its only love sacrificed at the behest
of these earthbound breasts, this arm, that sky.
There should have been more images among us,
ones that could mislead the witness
on his search for the latest factual placebos,
but boxes started arriving, filled with a human
percentage that would lighten the moon's distance.

AFTER WHISPERING, A COMPULSION TO MOVE

Though I would like to breathe at the best possible moment
when people are waking up after their first cups
of homegrown fresh black brew that is a liquid containing
an important caffeine the rest of a populated race doesn't drink
and slows down without, in fact, as facts, we aren't ever
on the same page, our libidos and metabolisms separate
our bodies, and we call this mixed desire and unmatched
in appetite so hard that you don't finish your plate and call me
a savage with tiny daisies stuck to my fingers. I'm sorry,
I was ravaged by personal pangs, and you would not satiate
my petal-plucking needs, so I blasted the leaves to shreds
with my teeth when I meant I'm sorry,
utensils don't do it for me: I'm turned on by the osmosis
of carnal matters, including the blood that might
flow through these aging forked veins that carry the meat
of life giving particles in their jittery existence as a way to speak
and pass meaning between us. I want to break bread, but my mouth
is open and there's no way you could attempt to understand
the words full and mixing with this white matter coursing
within my corpus system, then out through an unclear sound,
even if I wiped it spotless the moment it moved in closer to you.

AND *UT PICTURA POESIS* CALLS HER NAME

I think of you, the mistress of ceremonies with your fist held
In a tiger's grin, a bouquet resembling delphinium
Between your teeth. Every man I love becomes a woman.
But first, there is the critique of the human subject,
Where "subject" comes out into the open, lights his fingertips,
And disappears a gold-plated elephant, entirely remaining
A free agent unmoved by clock-ticking acrobatics.
Like most battles, many bottles are closed, out of reach,
Never opened. Either way, the laurelled genie knows her way
In. She persuades, sketches, or merely snakes through
The backdoor the audience forgot to spot long ago.
Of course, there are many rusty hinges, all with equal access.
Rising, one may move by the tendrilled whispers heard
Within each framework, but pretend concern for open sesame.
Eventually, she approached me about a missing kiss—
Mechanics of another kind? Two lips, tender teeth, a tongue
Dewy wet, and still, in a distant neighbor's eyes, we
Could hear the urban decay through a Holiday imitation.
Her voice fell a beat behind mine. Her skill at jazz phrasing,
Variation and vibrato wrenched diamond-cut moods from
My seediest pop songs. Someone should study
The extracting power one has with another: only everything's
A signal when you turn your radar on. Interlocking legs twirl
Voices out of words. The smallest story of two people coming
Together imitates a circus tent in winter holding
Everyone beneath it. The sheer beauty of ten thousand minds
Colliding with seesaws airborne, trampolines, top hats,
Harmonized buzzsaws, skirts with wax feathers
On phonographs, contortionists, brick-a-brac, eggshell
Statuettes, a lush masquerade blends discord to dance to,
So that understanding may begin with seclusions,
Ignite collusions, and a body may ask,
Where do you live? And, Why aren't you with me
In this room here tonight? There're a million ways apart
When two or more prayers gather in conjugal thought,
And a painter lifts his pen, arouses the medallion of a kiss
That will gently float always on the air between our lips.

ANIMALS ELSEWHERE

For the looks I like to say
rows of smiling women ask,
*If the devil be a gentleman, how
are you in this killing condition?*
If yes, then say: you are very
like love too.

With horns, my brother goes to pot
on his wiry way,
a kinder ivy,
a giving tendril of smiling nooses
that startle the animals elsewhere in us
& remember the pink of tickle
below your chin tasting
of stag-like flesh, now dead again.

Labyrinths of vanilla
lamplight guide us,
border crossing bodies of bones
of believers in weapons,
of what to do anymore,
of when to want
completely.

Cornflowers in summer.
The smell of orange blossoms.
In muffled coo songs pushing up
through feathered-down earth,
I wish to fondle the yellow
underbelly of bee-like worlds colliding.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ENCOUNTER

The fact that I am writing in the background of day should offer a notch of cool comfort about or without me, my graveyard on ice. I tend to camouflage acrobatics of finely-grained stutters by sitting perfectly motionless. Passersby speculate in rounds on my row-boated entrance: through onlooker swallows and necks of picket fences, fishtail mirrors and ancient mailmen puncture the work of the body. What's a story then without a spoiler? In the next room over, fist-squeezed juice and just-burnt toast turn recurring themes in my work. I'm often found napping in the backyard of youth's shelter, lying on grandma's gladiola bed. She'd rather this scene than actually to kill me. Sometimes survival is the closest I come to silence: my car sits stalled in her laundry room basket. Habitually, I mismanage the stress of my small jaw almost as much as the money she left. An inner voice tells her misquoted ear to back off from critics since I am a fun loving lady thinly slicing bread into squares of handwritten text. Muddied roses, I remain a lump of failing meat. I measure the thorns

it takes to dance over days while praying
buttermilk curdles its edges. Without a cause,
payback pyrotechnics cut into news of tsunamis
and late-breaking terrorists. How can the metallic
hour become our wine red stand-off, proving
we held center-stage in the crosshairs of films
that sell us together, drinking and sewing
characters of tinfoil, hacking limb from limb
the links to a delicate lace on our innermost
planets? We gather no longer talc within
a captor's lens of grave proximity;
we bluff at powdered resistance. We turn to
stony nectar of silent sugars chained & fermenting.
Everyone knows somehow we'll arrive in a cubed-
vision past we've long since distilled in brackets.

BETRAYAL OF THE PAPER MACHINE

A small child prays to postpone grown-up
events, overfed-carpeted green and strummer
of stock market messages, deified.

Her competitive lover plays along, tasting
of pudding, only sweeter, more pliable
than the one we ate in Germantown the year
a blizzard took over our sense of direction,
our sense of star-crossed antiquities,
our need to align murky constellations with
anti-historic natures, wherever they mistake us.

This profit-thin ghost grows taller in blood-
darkened soil, grows blinder with sight the color
of sea foam like milk from an udder
beneath the crisper shell of a crème brûlée.

I'm building a career based on access,
the pointing man dictates to his secretary-in-wait,
to his briefcase by the bed stolen
with a note that sent him home after school
one frosted May day for dressing like a girl.