

Pandemic Puppy

Her eyes travel over my hands as I reach for my shoes,
liquid onyx flowing to the Vans, their soles abraded
from our loops around the neighborhood. Her nose twitches,
remembering the chicken bones she snuffled
out from under a bush last night.

She watches the crawl of my fingers past the Vans,
her mind now whirring on my Birkenstocks, dirt-stained
from our pattering in the backyard, her golden body suffused
with last week's sunbathed slumber on the grass,
the cicadas' metal-edged whine powering her dreams.

The journey ends at my beige heels, rimed with closet dust,
heaped with others like a burial mound.
She does not hear their click-clack in once-familiar corridors
or loathe the matching pantsuit clinging to new belly fat
or dread the stilted hellos and awkward small talk.

She casts her last hope onto my slippers, wool worn thin
from our circuits around the house, her paws tingling
with the countless steps by my side, even as her form
shape-shifts from companion to shadow,
as she follows me to the front door.

The Stars in Your Sky

The stars
are of some forgotten god who plunged her hands
deep into the earth and withdrew two great fists
pulsing with black carbon, gripping with such force
that zillions of sparkling shards exploded from her grasp
and skidded across the sky.

You gaze
at the constellations, wishing Sirius would protect you
the way Buddy cannot or that Cassiopeia would draw
a delicate hand to your cheek as you've seen women do
or Ursa Major would wrap you in a hug so hot and fierce
she might crack your ribs.

The sun
is an unwanted intrusion, scorching the filaments
holding your she-god and her retinue aloft,
and you watch as the cluster of stars
fade to soft green with some corners peeling
away from the ceiling.

Dear Home Seller Letter

Dear Seller, thank you for considering my offer. I love your house!
I want to explain why I am meant to live in your beautiful home—
why you should pick me!

I have three kids and consider myself a real family person.
I can picture all of us playing
Monopoly in your freshly painted living room
and drizzling syrup on our pancakes in your cozy breakfast nook.
Unless you don't like kids
and your self-installed genuine hardwood floors wouldn't hold up to so much traffic.
In that case, I am a happy singleton and don't allow anyone in my home with shoes on.

I just adore all the artful accents you have created in your home:
The charming faux fireplace...
the IKEA shelves you zhooshed up to look like built-ins...
the stained-glass windows that are actually big stickers—brilliant!
I promise to preserve all those creative touches when I move in.
Unless your ex is the one who DIY'd everything and that's why you're selling the house.
In that case, I will tear that shit out!

*The truth is
I am so tired
and desperate
this is my 18th offer
I don't know
how much longer
I can keep this up.*

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.
I'll be eagerly awaiting your reply—but no rush!
Sincerely, Hopeful Home Buyer

The Guardian Angel

“The idea of angels is absurd,” she says,
even as she grooms her wings
like a cat and then spits a wad of wet,
dirty feathers on the ground by my feet.

“What do you mean?” I eye the rusty halo clutched
in her hand. The outer edge is corroded and sharp,
and I keep imagining she’s going to hurl
the patinaed disk like a throwing star.

“I mean, *radiant... ethereal*—
Who comes up with this shit?” she snorts,
getting so worked up she actually chokes
a little on her saliva.

“What was so important, anyway?”
she asks, sounding suddenly weary.
“Why did you call for me?” With a grubby finger
she points to my phone.

Invoking Your Guardian Angel in 4 Easy Steps
is still on the screen. I shrug. “Nothing...
I guess I just liked the idea of angels.” Or I did
until I met her. She smells like BO and cigarettes.