

## **An Apology To My Best Friend**

I didn't mean to take your dress  
But you know you are too much for me  
All that confidence that you wear  
It's so theatrical.

You command attention and  
I wanted a chance at that  
"Let me show you - teach you," you said  
But I knew you didn't mean that  
You really like your power over me  
And I succumb to your strength  
(And my jealousy)

So while you were working and I was waiting  
At your apartment  
I tried on your wispy light blue dress  
The one that follows you in folds so unnaturally perfect  
I can never tell if you move the dress or the dress moves you.

I thought the dress would transform me into you  
It zipped up so smoothly and I was hopeful  
Even my stomach fluttered for a moment  
Your skin on me might make all the difference  
But my insecurities leaked right through your dress  
And changed it.

It was not like a new skin on me  
My skin is too thin, too translucent, to be yours  
I knew I would end up infecting your precious dress  
(But I hoped I wouldn't)

And I didn't mean to crunch your dress into a ball  
And stuff it in my purse.  
I planned to have it cleaned and return it on another day  
When you were working.

But the stains didn't come out and  
I couldn't tell you about the damage  
(You know how you love your clothes)

So I brought your blue dress home  
And I promise I only wear it occasionally  
Just on days when I'm trying to be hopeful  
But now it looks more like me and less like you.

It doesn't smell like you anymore  
Your scent of pure, fresh wash  
Is completely gone  
(I loved that scent) but  
I sat on my couch in your dress and  
Tucked my knees to my stomach and wrapped myself in your skin  
And hugged you, along with my knees, and  
Covered my legs in all that blue  
Taking deep sniffs and for awhile, I held you inside

I should have paced myself  
But you know how impulsive I am  
So I wasn't able to preserve you in your dress  
And I can't talk to you anymore  
Because I stole your dress  
And its seams are fraying and the hem is uneven  
And it smells like burnt toast and buttered popcorn  
My scent overpowered yours (I didn't know I could do that)  
So I can't even return it to you.

I thought I could be *you* in your dress  
And maybe you would be me, just for a bit  
While I learned how to be you  
So I could someday be *me*.

(*Sorry*)

## The Hair Wash

Dark hair is for brooding  
So I stow my deepest regrets in its creases  
Tied snugly in a flexible band  
Wrapped and triple twisted  
An elastic circle holding my ponytail and insecurities in place  
Until it loses its stretch  
Ripped apart suddenly  
Scattering my hair in uneven sections  
While squeezing the stray, messy strands in its fabric forever.

Throwing my head upside down  
Letting it loose in the kitchen sink  
A hair wash  
Dark knots that turn to sticks, spiked at the ends  
Spread against a cool, white sink.

Faucet waters defining spaces of  
Parallel streams  
Spilling out inner truths,  
Gushing water running through slick rows  
Brown strands in straight lines  
Heavy and water logged,  
Some released from long-held spots  
Spinning around the drain  
While currents of water splash against my scalp.

I meticulously scrub the roots of my brooding  
Covering the melancholy  
With bubbles and lather  
Smoothing out the troubles  
Cold rinsing in the shine.

Faucets locked shut  
Clumps of rejection caught in the stopper  
Ready to spin through narrow and dark tunnels  
All that cannot be reattached  
Darkened with no light source

While I wrap a threadbare towel around and around  
And cover every rescued dark strand with  
A smell that is clean and light  
Until tomorrow's wash.

## Wednesday Night at Bar'Lees

Bar'Lees – sleek, suburban galaxy  
Sleek, shiny planetarium ceiling  
Minimalist archival song museum  
Diminutive menu, substantial wine glasses  
Contemporary trimmings for  
Drinkers and musicians digging the past.

Performers circle the space  
Communicating with tee shirts  
Souvenirs of Dylan, Clapton, Baez  
Silent acknowledgments of familiarity  
Subtle hints of decades and genres  
Generations of guitar cases propped against the wall.

A sign-up sheet stationed on a low footstool  
Rules the night  
As ukuleles, harmonicas, violins compete  
With guitars, drums, and singers  
For coveted positions on the roster  
Waiting eternities for ten minutes under planetary light fixtures.

The house band plays  
Momentarily suspending  
The push and pull, while  
The door swings open again and again  
Regulars arrive carting in their sounds and cases  
Raggae meets rock and open mic night soars.

Bar-huddled patrons  
Stage-bound musicians  
Competitive sounds merge  
Hook-ups to the right; plug-ins to the left  
It's all hope at the start as  
The mounting orchestration of Wednesday night begins.

Planets swirl in solar system circles above heads  
Floor planks vibrate in drum beat rhythm  
The drinking crowd swells their volume  
The music makers up the amplification  
Sounds vie for control, for attention with  
Brief interludes for applause and uncertain quietness.

A lone watercolorist captures the night  
Loose hues dripping  
Musical desires with runny brush strokes  
Committing longing to paper  
Magnifying the urge to be heard as  
Left and right sides battle in a cosmic sound war.

## 1969

Anchored on the outdoor platform of the 180<sup>th</sup> Street Station  
She notices herself  
In the windows of the uptown-bound IRT train

Face hair jacket, youth  
Streaming live  
In multiple versions  
Framing her face like a Warhol model  
Zooming live like an unraveling film reel

Pleased with what she sees  
Her sheen blooms through filthy windows  
The stance the smirk the slender frame  
Vibrating speckles of light pouring through  
Chantilly-scented hair  
Perfection smiling back at 60 mph

The passing train whistles  
At her elevated moment  
Moving too fast to stop

The sun changes position  
The wind stirs up the platform's stench  
Grabbing her freshness with it  
Depositing grains of grit in her Patchouli-oiled skin

She squeezes her eyes shut as  
The fleeting train's current drags her  
Image along the tracks.

## **Gardening**

I'm gardening my friends  
grouping them florally  
weeding with a vengeance.