

DIFFICULT WOMAN & OTHER POEMS

Difficult Woman

you can't make homes out of human beings
Someone should have already told you that
And if he wants to leave
Then let him leave
You are terrifying
And strange and beautiful
Something not everyone knows how to love.

“For Women Who Are Difficult to Love” by Warsan Shire

That's what you've always tried to do:
make homes out of human beings
it just doesn't work love
but the world keeps on lying to you anyway
and you believe it
the lie that love is safe
how can that be so when
your scars say otherwise
they whisper stories
how love is perilous dangerous *risky*
you know good and well what a human being is
a home is static unresponsive *safe*
a human being is nothing like that
he's a thorny rose
 a rocking ship
 a sharpened sword
 a sleeping lion
the wind and the rain
 and the sun
 and the sea and the stars
all rolled into one
 living, breathing heart of chaos that can destroy you
turn on you
stab you
bite you
kick you
burn you

prick you.
 make you feel alive
the stakes are high you see
but you still stand
trembling terrified
holding out your beating heart to him
making yourself vulnerable weak on purpose
you give yourself away
you lose control
you lose everything
you chip away at his mask to get underneath
because he doesn't hold his heart in his hands like we do does he?
Before it's too late (it's always too late)
you pry to see if it's
big enough
strong enough
kind enough
gentle enough
accepting enough to carry yours as well
only after it's too late do we discover the truth:
no human heart can stretch that much
he's either a warrior who will fight for you forever
or he's a dagger that will stab you at your weakest moment
but which is he?
is he your angel sent to save you?
or is he a wolf in sheep's clothing?
perhaps you could just give it up and save yourself

So what will it be love?
will you stand there like a child before a stranger?
or will you shield your heart like it's a baby bird
turn your back on him and walk away
you wonder...you wonder if he'll follow after you
only time will tell, I suppose.

Loss as Dormancy

In my office, lost in past,
 I look down and *she* is not there.
 Unmet expectation germinates hope,
 like the first, lone bud in the Atacama Desert,
 when *desierto florido* births thousands of little lives
 just beneath the surface.
 For them, as for us,
 dormancy wears the guise of death,
 and that's why I grieve the lie
 that she is dead.
 I cannot say "*you* are dead."
 We are still two:
 above, brief, blooming,
 I pine for her.
 But she sleeps peacefully beneath.
Psuché, the natural soul, means
 never having to say goodbye.
 Yet here I sit,
 laboring between energies
 as I see the good you've lost:
 Remember what breath leaves behind?
 For I'm still struggling among the desert perennials;
 you're below—now
 deep within the heart of things
 ("alive, but unseen")
 with no barren endings or drought dreams.
 At my feet, a chasm separates two hearts.
 Black words on white screen
 broken down like bones into ash;
 love is the only eternal thing I see

Heart Surgery

Cut me open; study my heart.
Tell me what you see.
Describe every bruise and scar
And I'll tell you who did it to me.

Run your finger across my left ventricle.
Feel the rough-worn texture there.
Owl Be gentle please.
That dried red blood takes care.

I laugh at you who believes in healing.
Wait till spring and find a grassy knoll instead.
Gather every wildflower blooming
And rip it from behind its head.

Lay each bud gently on my sores.
Create a garland fitting for my heart.
And for a time, I will smell so sweet and pretty.
Then spring will end.

Beyond all this, the wish to be alone:

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somewhat akin to the dew-dipped petals
unfurling themselves to the bright leaf-light.
Their granted wish is to be daily freed,
while I squirm wriggling like a dirt-damp worm.

Beyond all this, the wish to be alone:
somewhat akin to the moss-covered edge,
where the river turns from song into a resonating breath.
Crashing loud, the liquid traffic thrums the
strings of the forest-city, soothing the
bird's *chip chirp* with its constant rhythm.

Beyond all this, the wish to be alone:
within myself to see a soul-unclothed.
Within myself a realm of natural struggle.
To search, seek, find that which has been lost.
Alone is peace. Alone is quiet. Alone is to be surrounded.

Marriage is a mountain

Sin logs trees in the mountain of our love.
Tourists here, we blind ourselves
to forget its many woes.

Marriage is a mountain.

Hike among the Douglas firs,
then a raven cries,
you spot a blackened scar
where charred trees
lie.

Marriage is a mountain.

An evil word sparks a blaze.
A match unlit is not a match;
fight with sticks instead.

Marriage is a mountain.

Beautiful and maimed, you think.
You look to him—
guilt doesn't blink.

Marriage is a mountain.

Majestically imperfect.
Does destruction compromise the view?
Yes—and—No.
Will we fall to our knees,
or wrestle with the silence?
Maybe—Never.

Marriage is a mountain:

vulnerable to the smallest threat
and so are you:
rock faces, precipices,
waterfalls,
newborn rabbits.
It's called survival.
Stop and smell the
wildflowers.

Let the avalanche engulf you.

Marriage is a mountain.

Trees un-watered die
(but rain cannot be promised, only given).
Bark-beetles destroy a grove of quaking aspens.
Heat up a pinon pine
with too much sunshine.
Marriage is a mountain.

Waltz among an ecosystem
where beliefs and values grow.
Intertwine your fingers
like roots above the ground.
Sing among the vistas, shifting snow,
and predators with eyes.
Hold each other close or freeze.

Bring a mask, chains, some gasoline,
and love along the way.

Marriage is a mountain.