

## Ligaments and Neurons

I am fragile fragile fragile  
Jenga tower tilted  
Synapses trapped in hourglass sand  
And my spine in a pile at the bottom of the stairs

I am tattered paper crane tired  
As if my ligaments turned to lichen in a breeze  
Just a shattered chandelier after earthquake  
Dewdrop glistening in the foyer  
Once whole now splattered starlight

I'm expiring milk  
Blood bleached white as angel teeth  
And a countdown until I'm as bitter as molding fruit  
Scrape this wine from sun melted skin  
Death does not dismiss you of a purpose  
Hang my eyelids out to dry  
And use my flesh for fertilizer

These days hang off my shoulders  
Like a stretched out attic sweater  
My brain somewhere east of the Cascade Mountains  
But my feet planted firmly in rented carpet

Time to strike these ribs of flint and steel  
And burn my dryer lint lungs  
Overgrown vertebrae consumed by flames  
With a uterus stained black as coal

I hope my mind a ponderosa pine  
Returning with the rains of spring thaw  
I hope my bones grow like a bristlecone  
Weathered but rooted in stone

## Half Empty

I've come undone and all that pungent gin has come flooding out  
Bottom shelf potion with a cheap plastic cap  
I am a vessel  
A roughly molded earthen bowl  
Inexperienced hands that pinched instead of pulled  
I've collapsed like a gasping balloon  
Laying limp across crumb covered sheets  
I'm a gutted glassy eyed fish  
Give it a few days before the rot settles in

I live somewhere in the heartbeat of each minute  
It's hard to know the time when you're fading from existence  
And your brain isn't real and your thoughts aren't very real  
and that hangnail poking your pinky finger definitely isn't real

I've lived a woven basket of a life  
My hollow heart a casket for eight hunting rifles  
And my tongue as shriveled as a bee  
trapped backseat in the heat of mid July

I am white paper  
Rubbed raw by eraser  
Pockmarked by lines now forgotten

I am wet laundry  
The soggy smell of mildew  
A chore left unchecked and a headache for the next day

My body's littered roadside bottles  
Burnt butts of cigarettes acrid and charred  
I've made a home along this highway  
I will never decompose  
I will leech into the soil  
Clinging tight to every particle of dust  
Dispersed within the wind  
My constellations leave behind fingerprints

I've been staining sinks acid red with fingers scratching flesh  
I'm just a gnarled crumpled carcass trying to find a place to rest

## **My Own Judicial System**

I've been accused I've stood on trial  
I've called for order in the court  
I've handed down the gruesome sentence  
And pulled the final lever

I've put my soul into each of these roles  
As judge, jury and executioner  
I watched my pleading eyes sink below the morning tides  
And felt nothing when bubbles burst upon the surface

So strap a rock around my ankle  
Toss me down into the lake  
I'll settle in the silt  
With the darkness and the shame

Scrape the last remaining bits of air  
From the trenches of my lungs  
Let the pressure crush my fragile frame  
Until I fit your palm

My bones will erode and my brain will dissolve  
I'll be sutured to the sea  
My atoms will reek of rotting fish  
And crabs will live between my teeth

I'm far removed from sunset views  
And clouds that burn like wax  
A starless sky tied around my mind  
A cell without lock and key

## Runaway

Homesick for the marrow leached from bone  
Evaporated under unblinking sun  
I search for wonder between the gaps in cumulus clouds  
And wonder what would happen if those twin engines on this Boeing 747  
Cratered down to earth  
Like Lucifer from heaven

I've woven a life from acrylic yarn  
Artificial and sterile  
Extracted from dinosaurs long decomposed  
Now I'm fraying at these unwoven ends  
My flesh hangs itching and raw  
Crescent craters line my palms  
Piece by piece  
Cell by cell  
I slowly dissolve into dust

Can I resurrect a purpose  
Cobbled together from decaying discarded meat  
Animated under unholy moonlight

Can I slough my skin of this sewage  
Mold my mind like the fresh river clay  
I excavated with youthful pearlescent fingers

Names of these cities blur together  
Like faces from a ferris wheel  
Suitcases sprawled open wide  
Ravaged as a carcass crawling with vultures

I've fled as fast as I possibly could  
Five hundred and seventy five miles per hour to be exact  
But there's always a stone stuck under my heel  
A rocket lodged firmly in the eye of the moon

## All That Still Remains

The older I get the clearer I see  
Smudges of my mother and father  
Left in the windowpane of my psyche  
Like the imprint of that bird  
That met its end just outside our living room

Carefully curated little bonsai tree  
With wire wrapped limbs pointing skyward

I kept my mind tidy  
Quiet as freshly fallen snow

In fear one day the curtain would be yanked away  
Each of my thoughts paraded beauty pageant style  
Ranked on a scale out of ten

I was miles and miles of pristine  
bleached white desert  
All signs of life annihilated

I split my soul along its seams  
Like a cracked open pomegranate  
Whose red juices stain my palms with shame  
Whose seeds burrow deep beneath my tongue

My heart beat reverberates far too loud  
Children should be seen but not heard

So I preened and I plucked and I prayed every night  
To grow stoic and steady as an oak

I stuffed my stomach with satin silence  
And let my thoughts catch on crooked teeth

My memories began to fossilize  
Trapped as mosquitos wrapped tightly in amber

Now I warble like a phonograph clinging to life  
Words dribble out the corners of my mouth  
The remains of the once great Columbia river  
Now choking on miles of concrete

I've spent years trying to coax these whispers from the shadows  
Feeble trembling creatures  
Bones protruding at awkward angles  
Too often they simply snap when brought out into the daylight

I want to crawl down into the deepest crevices of the earth  
And scream until my lungs turn to tissue paper  
Until my voice echoes back for eternity