

The Translucent Between

Smoothly & simply
like hourglass sand
I am
descending
down a
grand elevator
into a marble lobby, my rendezvous resort, as a poet unicorn,
who penned my way
to fortune,
elevated in luxurious chattels
but buried in solitude,
who carved out thousands of kingdoms
between my father & me so he could not find me
because of his
abandonment.
I step into the golden lobby, lit
like a sun
squeezing
into a
train
tunnel
& my eyes are lucid large, glowing rings of Jupiter & there he is
radiating under a crystal chandelier,
standing in the world I wrote him out of,
seated on a sleek curved bench
a pedestal throning three generations, my father
& the family in mid-century suits & gowns,
as if we belong together, my father
with a diamond-crowned pen peering from a snow-white suit pocket,

his mother/my grandmother,
a frail hand on a rose gold cane,
his sister/my aunt with a bronze pearl-entwined beret in a jet black airfro,
like mine
her son/my cousin with a pink belt above a glowing grin,
a grandeur of chocolate people
peering out of pale pink & white, sitting upright,
holding hands, a tribe,
my father in the middle.

They rise like cathedrals

when they
see me.

Me, the pace of a bride but steady & stunned,

I forward to the magnetic field called family

as if

he crawled out of the dooms of my poems,

this is what walking is made for

to stride into a father's arms

framed by the family
illuminating with forgiveness

with a grandmother beaming in the background with patient eyes
& an aunt & cousin waiting.

I cannot help but expand to a museum,

so he can feel my art

feel my pain

my shame

& he coils himself around me—like a winding

white-gold

bracelet

over the medallion in the marble floor, in my peripheral-our image
refracting in a silver-see-through grand piano.

My years of resentment rust.

Like a yacht into the mango sunset,
I drift deep inside his
orbit, untarnished love,
deeper than I can paint in the depths of any poem.

I 'm surrendering in a shrine

united with him,

a seraphic spasm upon my body.

But Desire, pardon me,

pardon me please,

I lie awake now.

It's a shame he had to find me in

this dream.

Sequin-Setted Teeth

You swear you rock razor blade shades, strut under stadium lights. But you haven't
popped a bottle of exoneration, wheeled out your intestines & jump roped.

You misspell chaos every time because you don't want no part of it; one must claw through
chaos like a tiger through a glass chamber in order to reap the cool. Maybe this
world ain't for you. You dodge the circus you need to catch in your palms—to get a closer
view of how erratic life can be. Walk through a wasp wonderland in the nude. Orgasm
on top of an organ in front of a stained-glass window of Jesus. Glutton your mouth
with gold nuggets until your words sound more imperial. Convince yourself you can
crack open like a coconut & leak blood. Your name wants to reek of grit but you've yet
to skin the jitters covering your core. Until then, you won't see the cobra you need
to be. Smear armor oil across your chest. Paint your skeleton the color of copper. Let a pistol
bloom under your tongue before you think to pimp out your halo & pin sequins
on your sorrows. Remember cool is being scathed yet unphased by the happenings of the earth
& earth is always happening. Even when you are weighed down by tiny dark spirits,
filaments of fear & strands of stealthy insecurity that won't let you build a bravery greater
than what you already have, you are a trooper who surged from the trenches. So grab
them hecklers by the scrotum & tell them you don't rock roman gauntlets & a stone chain
for nothing.

Vegas Fireside Lounge.

Over fried calamari, your dark ambered Modelo, my rosé,
we cackle like schoolboys in a joaning match,
reckless down memory lane. Like when you wanted to sling
a thousand slurs at your Home Depot Manager
for reprimanding you for your life-length conversations
with customers and moving no faster than a snail. You say,
that wasn't a real job; I slip you the side-eye because
I still work retail and you are the corporate guy,
even back when The Recession stung like a bunch
of bees ruining a picnic on a pretty afternoon.

You say white collar-money is sweeter than Janet Jackson's
nipple ring at Half-Time. Classic shit-talking we did, we do,
but now you a bit more than me. You used to buy exotic women
off those expensive websites; you called them hot treats
after a long week. I called them call-girls. *You still do that?*
Nah, quit years ago, you say. *Good,* I mumble.

You vacation here, away from your home in San Diego,
convinced me to fly up from Atlanta where you swear
I am the future modern male Badu with my poetry
if I market myself like a maniac—will rally women like birds
to breadcrumbs. We chuckle, me faintly. Flag another round.

Neon lights illuminate from the ceiling.

A helpful kind of homie once, perhaps because you were older,
like your friend who, supposedly, was a mechanical magician,

who gabbed like a pack of preachers in fellowship, and fixed
the wrong thing in my car, starter motor instead of alternator.

All in your favorite city, Lithonia, the place where you said
it took you to find a lesbian to cut your hair the right way.
No one comes close on The West Coast where, you say
the breeze feels like silk on the skin—the reason you relocated
without a job, relied on your new sonic-silver Jeep Wrangler,
Ubering all types, smelling like a fertilizer factory,
decayed fish, but you said it had to do until you get back on your feet.

Seems as though you were always trying to get back
on your feet. You say, *Tonight's calling for cigars,*
Padron 7000 Natural, lit with your good old torch lighter.
I say let's close out this Sunday night in Vegas with it.

Then I walk off to the men's room.
Linger over the urinal, thinking how these old jokes
are like the rosé I'm drinking, like this bond we seem to have.
They don't age well, in the lounge blaring Bruno Mars,
near the cascade fountain. There you are, with your
debit card and phone out, buying time with Victoria
on a bright red site. And there I stand, looking at you,
the last line of an unfulfilling book I'm closing.

Jagged Little Thrill

Sometimes I think I could clear out the sun with all the evil I have done.

I have hung like a pendulum under hell raisers for too long.

Let me call my childhood neighbors who they were—humans heavy of the world.

Therefore, I was branded in grim.

They say you can't enjoy the work when the main character is unlikeable.

But what's more likeable than a monster offering you his arteries: his
secrets?

The last time I saw the angels dangle in my pupils was before I stole,

or lied about being thirteen to get the job.

Those angels would guide me to goodness.

I don't need to view my reflection to see my spiked nature—

I can see it in other people too. Scorpions and soldiers.

A body can't fully live without a couple drops of evil.

Souls coated in total sanctity always go unseen.

A haven far beyond heaven summoned me to be a bruised saint—

one hand ironing out good deeds, the other frolicking with voodoo.

I wished a jelly fish sting upon a man who scammed me out of \$200,

then that night, I dreamt I bit into a pretty peach that veiled a blade,

the taste of gore.

I gambled with my own sanity.

Perhaps, in a cloudy moment, I could mistake myself for an alien ally against humankind,

but couldn't we all?

Diverse octanes of evil within people makes this land
a cemetery of scarlet roses: elegant and horrid.

Glance under your nails, there is residue of betrayal
and lies you left upon precious people
on your journey here.

If you carve open my core, you will see, occasionally I want out of evil,
but often overlook an exit.

Therefore, I morph into the wildebeest when the boomerang swings back.

Of course, I still reap sown sins that are hard to remember
even the ones I cast on myself.

But who is the regulator of my evil when I am not?

I scold myself with enough heat to burn a million universes.

Fury erupts to self-flaming. I throw myself into a padded room I built with my solitude.

Here is where I become a quiet case of knives in a treasure chest.

Here is when I feed the serial lover within me.

Here is where I sometimes ask God to retire for a holier God
who shows more mercy on me.

Perhaps everything is held for ransom—the exchange of my voice for some victory:
truth for peace.

So it couldn't be about the demons that flock to me,
it's more about being able to conquer them and I can.

I must trust my trusting,

bribe my own self into being beautiful in spite of my poison.