

Homesick for a Place to Rest

Where Do Words Go

Every morning the sun shines through a crack in the window
And the day is new but the feelings permanent.
Clocks in motion: Undo me -
coffee in one hand
bed-head in another,
I am graying.
This is mourning.

In the darkness I am alive and writhing,
writing across starboard skies
those gleaming surfaces
taken for granted, and I
know better

Keep right on, stay talking, don't forget
your tongue. You are not
like glassy eyes, rolling submissively
underneath carpet and rubble
You are smiling, you are feeling
and there is hope again

Gift your heart, give
your head some space
More words than greetings
Less words than five and
nod once in a while.
You really do look interested
*Quick! what are the next words
coming out of your mouth?*
Does your heart fight your brain
Incapacitate what's left and right
Too hurried to think and speak
the words fleeting through the window
ten syllables at a time

The telephone hangs off the hook
and I am drifting on smog,
tasting empty promises on street corners
trying to make ends meet
and once more I wonder,
Will I make it through the night?

Tonight the blinds will close.
Tomorrow the birds will sing.

My Father, The Man Who Bloomed Underwater Gelatin for a Living

My father's hands find each other behind arched back. He peeps outside from his bedroom window, the painted rectangular frame preserving nature's movements - the wind coaxing white winter orchids, pond water streaming, goldfish fanning fins. My father's eyes fixed, his faint breath drenched with longing: bitter fronds like gelatin sheets dredged up by their necks, my father surveys the land. He wants to plunge into the unknown unclothed: molting his skin, shifting his shape, decimating his chance for survival. He noticed them first -

the gaunt bones protruding from his cheeks to shoulders to hips to thighs, when something inside of him snapped, and my father took me off of his lap. I was weaned from his protein when I turned eighteen. Now, at twenty-four, I am my father and he, unrecognizable. He slinks away when I look him in the eyes. He shuffles to the corner when I enter the room. And in response, my back has broadened and his heart, frozen.

Take me with you.

What Does It Mean to be a Man

I

What does it mean to be a man
when I am without?

What does it mean to be a man when my mind does not align
with my body and I wish I was one thing
and just one thing to everybody
so words can be soft,
the music in the background humming,
hovering instead of whispers
following me out the door at every party,
every reunion and every gathering.

Before I make my entrance I am haunted
by your invitation, the expectation
To *be myself* as homogenous,
predictable, unobtrusive like the
black and white film reeling
in the background as news
but this- this is nothing new.

II

I am naked, wild, and roaming
the forsaken land beneath lazy clouds
drifting past the heavens.
One hand shielding warmth and light
I glance at my birth body shriveling.
I can barely touch myself without recoiling,
Afraid to burn myself while remembering
broad shoulders like cold mountains,
wisps of hair trailing the overpass.
I almost shrug off the snow
burdening these abandoned breasts
white like the backs of silver foxes, they lie
awaiting like the seasons
hoping for freedom
redeeming what once was,
and is, unapologetically.
My hands are coarse as fibers
when they twist the hairs on your arms
and you in circles. I lose control.

Heat escapes from my loins and I thrust
into your mouth head-first.
I am falling
I am flailing

III

Am I a man if I force desire
on an unassuming body
Am I a man if I ignore
the wounded and dying, still
Am I a man if I conquer
Anything at all, even myself
when my blood is running;

Stop. I am not the enemy.
I am not the drug that holds me steady.
I am the process. I am participating
in the pushing of the needle into my thigh,
the dull yellow oil slowly coating my muscles,
the pulling of the needle out of my thigh
not knowing if or how far I injected into a vein
before it is too late, and the blood
gushes from the site. My eyes stay
detached as the streaming red
stains the bathroom floor and houses
between cold and forgiving cracks.

I drop the syringe into a disposable box,
I watch it slide underneath the slot
landing among the dried and the old,
the used and the resting ones
until death do us part.

IV

What does it mean to become a man re-born?
What does it mean to awaken half-breed,
half-gold because dreaming whole
has not felt enough for man.

I climb those tired boulders
until my eyes fall short of the horizon.
The sun drops from my gaze
And I am alone again

But fear has revealed itself in
the conceivable: abstract and concrete,
precious though dissonant, I know,
I'll sing anyway. The earth does not have to
tremble at my feet, and my hands
do not have to listen to the hungry
beasts, purging the blood of sheep.
I was there.

Breasts of mine I console you,
Lady Flower I beg of you
to hold on. You look like you could
carry a child. And you can. Lead
the wolves astray - they are confused
by our geography. Here we tumble
and laugh.