

## Roar

all the stars in the sky  
love,  
they're looking down on me  
tonight  
and I remember when I  
cowered before you,  
while the atmosphere  
fell down around me,  
all fists and fury and  
still,  
what was life without you?

'cause you  
became  
my cosmos,  
I traced  
your constellations  
like braille,  
made wishes on  
the light  
you projected,  
fell right into  
that  
landmine shine.

and I didn't see  
the darkness  
rising,  
too busy  
diving into chaos,  
to pause and  
take a breath,  
you extinguished me  
ever so slowly..  
sweetly.  
smoke remained  
in place  
of flame.

But tonight, my love  
I am a bonfire  
and I roar  
with  
more force  
than you could  
ever contain,  
my pyre,  
stories high,  
my rage alone  
could eat you alive.

instead,  
I choose  
to use my fire  
to warm myself,  
I exhale ashes  
of you  
left on my tongue,  
lift my lips up  
and kiss the sky.

**one**

you  
give me  
proof  
that I still exist

my fire  
rises  
in your eyes  
part beacon,  
part reckoning

exiled,  
annihilated  
by years of apathy  
indifference  
only the  
briefest  
trace  
of understanding

you are  
skydiving  
through a  
rainbow  
after being shackled  
to the ground,  
reckless  
unbound  
irrefusable.

## Fishnet

Upside down pyramid of adoration:

Gorgeous

Beautiful

Pretty

Sexy

Hot

Somewhere along the bottom I've crawled;  
nice and sweet were never adjectives  
used to endear me to potential suitors.  
I get fire words motivated by lust,  
No one gives a fuck about  
my vocabulary, no matter  
how erudite

I eat cute for breakfast  
with my Vampire Red mouth,  
eyes done up in kohl and contempt,  
black skirt mocking your distance from  
this magnified, sexualized form  
I call my own.

If you have to pay \$20 in order to speak to me  
how am I not winning?

Get more respect as a lingerie doll  
than a shot girl; funny, when the clothes  
come off, men seem to know their place.  
But for a dollar tip, as I hand you a beer,  
I'm supposed to giggle as you grab my ass?  
Explain that one.

People say dancers are fake;  
hair extensions, false lashes,  
tan in December, hundreds of outfits,  
accessories, shoes, body glitter,  
push-ups, make-up, perfume;  
the persona, the sultry or sinful name-

It's armor. All of it.

Like a knight going into battle,  
the costume is our chain mail,  
protecting us, hiding our essence,  
sheltering who we really are.

We strut onstage as warriors, Amazons,  
the personification of every fantasy  
anyone has ever hoped to touch;  
We wield the power to manipulate your mind,  
your senses, your body, your wallet.

In the end, at 3 am,  
I take off my 6 inch heels,  
brush out my hair;  
wash off layers of color, glamour,  
from my young(ish) face,  
stuff my gear in a backpack,  
count my money, hundreds,  
sometimes thousands, a night,  
pull on sweats, tip out,  
and come back into my skin.

## Church

I fold you up  
intricate and tight,  
an origami trapezoid  
a football of torn  
notebook paper  
four sided,  
one inch by two.

put your image in  
a tiny lightless case,  
deep in the center  
of my cortex-  
lockbox in miniature  
chained twice over,  
like a gift.

steel clasp thick,  
unbreakable.  
a lifetime of you  
boiled down to the  
smallest fragment  
of burnt earth.  
You're a thousand stories  
recorded in kohl,  
that fit  
on the head  
of a pin.

I hide you  
so far down  
in the tunnels of my marrow  
(into the hollows of these  
cold, lonely bones) that  
you become a part of me.

## Leaving Here

too much here-  
and emptiness across buildings,  
only bones dragged along  
to find salvation.

lamplight filtered through silk,  
opium lies readily believed-  
once **this** was utopia,  
now travels say something sordid.

fate splays tissues wide,  
turn signal beckons-  
lands unknown before and since  
leave ashes on my tongue.

stains of sadness,  
decades of delusion,  
seconds ticking,  
minutes melting.

Always leaving here.