

Mind Wandering During Sex

Beat.

Beat.

Beat.

(Heart)

Beat. the sound that is shaped and molded into a moment of romance
 between my ear and your ribcage

Beat together Swiss chocolate and shards of sand, dash in some red of
 autumn leaves, but only enough that I can smell it as I wrap
 your hair around my fingers

Beat your body says to me, louder, louder, until I can't hear my own,
 but don't need it for this new survival

Beat ing is an insistence that reminds your body every day "the cardboard cutouts you
 made for your mother, your second grade teacher, now drip with blood and the
 vivacious insistence of being heard"

Beat like you will listen

Beat.

Beatbeatbeatbeat goes my heart as you put your lips on it and stir that crazy feeling
 of breaking fine china and cracking geodes into a tornado,
 lifting both of us away from our bodies and into that

Beat.

Obscene

Artist,
you notice
my mottled skin,
you take joy
at my discolorations,
humming as you mix
pink and brown,
as you pull
the fine horsehair brush
from your smock pocket
and daub in a thin line
of wrinkle
below my eye.

I do not watch you paint
the fourth
or fifth lines.

At home,
I will stare at the mirror,
trying to:
 smudge the lines,
 smear them,
 wash them away.
My make-up will run,
and my skin will remain
hanging off my cheeks.

Artist,
you will someday finish painting me,
and my color
will have disappeared
onto your canvas.
You, artist, will take liberties
with the shape of my breasts,
will paint a smile
I don't recognize

onto my lips.

I will go home:

touch my breast,
frown at myself.

I will:

feel your hands
molding my shape,
your eyes looking
indiscriminately
at me.

You, artist, help me
out of my chair,
pay me more than I deserve,
and set the portrait
“FOR SALE,”
to be bought
by an unsuspecting young couple,
who I will watch grow
as old and frail
as myself.

Obsolete

Think of the words we've lost,
the entries in old Oxford dictionaries
being torn out, black censor bars
over the bright light of January's *apricity*.
Somewhere, *grumpish* men in gray tweeds
expugn our elder's words, taking the meat
of our language and shredding it,
lathering it in sauce
and forgetting its own generous taste.

Somewhere,
old spinsters,
tired of their husbands and their everyday colors,
tattoo in *tyrian* purple lost words
onto their scabbed skin.
They are Rememberers
of forgotten sayings,
they quip to each other in a language
only they can understand.
One will bring the book of lost words
a tome nearly as tall as herself.
Another will take attendance,
half of them carrying obsolete names
as well:
Marjorie, Bella, Corinna.

Inked and oozing with memories,
they meet together on Tuesday afternoons,
take note of the date and time,
and chronicle our hollows, our inconsistencies,
where language has lost us,
and we're fiddling with our matches
in the dark.
They record the dead words of the day
like extinct species,
and cringe at the new words being added,
sometimes in sorrow, sometimes with glee.

Small Talk

I have used 40 percent
of my allotted words;
crassly tossing them
into forgotten rough drafts
and pointless online forums.

My voice is moving slower and slower,
as the voicebox reaches capacity.
Perhaps this is the plight of the mute;
in a previous life, did they speak
too long, too grandly,
and now pay the price?

Someday, my love poems
will have to be carved in sign language,
I will dabble in watercolors and acrylics,
as my pencil lead breaks
and my computer keys stiffen.
The world will steal from me
the possible orations
I will never give,
and publishing houses
will be baffled
as my books turn up
blank:
white pages raped of ink,
words I once could have said
dismembered and crudely buried.
Look: already, I have used over 100 more!
Silence me, unforgiving muse,
lest I prattle to my own silent grave.

Proximity to Trees

For Vita

Taste air, bone fed
blossoms that recycle,
destroy, condense
and give birth again.
Fire engulfs and forgives
once a year,
burning new paths
into vain fears,
then returns to black bed.
Air revives, bottled—
broken seal in city imaginations—
return to rank air
and fetid breath of the animal,
who knows no mediated circumstance.
Air viral,
air crinkled,
dread air packed too tight
between metal and man,
air of terror oceans
and tranquil harbors.
Excuse the air
that is too thin,
or mottled by fog,
severed by lightning.
Remember breathing.
First moments.
First memories.
Breathe deep,
hold, depress,
compress emotions,
breathe out.
They protect, burn,
revive, forgive.
Growing too close,
they will hold each other's branches up.

Air drips from them
like afterbirth or beforebirth.