

In the beginning,

We spoke the language of gardens,
and the word was “sunflower,”
and the word was a passage
to summer and chlorine when
you and I would sit on the blacktop, huddled
over the drain, convinced
it trapped the heat of warmer
months and saved it for cold, first-grader
fingers that were ours.

We didn't know
that the pen that pierced my side would
pierce her heat too.

We didn't know that the
winter voice in both of us could
breathe the word “sunflower.”

'On' summer

We were one.
Spit dirt run water right
 down the middle
together mud,
smelling mud pies,
cheap plastic molds,
 begging for coffee milk
in ninety three degrees
(Mom said we were
New Orleans babies)
 screaming-crying
laughing when Thomas said Furbies
were government spies.

We blued white called rain,
recreating nonsense and
 Ovid's Chaos,
sitting in church pews, stifling
chuckling at Monseigneur,
where you told me you hadn't a single
crush in the class, and I
thought nothing of it.

A discourse

It's time for discourse, Jack Spicer.
I've agreed with you long enough,
sitting before your text
like a student with her favorite teacher.

 This is not kindergarten anymore.

 I'm old enough to write back now.

You weren't the first to notice
that people can fly.
What we do in the bedroom isn't simply
the birds and the bees, but the butterflies.

Butterflies, they can be surface creatures,
surface phenomenon,
riding lightly on the wing, but a bird
is a substantial powerful thing.

Butterflies are best for conceits, but a bird –
you can ask a bird questions on and from
a crackhead's old lounging chair as you take off your clothes,
and you're right that the sex won't matter.

 Wrestling with the air is something we do
 to ground ourselves,

but even better (maybe Feud was right),
to taste death on our own terms.

As a wise bird once told me,
it's more fun to be Jim Morrison than Ghandi.

So much depends upon

a pudgy orange cat that really
wants to be loved,
lying beside the white chickens
like a god of the sun,
lethargic, pathetic,
longing for compassion,
(But why does he have to shed *so* much?)
smarter than we think
but too still, docile
to part those waters
or open up Seol to watch the chicks plummet.

He saunters over,
digs his claws in my thigh
to make sure I'm not going anywhere,
and I think about my sister
grabbing elbows,
pinching til it hurt
when she was a baby,
and I'd rock her to sleep.

Response to “Wean Yourself” by Rumi

Hello from an embryo,
softly tucked away between
three bodies of water or blood
flow –

Put the arrow in my hand.

Make me an archer.

Never mind,

I’ll do it myself.

I’ll dance on a star,

and believe you when you say

people dance there.

Maybe at a wedding,

I’ll throw the celestial rice,

and watch as the black hole

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