

First Poem of Mourning

I am a Patient Pendulum
Perpetually swaying between idyllic illusions of love and bitter indulgences of greed
Permanently caught between two worlds of emotion
This is what I have found
This is My slanted universe

I am a flower with petals nearly all turned
Not as vibrant, Not as crisp
As the ones found growing in the earth
Not as delicate, Not as earnest
As the white stargazer lilies which thrive in the sun
And sit patiently on the mantle of death

I am the footprints of all who have passed
I am the pacing of the grievers
Back and Forth. The first and the last.
I am Not as delicate, Not as earnest
As the swollen earth
Not as careful, Not as precious
As all of the kind words

And I am still amazed
After decades of deaths
I remain cold, devoid of the feeling of loss and love
Of light and depth.

I feel
But only with a fraction of a fraction of a heart

And when I am with you
My love
I wish to tear my skin open like a sealed envelope
Watch as my body drains
And my emotions flutter and swirl

But would my emotions erupt from my body
With a sound as strong as the tremors heard underground?
Or would I lay beside you, hollow
Like a skinned bird
Legs and neck pinned back

But when faced with my own bitter emotions -
I look up at You, my slanted universe.

Finally. I am bleeding.

The Pounds

Like a petulant pendulum, we sway
back and forth in the dark and through the day.
You smile and I try to forget the pain
which you carelessly carved into my brain.
Should I try to tip the scale and break free?
I try to breathe, but your words smother me.
And here: your far-away stare. *Add one pound.*
And then: your fingers wrapped firmly around
My neck. My arm. That organ we call *heart*.
With tired hands, I add three pounds and start
to trace the ways in which love comes to end,
the silent way it snakes and twists and bends.
So I measure the weight that crowds the scale
Until the day dims or my last inhale.

One day, you will notice a shift

One day, you will notice a shift
A bend in your once seamless existence
You'll fumble when you try to plug in the iron
Or trip when you try to walk up the steps
And like a frozen amnesiac you'll scour your mind
To remember the faces, places, and times
And you'll try to pinpoint the exact spot
Where you watched your dog unknowingly harass
The timid rabbit that sat idly on the grass

Or you will try to forge the words you heard your parents scream.
And even though you planted your foot at the bottom of the staircase and peered your head,
Your curiosity was never fully quenched
And you never quite heard all that was said.
And this, all of the blank fodder for your trauma
Has been logged and stored in the designated spaces in your mind

And even now, you reach for the memory
Of you and your cousins at your grandparents' house
All standing cautiously at the pool's edge
Attempting to measure
It's depth.

But you've never stopped measuring,
It is the one habit you cannot break.

You try but you still wonder each time you meet someone new: How do they measure?
Their face, their hair, the whiteness of their teeth?
The way their brows are sculpted, the curve of their cheeks?
But what is even more exhausting than the look of a new face
Is the mind and all the heat it radiates
from their skulls, from their eyes, their fingers, and their lips-
Like the steam that rises from manholes lining city streets
But how deep are these manholes?
How wide is this entrance into these brains?
Is it as wide as the doorways of your childhood home?
Does the gap stretch as far as your place on the steps from your parents tired arguments?
Or does this gap dissolve with each indifferent shrug-
Do these entrances disappear with each tinge of disappointment?

So you read the words of each person you meet

Assessing silently the depth.
Attempting to determine:
Will I Jump?

This is How it Begins

First with the buoyant gall of my even heart
Then with the heedless hastenings of my careless wit
I reflect upon a world that I no longer fit.
And in this adaptation, I divulge my sullen start.
Here we find ourselves pinned against the arid walls
Of my parents home as we trace each worn face
As they collide, intersect, embrace
Each other in a fit of fearful withdrawal
Stemmed from arduous conversations
Of lecherous love and risible hate,
My sweet parents, sweet harbingers of my fate,
Please breathe into me such oneiric susurrations.

For even now, I wish to trace the trauma
Like worn epistles outlining the route of all sorrow
The pain we will feel next year, next month, tomorrow.
The suffocation we'll feel, like old men in a sauna.
And here we find ourselves, hips pinned to the dryer
Depositing loose coins in their designated holders
Our shy gazes linger just like a bonfire smolder.
And I think: how many cycles are required?
I fight the urge to count the spins of the washer
Yet still watch as the ruffled bundles turn and turn,
Swallow themselves whole without notice or concern
And collapse within the cylinder of water.

First Poem for My Beautiful Love

And so it begins
As we sway and descend the zig-zag stairs
To greet the heat
With our incessant footsteps.

And we glide through the glass doors
Only to hit the gray pavement abruptly
Where we pause, admiring the cement lines
Stretching in every direction
Separating us from the legions of cars
And bright yellow taxis.

And the street signs signal where we stand
In the universe.
Here is the East.
There is the West.
And you,
A figure of beauty and light,
point toward the not-so-far 30th street.

It is then when you throw your arm towards the sky
Signaling for a not-so-far taxi.
And in one eyeblink we throw our bodies into the car
And secure our seats beside each other.

We head downtown.

Raindrops begin to stream down the misted windows. There is a smile on your face.
You are happy we missed the rain.
I am happy with you.

And I imagine a world of loneliness
In the uncertainties of your heart.
A different loneliness spread across the faces
of the nameless, featureless strangers
flooding the streets behind us.
A slanted, dazzling world captured in the smudges
And straining street lamps.

And as the loneliness hangs in the air around us,
I reach beyond and pull for your past murmurs
Of affection and love.

And as the delicate words pinwheel and spread
Throughout my mind, I grab your hand
in an attempt to encapsulate every spent
and present moment beside you.

And the loneliness permeates through the air,
and twists and contorts and swerves
with the adamant summertime heat,
cradling the featureless bodies beside my own.

But there is also you,
cradling me in the palm of your beautiful hand.
Absorbing all of my thoughts
that have yet come to fruition
through your skin.

We step out of the car.

We head towards an entire orchestra of illumination,
In the city devoid of silence and darkness.

