

***Pinokkio***

Pinokkio pierced his nose, pushed in a loop ring  
the size of a cock ring, thought this would make him  
edgy, mature, abandoning his boyish image,  
for a grown-up one, vowing to leave his lies behind  
in his adolescence.

Pinokkio pimp-walked all throughout the Tuscan town  
letting his nose ring dazzle like the sun leaping down  
and pirouetting across a pond, each day camouflaging  
his insecurities, thinking to himself I'm proud of the man  
I have become.

One night during a walk, he landed upon a spunky lady  
at a graffiti party with a luscious golden ponytail  
and a teal flamingo tattooed on her inner right thigh.  
She batted her granddaddy long-leg eyelashes,  
asked *what's your name?*

Pinokkio responded *Nokio*, then smiled so big that  
you could see fairies back flipping inside his cheeks.  
She said, *I'm Pinkie*, asked *are you into sports?*  
Nokio nodded with a smooth swag. His nose  
thickened, nose ring shook like a struck tambourine.

Pinkie merely blinded by the ring's luster to realize  
Nokio's nose. She popped a black gummy gnome into her  
mouth, asked *are you a punk?* Nokio blurted *naw*,  
with bass booming the ground causing a nearby  
possum picking through trash to have a panic attack.

Once more, unnoticeably like stars tip-toeing through the midnight sky, Nokio's nose thickened as he thought that Pinkie might like him for who she thinks he is, for the man he convinced himself to be, not by who he really is, which he saw go wrong too many times before.

Pinkie adjusted her lemon-colored halter top, asked *are you packing?* Nokio glared, then murmured *mos def*. Pinkie's eyes lit like a firefly in a black dream, but Nokio sneezed, covering his nose once again thickening now covering part of his right eye.

Whispered *tomorrow at 6, let's meet at my babo's movie tavern, The Geppetto*. Next day with a few swapped words between them and Nokio's newly broadened nose like a clenched fist, the two watched a mafia movie while they drank birch booze.

Then they walked down a cobblestone road listening to trolls freestyle to 90's beats until the two stumbled upon a basketball court with urchins playing, slinging slurs about the shots. Pinkie shoved Nokio, said, *show them how it's 'pose to be done*.

Nokio's eyes sunk in, his spirit turned lazy like a donkey. Pinkie hollered, *youngins let him join for a lil bit*. The ball bounced into Nokio's hands. He dribbled, then double dribbled, then dropped the ball as if his hands were stiff, made of wood.

Weaving closer to the basket, he yelled, *I got this!*  
His nose widened to the width of a watermelon  
as he leaped to dunk. Nokio's vision now fully blurred.  
Pinkie and urchins' eyes protruded as Nokio's nose  
struck the rim, then the nose ring hooked into the net.

The sun slid its shades on as Pinokkio hung by his  
nose ring, like a marionette, onlookers' eyes bulged,  
turned blue. Bright blood gushed into wide words  
across the dirty green basketball court,

*the truth may feel like a nightmare,*

*but lies lead you to the slaughterhouse.*

*Write Hehmisfear*

In school ADHD formed an army against my concentration.

You will find that W.E.B. Du Bois was a chemistry apprentice / consumed with/finding the cure  
for Parkinson's disease / in cicadas/but in the process / unveiled a poison / that could give poison  
to poison ivy/

Twisting the strap on my bookbag, I can't see straight.

William Lloyd Garrison / was the first legally blind umpire / with the Los Angeles Dodgers  
/donated a million dollars / to The Retina Foundation / which inspired Helen Keller's / best-selling,  
Light in my Darkness/

I draw a funky frame around my science paper.

Mary Beachum was a slaughterhouse worker / created the concept / of The Great Wave off  
Kanagawa / while using an outhouse / watching silverfish coast and stream / the rain cascading  
from a crack/

A boy counting coins in his pockets.

Prudence Crandall was incarcerated in a barbarian cave / packed with coyote carcasses / for  
kleptomania in 1302 / before swiping the warden's arm which led to the creation / of Judas Cradle/

Who's singing that song in my head?

*(Poem continued, no stanza break)*

Laura Towne used to tutor / the legislative assistant / who had a love child / with Lyndon B.  
Johnson / that child became / the lawyer who patent the design / of the Lincoln Continental/

See: I'm neatly coloring inside the lines in my coloring book (with markers).

Booker T. Washington was a sax player turned confectioner / sold stuffed bananas / in a small  
disposal copper chests / from the truck of his car / before discovered by a foreigner / who partnered  
/ to make it / a chain at Disney Lands/

You, daydreaming about not daydreaming.

John J. Carter collected tarantulas / as weapons / to sling onto civilians / in the Invasion of Trinidad  
and Tobago / before they gained independence / from the Israelites/

I'm following my friend's waves in his haircut

Today, I swept shortcoming into the distance / of those/ pictures in poems / then bleached and  
painted them / the right hue of history / for carving a passage / for me to write this/

*The Translucent Between*

Smoothly & simply  
 hourglass sandlike I descend  
 grand elevator a marble lobby  
 my rendezvous resort having penned my way to fortune  
 elevated in luxurious chattels buried  
 in solitude  
 thousands of kingdoms between my father & me his  
 abandonment disconnected phone tone  
 on the night of my birth

The golden lobby  
 lit like sun squeezing into a freight tunnel eyes rings  
 of Jupiter & there he is  
 under a crystal chandelier, in the world I write him out of  
 on a curved bench  
 my father & his family  
 in mid-century suits & gowns,  
 as if we belong together  
 my father  
 with a diamond-crowned pen from a suit pocket  
 his mother/my grandmother  
 a frail hand on a rose gold cane, his sister/my aunt with a bronze pearl-barrette  
 in a jet black afro like mine  
 her son/my cousin with a pink belt & a sparkling smile

*(Poem continued, stanza break)*

A grandeur                    peering out of pale pink & white  
   sitting upright  
   holding hands,  
   a tribe

   They rise like cathedrals  
when they see me    walking steady &    stunned    the pace of a bride  
   to the     magnetic field  
called family    as if                    my father    crawled out of the dooms of my poems  
   this    is what walking is for  
to stride    into a father's arms    framed by the family                    illuminating  
   forgiveness.

   I cannot help  
   but expand    to a museum,    so my father can    feel my art  
   feel                    my shame  
He coils himself around me like    a winding    white-gold    bracelet    over the medallion  
   in the marble floor    our image    refracting  
in a see-through    grand piano    I drift deep inside his                    orbit  
   untarnished love

   A seraphic spasm  
   upon my body                    But Desire,  
   pardon me,    I lie awake now  
the shame    he had to find                    me  
   in    this dream

*Sequin-Setted Teeth*

You say you rock razor blade shades,  
strut under stadium lights. Like you're  
secure. Pop a bottle of exoneration,

free yourself of the *punk & pussy* childhood  
foes pinned on you because they were  
childhood foes. Wheel out your intestines

& strangle the remembering. Begin  
the unbecoming, purge the painful &  
coat yourself in bravery. Walk through

a wasp wonderland wearing only this code.  
Glutton your mouth with gold nuggets,  
your words audacious, strike back. You

crack open like a coconut & leak  
blood & leave the teary lad behind the one  
with scary fist & vague aura. Today,

you smear armor oil across your chest  
& let the dirty memories muster you.  
Let a pistol bloom under your tongue.