

Springtime

Pink and purple azaleas announce themselves making everything else less beautiful.
Lately I have been thinking too much about these ravenous shrubs.

Four baby birds on the small tree outside my office complex reach their downy heads --
beaks like yellow cups -- eagerly awaiting their mother's worms.
They shiver through days of cold rain and I fear for them.
I used to feel the presence of blue jays on solitary walks through a maze of subdivision.
Backyards where boundaries truly had no meaning.
I used to know the moss underneath a maple tree whose scent felt like a miracle.

The Myers-Briggs personality test reveals a preference for thinking but I wonder when I feel
myself choosing the answers I only know I ought.
It's only a preference I'm told.
For introversion or extraversion, thinking or feeling, sensing or intuition, judging or perceiving.
It is only a preference for a certain type of person in this world.
Would you rather your child be smart or kind? What's more important?
A better experience for them?

I am the executive.
With a preference for wandering city streets when I wake at noon,
For dive bars and cafes where writers have toiled,
sculpture gardens made of rock and fantasy.
My doppelganger is a fast-talking bartender with a good lean and lust,
that would prefer to live out her days singing karaoke in a red walled basement.
She has a lover.
The sound and vibration of their voices in unison confirms an unknown joy.
The desire for him is excruciating.
While she waits for reciprocation the only solace is found in Jim Harrison's Unreason.
After making love they do a kind of dance.
Asking one another for their love as each item of clothing is put back.
When she looks in the mirror they move in harmony like waves of the ocean smiling.
He tells her she thinks too much and for the first time she hears the words with humility.
She wishes to unsay the many contemplations of the morning and share the feeling in her heart.
Now she waits reading Dan's Bugs to relieve the pain while she stares at the computer screen
missing the scent of the maple tree.

You

I

You.

Drown out the noise

Are soft like a winter coat

Wear alligator shoes Friday Nights

Fix your hair in the mirror

Tell stories with the composition of your outfits (I do this too!)

How you love yourself, I laugh at you!

You want your music to move bodies and hearts

Oars against a great river

A tender dark part of you that fears death

moves like a hummingbird

When I struggle to carry a tune you harmonize to bring my voice out from its turtle shell

You have a loyal friend bonded to you from a story yet unknown

Your love for your little son is vast

A lustrous pride

A hope in him vulnerablestrong

You love to share little daydreams with me, why?

His precious face

Doing your hair

Watching the soccer match

I float in the air waiting for you to pull me to the ground

A translucent kite in the whipping sunny-may-skies

I see you across the room and think

That is the one that should be close

I ask, you say of course

We dance wild like a baby with the hiccups

Later you gently take my hand

Scrambled eggs, that's what you've done to me

Before that night my own desires were as close to me as the gum wrapper in a stranger's jacket

Crinkled and on its way to the oblivion of some closet

Now I feel you lipsweet-like-sparklers

You hold things in your hands:

Songs

Baby pajamas

A blow dryer

25 lb weights

A tall glass with a cold margarita

Bright plastic watches in a rainbow of colors

The small of my back

A phone on which I sent you an embarrassing love song

What do you hold in your heart?

I want to see wind fall across your face with hunger

To always know the proximity of your shoulders
To enter sunny doorways that bring dreams come true
To walk down streets into cars that take me to your lips
To make you laugh sillycrazy
You could love many others and I would not care
If I could keep you close
If you could come back to me and tell me every truth you've found in the pleasure and pain
Listen to my travels as well
If you would let me bring you joy
If you would hand me to your fears
If you would never own me
If you would be a friend
If you would be a father to my child as well
If you would share with me the tiny bits of dirt that graze across your floor
The ice cubes that melt in your cups
Will you put something on my wall in a color you like
that reminds you of why you wake up every morning?

II

I have written the wrong poems
of desire and regret,
offering distance you did not ask to be given
Yet have I told of the spaces of my heart filled up with you and only you
I am sorry.
I told you I did not like the scent of your lotion
to hide from the lion of my affections shaking my soul with its roar
to conceal my intoxication with every scent and sense of you
I am sorry.
You asked if I loved you and I was not brave
protecting myself with the cool stones of a cynic.
Beginning an ugly game,
I told you I wanted two lovers
Please understand my confusion and terror
I did not think love could come so fast.
So beaten down and buried I was in sands of heartache
barren beaches of little fruit overtaking my romance with the waves
Now I'm left to wonder what would happen if I just say yes.
The truth is that my feelings for you so suddenly eclipse every other love I've ever known.
It has been you and only you since that moment.
There is no other I long for, no other that sets my heart aflame
No other who has ever been at once so familiar and so mysterious
every day I want you close in body or spirit or both
I wonder how you are, wishing I could care for you, dance with you, cry with you, fight with
you, sing with you, only you.
It is you I want to walk with up mountains

I don't want to walk any other road
I don't want you roaming through forests of lovers
It angers me to think you would do so
I was foolish to say you should take pleasure in mud puddles when a sparkling stream runs
through you whispering my name
I am only afraid it is impossible to make you my own
and so shield my heart with indifference to your footsteps
But days go by and this feeling does not fade
You are not replaced by any other
Your eyes are twin moons pulling the tide of my soul
through black nights where I drift above tree tops
My life suspended in air, waiting for an answer
Remember, I asked the question back, yet was not given a reply
merely the circumstances, which do not determine your capacity to love
I fear the emptiness of never knowing
never speaking the stormy words stuck beneath my chest
I would rather bear the pain
looking silly and insane and tell you truthfully the answer is yes.
You have my heart, you and only you.

Walking Giant

Summer air is full of music...

scent of honey suckle

those dirty-sock tree flowers

charred meat on the grill

Love comes just as surely as the silver moon

Heartbreak too

My little pup circles in a fit of joy when it's time for the evening walk he desires

Two old friends stroll in the cool

Under sherbert skies of grape, straberry, and orange

Petulant lovers sit on a grassy hill beside an evergreen

Its trunk of smooth ridges like pleats of wedding tulle

A crowd of boys and men gather at the perimeter of a basketball court, game underway

The force and squeak of kicks on concrete,

a basketball's tawny explosion,

sweat-breathe-bodies in collision.

This symphony comforts me

Echoes those childhood evenings watching the Bad Boys in my pajamas

Two little girls, basketball fanatics, whose father told them they could be anything

Beautiful strange-cruel dichotomies lace together evening

Dear Jim

Dear Jim,

There are many shades to human emotions
like fluctuations of the clouds
It's hard to know what to hold onto
what to let go.

There are many shades of love
lust is ok as well.

Maybe someday we will live in a world without sin,
As in a world where this concept has been obliterated and people love and lust and know when to
hold on.

Maybe we will learn from Brown Dog and a few hours in the woods.
Perhaps things will come into focus.

I get so damned pissed at you sometimes because well, I don't think you ever thought about what
it is like for the stripper to be the stripper, whether she wants to be or how or why she might
come to love it- if she does, in a twisted way- what it takes from her, what she could have been,
but I don't condemn the pleasure that you receive from women's bodies at the clubs in Nebraska
or France- there is a humble earthiness to it, it does not seem that you are a predator, or that you
must possess this sexuality stripped from us, it's more like you want to walk within it with us
and that I can get down with.

There are problems with the feminist critique of your work and your lazy caricature of the
feminists that have critiqued it, but did you know that young girls wearing a bikini do more
poorly on a math test than those in a sweater?

Just think!

What genius has been robbed from us due to the erosion of young girls minds by a society that
sees them first and foremost as objects of pleasure to be consumed –

How many Millers, Faulkners, Shakespeares, Hendrixes, or Einsteins?

Already missed because they happened to be born with a vulva and lips instead of a pair of balls?

I get so mad at you because I wonder whether you ever thought of what it means to be a woman
in this world.

Then I remember Dalva,
How tenderly your characters love,
How unafraid you were to bear your soul,
To carry the weight of your humanity and others', and I forgive you.

I miss you, and I hope that we can do better.

With Love, R.

Slam Poem for Heartbreak Lovers in the Night

How dare you treat me like I don't matter
I'm not your game to play, I'm not taking your tests
You failed when you tried to make me less
You lost when you locked your heart up in your chest
I call the sun, the sun
The moon is the moon
My universe don't revolve around you
The world aint turnin to your sinister tune
Women weren't put here to be under your shoe
Your pig headed ways got me singing the blues
Cause we could have been poetry.
You put blinders on and shut your eyes
Wearing my heart like a gilded prize
Trying on my love for size,
It's too big for you cause you're small and unkind

There's just one question I have now
Who hurt you so bad to make you seeth with pain
Harden your heart and make others feel the same
You can cover it up with your ballads and praise
With your glittering watches and style in spades
But I see the truth beneath shades of grey

I know how the story goes
You don't have to say it I can feel the woe
Bitter loss, a wilted rose
From the tips of my fingers to my little toe
Every day I live this prose
I see a young boy with a beautiful gaze
Told by this world he doesn't look the same
That his bodies not right, his accent a shame
Those dreams and goals-- quite insane
Just be quiet now, let good children play
A boy that wants his mother's love
but waits for days until he's come undone
never to know a familiar touch
A maze of concrete and blood
Then he meets a lovely girl
That dashes his heart like a fragile pearl
Just numb the pain and it's all a blur

Until he finds he can carry a tune
spinning songs

that graze the sky
Shadows of love that
make hearts fly
His passion true,
Deep down he believes it's all a lie
No one could ever reciprocate his sighs
There's something ugly and empty inside
So he numbs himself to the anguished cries
Of those he hurts when he rides the night
Drinking up their bedroom eyes
He laughs at their bruised and bitter love sprains
Shame on them to come his way
Can't they see they're all his prey
It's their fault to believe affections' display
Life lessons are tough, it's for them to unfray
I look out for myself, they can do the same
No way in hell they'll get over on me

Now comes the day he meets a woman on fire
Her words match his melodies oh how they inspire
They find in each other a common desire
She sees through the lies, doesn't wince at his ire
She gives from the heart, the flames melt barbed wire
He tries to resist though her love doesn't tire
But if she knows him for real it will surely be mired
Gotta keep out her light before it gets dire
So he sets out to break her and run for the door
To treat her like dirt and then come back for more
Make her feel like his play thing
View her just like a whore
There wasn't no love just a little detour
But this woman's got somethin different in store
Unafraid of his soul and the pain that it pours
She draws on the lessons of poets before
She knows on the surface life ain't what it seems
And no matter how dark, a heart might be redeemed
She says what she sees, wears her heart on her sleeve
Then writes out their story pulled from a dream

