

The Lost List of Good Intentions

Item #1. Piano for a Bird

No matter which way they turn it,
the grand piano won't fit through
the door frame. Clearly there's nothing
for one to do now but give it away.

This is what I have supposed,
as I come sidling up to the curb
like a widow in a jewelry store,
and run my fingers across the glass

of the chipped ivory and
attic dust mahogany, before
pulling up the bench and beginning
to tap away softly at each key.

There is a small problem though.
I cannot play anything
without each note reminding me
of a different memory I never had

the chance to forget—you pecking
your poems out on a keyboard
in a soulless, sterile bookstore,
dreaming up disasters for children

to get stuck inside of. It's not
unlike you, rowing home in a lifeboat
every night with ink-dirtied hands,
and repairing silently up the stairs

to wash it all off
before anyone can see.
Did I see it?
Or was it imagined,

Berlioz, second movement,
beginning to take shape over
the creak of the wind blowing
against the hanging fire escape,

kids somewhere inside try to solve big jigsaw
puzzles titled THE MYSTERIES OF THE WORLD
and all of its different punishments
and why they all seem to appear

like day to day life, the one that was
lived without resolution, where you were
stuck at a piano bench, washing your hands
until they were clean.

Item #2. Origin Story

Water claims
human beings were invented by water
as a device for transporting itself
from one place to another.

Water hears the phone ring in her womb
and feels haunted by the hang-ups.
“We can never be together”
is a self-serving dialect, they think

at the exact same time.
Water claims
what you don't see coming
is what will change you the most.

The period drama of preordained
political pseudo-activities has nearly ended, and
I consider the relationship I once had with an outdated dogma.
Our love was ambivalently close to capitalism.

Most poetry gets lost on me
like water. I stare at the backs
of my hands with the same incomprehension
that is permeating the room

when someone's baby begins to cry
in the middle of a performance.
But someone has a wild hair up their ass
and has decided to claim it as art.

I never thought that was very fair though,
because what about all the artists
who are incapable of being incidental
in their attempts at attention?

Historically speaking, we are all criminals
in this respect.
Do not exclude yourself.
We need the numbers.

Item #3. Lion's Teeth

Nobody has ever said
I would like to grow up
to one day be a bureaucrat.

Or a sinecure; listless
at a desk in the afternoon
staring at immigrant landscapers

from an office window
like they are flowers
in a garden, wet with sweat

from guarding the marigolds
against imperialist insects,
moving across the tableau,

the manicured lawns of America
like checkers on a board
only ever vaguely aware

there's a sycophant who sits
and watches them pull at weeds
while he himself feels stuck

like a staple in a stack
of papers—sifting through time
sheets and blank accounts

receivables, waiting for someone
to come and pluck him out
of his hole like a dandelion

and help him remember when,
wiping his brow against the sun
and waiting on a gust of wind

he would hold the stem,
and watch each seed
blowing slowly away

one by one,
until he was left
with nothing.

Item #4. Learn From Your Mistakes

I'm such a mess,
if there's a crack
in the floor
I'll find it.

Sometimes I search
incontrovertibly for
things like an old lady
looking for hair in her soup.

I'll be the first to criticize
the amount of time spent
poring over pointless details,
imagining the contours of an exchange,

like they're painted on a relief map
or an itemized receipt that
life handed you after the leg work
was done, as if to say here,

it would do you some good
to learn from your mistakes.

But the biggest one
you might ever make
is trying too hard
to learn something from them,

like you're seeing cracks
in the floor
that were actually
never there.

Item #5. Untitled 404

*“There are a lot of punishments in this world
and some of these punishments look a lot like day to day life”
-Hera Lindsay Bird*

When I read Untitled 404 I think
the proper response is to quietly drink
wine from a water bottle and scream
with jealousy. I love it so much
I wish I could plug it into the wall
like my computer, staring
at it for uninterrupted hours.

We are supposed to love things
for their individual flaws,
but I see none in this long
lost list of good intentions,
or is it that I've overlooked them
because of how in love I am?

Today I spilled ink all over the floor
of the news agency. Nothing new
came from all of the times I said
I was sorry. I was in such a hurry
to get home and write this, afraid
of offering to pay for another mess
I can't afford to clean up,

afraid I'd forget everything
that I had to say. Now I don't
remember, which is all guilt does:
consume your day like a heat wave,
until it's too late to change
your shirt or your mind.

The ink is still in my fingers,
reading over everything.
One last time today, I say,
and every response that I have
to the way I feel, feels still
like it will continue to linger.