

## **Codependent**

I cried again today,  
kind of like a 4-year-old might cry:  
palms coated with tears & snot.  
It's the third time this week and  
tomorrow is only Wednesday.

Not to mention I'm a 29-year-old man  
with a wife but no clue how to love.  
Rather I've learned to belittle,  
utilizing the fewest words with  
the harshest intent. A slut-cunt-bitch.  
Slut and cunt describes the bitch.  
The bitch describes my wife.

Our photos are only mimics,  
just wall décor to humor the neighbors;  
squares & rectangles suspended above  
more squares & rectangles resting  
on these ridiculous doilies that are almost  
always synonymous with dust.

But without my wife,  
there's not much I can handle,  
just a bird caught in a room  
with a bleeding wing.  
And I am way too hysterical  
to tell you where it hurts.

## Remembering being nine

I try my best but just can't remember  
the last time I felt lucky to be an adult.

I remember when I was nine and my winning free-throw,  
how the popcorn was used for confetti,  
how the guys invited me for pizza but I was too shy to go,  
so mom treated me to McDonald's and for the rest of the night  
I took pride in pretending that I was Michael Jordan  
doing a Big Mac commercial.

These days I'm lucky just to make it through the week.  
Tomorrow is Friday but I'm terrible at optimism.  
I'd give it all for a one-track-mind: Pink Floyd on repeat.  
But sadly I dwell on anything subliminal,  
and I'll believe anything that's told.

And I remember being nine, carefully watching my father  
who's lost it all to the power of intolerance.  
I'd ask myself: how can he be mad  
in a world where a summer night  
can loosen the knots in your belly?  
I bet he's never listened to the crickets chirp  
below the glow of countless stars.  
Or let the green grass slide between his fingers  
so the moisture could soften his calloused heart,

far unlike my heart which was weak & naive but  
only when it mattered: weak when I was too scared  
to look at Playboy, and naive when I  
couldn't wait to grow up.

## Apartment 1B

The flypaper hangs like ribbons,  
catching clusters of what one might mistake for black pepper but  
is actually dead flies and the ones that aren't dead  
are feasting in my tiny kitchen.

Trash covers the countertop. The sink is full  
of stagnant dishwater—an oily film collects  
like the one on my flaky scalp and for the sake of comic relief,  
I chuck the closest object: a plastic ladle, confident it'd crack, rather  
stunned when instead it shatters a couple of stale Coronas,  
rotting limes fall on linoleum. And all the while is apathy,  
lingering with the fruit flies.

The power was cut today, 3 months past due.  
I'm not worried though, I don't need much energy.  
All I really need is to remember  
that the carpet is not the ashtray  
and at no time will my piss covered bathroom  
ever feel the urge to clean itself.

And I refuse to squander the few urges I have left  
on Pine-Sol and scrub pads and showering each day  
(underarms the smell of barbecue chips).  
I even refuse my very own mother,  
who will never refuse me,  
who falls asleep before the sun goes down and will never remarry  
as she withers with pride but still withers nonetheless,  
suffering in private just to spare me the guilt  
of the selfish and ungrateful son.

## **The human venture**

It truly is amazing,  
our journey

how we step in and not over  
how we step over and not around, or

how we change hearts entirely  
and step backwards in the sun,  
it truly is amazing

how we fall in love & fall out;  
how we fall to pieces either way

how we give in & give up,  
how we persevere and give it our all

or, how we just pretend  
the way katydids pretend they're trees

and blend with the leaves so the snakes  
can never tell the difference.