

Human Wreckage

-For a Friend

I am Human Wreckage.

Washed ashore, a shipwreck in the hall.

Hip wrecked, following a beacon of light

Emanating from a Siren's room.

I am Human Wreckage.

Seeking a lighthouse in the distance,

Pissing electrolytes out at night

In a fit of drunken lullaby.

I am Human Wreckage.

A husk for a hull, and precious cargo scattered,

Faulty medication verging 15 years

Of twitching instead of tweaking.

I am Human Wreckage.

With my nerve endings shot,

And a finger on the trigger

Of a Bic near a pack of Pall Mall's per day.

I am Human Wreckage.

And my lighter, light blue,

Looks like a fire on the water

Through my ship's telescope.

2 Introspection: 4 poems for 4 people

I am Human Wreckage.

When my light is extinguished,

More than my Captain's quarters will

Black out.

The Living Room

-For my brother's caretaker

I heard the pill bottles
Rattle when you went through
My stuff. I should have guessed

You didn't see me
Asleep on the couch; lying
In the other room, afraid
You would find me.

I feigned sleep
For three hours, in the living room.
In that time,

I heard your conversation.
"Does your sister really
Take all of these?"

You asked my brother,
Gesturing to three bottles
Of pills. "Yes".

"They're for anxiety," was
His dubious retort, made over
A bowl of dry cheerios.

(I could tell by the smell.)

“She should see a psychiatrist,
Then.” You said. And I
Wondered if you knew

My psychiatrist was my prescriber,
And nothing was OTC, or any
Of your business.

“She’s too young for
All those pills.”

I heard your closing remark,
About side effects and
Liver damage. I knew

You were concerned, and
For that I should be glad...
But it really was
None of your business.

Each time I see you, now,
I hear muffled pill bottles
-Rattle- from the

Living room.

Personal Space

-For my Father

Buried under old finances, and long forgotten high-school scholarships,
I found two yellowed pages, and a poem about space.

They compared my mother's beauty to the universe, and infinite cosmic
complexities that only my father, with his expensive telescopes and intricate
star maps, would understand.

I had stumbled into something I wasn't meant to see.

It wasn't the intimacy that bothered me, it was the sting of knowing my mother
had returned the poem; and he had kept it.

My father does not write anymore.

Gardener

-For myself

I am in the bathroom, picking at my skin again.
My eyes take in a landscape, cultivated
By the same hands for nineteen years. Determined hands;
Hands that pick and prune and hoe and till, until
They are pleased with the eroded topsoil that the
World sees. Hands that plant the seeds of
Insecurity so they may stay in business;
Hands that are not nice.

I mirror my reflection. Right hand guides
Right arm up; left hand goes to work:
Pulling dandelions out at the follicle and
Leaving behind red welts that shirt sleeves
And deodorant will cover. Meticulous compulsion
Will make them spend hours after the shower;
I move on to the next one.

Both underarms done is a pat on the back with a rake.
Grubby fingernails scrape my shoulder blades and
Take away dead leaves that accumulate during the Fall.
I flick dried skin into the sink. I blot the blood
Under my nails and watch the right hand squeeze
Another vestibule of puss, like pushing one's thumb
Against a hard-shell cocoon until it ruptures.
The butterfly inside dies. These hands are not nice.