

Sublime and Beautiful Love

Chasing Providence: An Affliction.....	2-3
Flat Worlds are Sublime.....	4
The Terrible Sublime.....	5
Marigold Blues.....	6
Not Beauty.....	7

Chasing Providence: An Affliction

I am the instrument of providence, she will use me as long as I accomplish her designs, then she will break me like a glass.

—Napoleon Bonaparte

I.

Florida soil liked accosting my feet—
the black droplets seeped through the holes in my socks.

I could smell tangerine ghosts between my toes—
I didn't take off my shoes, I didn't want to look. I cried.

Father looked down at me. The crevices around his eyes—
chiseled onto a Roman coin—deepened as he pounded the earth

with his blue anaconda feet. The colossus of my youth
yanked my crackling shoulder into his flaky metal car.

Be a man...

...rattled against my skull—the steam from the cul-de-sac
engulfed the baritone commandment. Sweat and dirt
dripped out of my stomach's folds. I stopped crying.

I let my old man have his moment,
let him continue his reign.

II.

I now see Father clearly; a picture from his coronation—
a red face matrimony—reveals a man
indulging in cathartic tears. Momma doesn't have an answer—

she looks skyward with desert eyeballs
reflecting on the horror of debunked machismo passion.

I don't always know why I cry either—
sometimes I just raise my arms, yawn, and allow the tears to fall.

During more certain times, the lachrymal salt soaks my cheeks
while I dream of Napoleon's crown—the perpetuation
of the leather bootstrap pull-up. I am moved by the myth

of anyone's empire. From Dollar Tree socks
to black booted admiral of the Gulf of Mexico

overlooking the rumbling waves dislodging
the brainstems of my old masters. Father,

III.

my classmates were ambitious too—
MBA dreamers mastering their destinies,
financing their fanciful rise, unlocking the front doors

to their misty comic book stores housing blue anaconda biceps
bursting across the clearly dictated line
of good and evil. Too many of my MBA dreamers

reel off whiskey breath flashbacks of Iraqi Freedom,
flinch from Florida's midnight lightning crackling the skyline.

*A soldier will fight long and hard for a bit of colored ribbon
and the pulsating doctrine of monetary liberty.*

IV.

I am an instrument of providence—Father died
funding my rise with life insurance, a warehouse 401k.

Maybe, one day, providence will shatter me
across her knee—the day I play master,
command my child to rise like I did.

Oh, the lure of glory—the scales across my eyes
leave me without imagination, leave me without

my plausible reality of M16 shoulder rifles,
white beams terrorizing Florida's skyline,
black droplets slithering down my face.

I would've known my father's blue eyes—
why they burst like flash grenades

across our humid winter,
across the faceless coins,
across leather bootstraps that snapped at the seams.

Flat Worlds are Sublime

He was soon borne away by the waves and lost in darkness and distance.

—Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*

An old mission is an easy sell to conquistadors in cargo shorts. I love the idea...
...my palm tree breath sweetens, sours with cannibalism. Eat more

beauty and I'll be okay, just okay, and I can't...
...I swear, I'm a conquest away from a fetal position

in marigold gardens. Dreams of redwood fences...
...rot wood vessels drift towards Eden

trapped in floating arctic islands. I will prove...
...frontiers don't just slide into the sky.

I am lost from the chase...
...purposeless without it.

The Terrible Sublime

The sublime...is at times accompanied by some terror or melancholia.
—Immanuel Kant

I don't have the palate to distinguish sweat from tears. I won't ask;
you may draw your dry erase magna opus on my white mug.

A flower bursts from the ceramic—pink petals and golden pollen
radiates the lime green grass. Truly, you don't need

to supplement the rays with your sunny inscription:
I'm a sad, sad person, so please don't take my sunshine away.

The purple rain will sprout new beginnings, new beauty—
your hedged bushes will beg me to stick around.

I can't think of anything to write, inscribe
you are a sad, sad bird.

Marigold Blues

I am a marigold shadow
shading stalks of yellow grass
against a September summer.
Don't fondle my sticky pollen—
my tiny grains will reseed
and I don't want to be moved.

Not Beauty

...the vivid sense of the beautiful reveals itself...
—Immanuel Kant

To be beautiful—
a yellow maple leaf
brushing my cheek.

The foliage is content
to fall into bed—
resigns life, resigns a will

for more. I want
to be beautiful,
want to enjoy

the easy blue
lung cat call—
the hard hat cliché,

my flouncy sundress
swirling with the wind.
I wish I liked beautiful,

liked being a rose
deprived of its thorns.
Instead, I consume fog

billowing around
the clay cliff's edge.
I fall for the thrill—

teetering pebbles,
weak legs not ready
for the precipice.

No, not beauty,
but liberation,
thin air.