

Chicken!

The most populous bird in the world is the modern domestic chicken, outnumbering humans four to one.

-- The Human League

How I yearn to praise thee, chicken, ubiquitous & invisible!

Despite the black clouds that hung over every childhood morning, chicken, you provided the staple for the wound of the breakfast table! golden yolk beaming amidst all that grief!

My sister is a vegetarian radical, chicken, she's a better person than I!

Egg, leg, thigh, & breast: to eat you, chicken, is misogynist!

After brunch at the Officer's Club on Sunday, chicken, I would watch my brothers slap each other on the face until one fell into the dust & cried "uncle". They called this game "chicken", chicken.

Chicken, do you even have meaning anymore? I think our species is doomed, chicken.

Chicken, I don't blame you for being impeccably tasty! Nor crisping so juicily in the YouTube commercial! This power dynamic makes communication impossible, chicken!

Oh, chicken! Get thee behind me!

Bless us our lord & these thy gifts, etc etc

In my mother's house, "chick" was not an acceptable term to refer to a woman, although once, holding a particularly peppery one at a 3rd grade science fair, I did think, cradling its soft, yellow feathers, grandmother.

Chicken, if you were born a coelacanth we would not be having this conversation! Or a velociraptor, for that matter!

Chicken, I have never seen you in the wild, & that makes me sad.

Chicken, is the wild still wild if a chicken is in it?

Or a human in a chicken suit, saying cluck, cluck to corporate ranchers in the rainforest?

Dammit, chicken, I'm so, so sorry. Listen, chicken: I love you.

Prodigal

Home, where are you? For even at home nobody speaks my language, nor understands my customs or the costumes of my people. I have become an alien, unable to fit in the neat categories of this house. Only in the dark cube of my room that pulses with rebellious rhythms am I safe. I sit at my desk and hold the glass wand of this pen and write such light – a vision of the world as this world will never comprehend.

*

The city's lurid as a carnival.
I seek shelter with a crowd
of misfits.
My new name is Twist. I kill
the boy who wrote with a unique perspective.
It's loud. And so must I too be loud.

*

In the mud, in the slop
is where I found the self I had lost:
it would be impossible work, the slog
back home, but the hand
that dragged me up by the hair
was merciless: It would not leave me there.

*

Death is always busy
yet answers every call
Its unknown pleasure waiting
asks but a single word of me.

*

Asks the embracing father through his tears,
"Did you find your fortune among the world's glittering islands?"
To which I replied:
"My heart now is light; its only cargo is repentance".

An Epidemic of Fire

A good boy keeps his mean mouth shut.
He is a clocktower haunted and condemned.

In not-so-ancient times we made sport of the condemned:
Kill the bear, the lion, and each other! we raved.

Maybe that's why I love a riot girl, a Pythoness who raves
and breaks up dumb thoughts as a seagull breaks down a crab.

History goes sideways, like a crab.
Yesterday a tragic man said, *I will become a fire*. His dead body's fire

gathered eyes like moths to settle on his written words. Fires
ignited in all our tinder hearts.

My mother taught me to speak from the heart,
but I disobeyed her to hold my corporate job.

Now, satans, gods, and planets are getting fired from their jobs.
The mean boy keeps his good mouth shut. Opens wide. From a condemned-face he tolls his
fire.

Judgement Day

It's the dead-weight of August when the cicadas
rise from the earth – released from the spell
of their prophetic sleep, uncoffined from their chrysalises,
unfurling from their pubescence and strange gestation –
as if responding to our low voices
wandering under the thick-thighed oaks they haunt,
wondering if they are chittering-chattering with us.
Love begets love. Sing, say
the bug-eyed muses, sing yourself to air,
and I hear the stars choir in the indigo sky –
molting, molten, wasting away – how even here,
near-naked in the city's sulfurous crush, we transform
from self-centered human, dull and guttural,
into that which is beyond the reach of language –
speechless – dying, rising in a land of famine.

Ode to Nature

for O.

sycamore
rooted in my room
i raise bones
into leafy voice.

daffodil
antique telephone.
hello, ghost?
let's set things right, pa.

tulip
cheers! it's goat-drunk spring.
here i glow
holding my cup high.

pink salt lamp
my sting is healing.
through ruin
my calm tear shines sweet.

granite obelisk
we fucked like mayflies
in your dusk.
i starved for silence.

siri
i have filled your brain
with knowledge
but no soul. speak, slave.

raven
what's my corax name?
your human?
by child's rule, we play.

squirrel
how do you tell time?
eagle screams?
oak moans? nut smells? fleas?

human
night sweats, mother's touch.
what is true?
clay, spit, love, gold. O.