

Arcane

The girl always knew north.

There is magic in knowing
the names of each bird and call.

Where the wood splits, how to skin a fish,
when the sun sets and the dough rises.

How to tuck sleep into the wailing child
or when to fold your hands and listen.

To stand before one's tribe and summon
wind with certainty.

The compass in me wavers.

The winged V in the sky sweeps south
because I heard her say so.

A woman, whole

It is only rarely that one can see in a little boy the promise of a man, but one can almost always see in a little girl the threat of a woman.

~Alexandre Dumas

How many servings?
Do not force me to say
how she is cut or quartered,
if the sweat is pat dry
and the skin gripped through a rub
or split and scored.

You want more.
The fat rendered down,
a salt cracked crust.

The meat is stubborn
and withstands the oven heat.
Withstands the flash fry.
The pan. The knife
and plate. The fork.
The hands. The fork.
The fork.

The apple in line 5 is like my heart

This isn't ambiguous like the previous poem.
This will get to the point and be in order.
It will be poem shaped and rhyme sometimes.
Also, we will mostly stick to one image.

This apple (PLU 4016) is like most apples.
\$1.79 per pound and red. You've had one of these before,
I'm sure. Inside sweet chalky white.
But it can bruise, it softens, ages from oxygen.

I want the speaker of this poem to be you
and I want to be *the you*.
Each read we pass this back and forth,
like the happy slap of an apple
landing in our palms.

Losing part of your soul to the devil at the bar

“Who holds the devil, let him hold him well, He hardly will be caught a second time.”

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, “Faust”

The devil cannot tell the truth.

Though slow to innovate,

he’s had centuries.

He sets a pint down, leans to you and says,

“I couldn’t drink a hundred more in one sitting.”

Meaning, he could – this is how he gets you.

Feeding on the doubt in your mind, it coats the blood and travels.

“I’ve been on an airplane.”

Never?

Don’t ask or think more, it gives him power.

Yet when he pulls back the tweed sleeve of his coat,

bends the padded elbow on the hard bar top,

presses a red chin in a palm and says,

“I’ve never been in love,”

you need to know when,

and who, and how,

and where are they now?

After the 33-year-old manufacturing supervisor buys a longboard on the internet

My collar is often blue
I don't recall when
or if I got to choose
the fabrics I must wear:
corduroy, chambray,
flannel, khaki, denim,
and heavy cotton blends.
A round brown shoe,
with a bloated toe
plated in steel.

This is for safety.
Watch the videos.
Take the quiz.
Sign this paper
that says you know,
that I told you so,
and it's no longer
my liability.

Of course, that's not true.
It doesn't have to be blue.
Gray, green, brown
and maroon would do.
No earrings, piercings,
wedding rings, or any ties
here by the machines.

Arcane

They could get stuck
and suck you right through.

I begin the pre-shift
inspection checklist
on the longboard.

Mild wear, but the trucks
are in order, wheel nuts tight,
Grip tape coverage passes,
the bearings spin well after
quarterly maintenance.
The PPE is free of defects.

Down the pavement I go.
Speeding on the slope
lined with parked cars,
and blind intersections
with no safety mirrors
here and between
wherever this goes.