

LOVE FOR ME IS LIMERENT THEATRE

He Said, 'I Love You, Spiritually'

Even now

I am aware of how naive I stood on the
shivering shore, bearing witness to indigo
waves signaling dusk. You emerge again
on the horizon salt-caked and shimmering
with arresting hands that reach miles
to grasp my throat.

This intoxicating moment of memory
left floating belly-up. The gulf beneath stars
moonstruck. Bioluminescence
on a creaming evening tide.

Even now

Nights of aching honey birth in me
foggy longing, like a ripening umeboshi
or walnut in my gut — still, you dipped
me in the pool hall, guiltless as a junebug.
My heart a shattered eight-ball. Through
cigarette and endlessness, yours a cruel light.

Even now

I never dance, because I never danced then.
Golden mauve was dead, and hair-pulling not nice.
I try to forget: I learn to love a new pillow,
learn thinkin' bout you on piano but when
I close my eyes burning amber
with a black locus. I spent years forgetting
how I would lay like a corpse,
how you get off on the dead.
Kissing full tongue was all cypress blue
this place, you and I with swollen throat.

Even now
I am told to take small, *you deserve only little things*.
I remember how you would shave me
with precision but even with careful hands
you left carmine blooms on my thighs.
Possessed by you I sung your name. The brevity
of my life, marred by schizophrenic worship.

Even now
I close my eyes but do not fall asleep, I am too
gentle to look grief in the face.
Burdened to sit with wistful glancing towards
the windowpane. Out the window, there is bursting
jessamine. Out the window, you are waiting —
a swallowing murmur from the trees.
Out the window, willow and hickory
stretched and mottled grey.
The pecans swell again in puddles,
how can I think of you still after five-fallings?

Elusive Pigalle Girl

he likes to tell me about
girls he wants though we
barely know each
other like the elusive
pigalle girl where he waits
hoping to run into
her but she never comes
so he sleeps with girls
who look like but dont
compare its fun to pretend
to be her but im not
even close my stomach
churns thoughts of wanting
the wanting now he messages
at 7am magnetic fields
asking to get wasted
but i cannot move my
limbs now he messages
at midnight *could you*
make me forget about i try to
reply my fingertips
weep blank space

Richard Brautigan Makes Love to my Hair

Love for me is limerent theatre, in which you perform.
How many times have I held auditions, had my own
private mourning for a role unfulfilled,
absurdist theatre: *il n'existe pas*. Yet still –

I fall in love.
Infatuated within the course of a week with:
a bartender, *the butcher*, my co-worker, *the baker*, a father,
or even the *candle-stick maker*.
One-sided, unrequited: all in my head.

It begins when,
I suck the meat from bread, and soak the heel
in olive oil, light– to ignite a spark.

I feed the hungry flames with your laughter,
imagined sideways glances, followed by
stories of how you disappointed so many
you loved. *Ambivalence.*

Then, as if scripture, I feel
my hands in your hair,
like a ghostly pain, I feel
the penis-shaped wound
inside me throb like a phantom limb.
I'm the princess and the pea for your love
I can feel it a thousand miles away.

But this is not a love song.
This is me checking your last.fm forty times.
This is wondering how you'd feel if I died.
This is hour long fantasies about how
I win the lottery and pull your family from poverty.
This is taking on entire lexicons to get closer to you,
This is intrusive dedication. *Unwanted.*

Some days I pick up Tennyson like the bible,
and ponder how I can guard myself
from chemical imbalances, *faceless destroyers*.
If life were a musical --

I have lagged in the scene
where I alone sing out an open window.
hopelessly devoted to you
I feel a miscarriage for all the love
we will never know.

You don't know the phases
of my nail-polished fingers;
if today my crescents are waxing
or waning.

You can only pretend to love me,
in my mind. Betrayed, I
sacrilegiously send songs
to someone new, songs
I used to share with you.

I'll only stay if I can smell the liquor on your breath.

Only if you leave coca-cola bruises on my body.
Only if we can pass out together in the shadow of the bed.
Only if you cover me with black marigolds and let me
leave cinnamon burning kisses on your neck.

But,
I'm just pressing two dolls
together. Love for me,
is limerent theatre, and I wonder
if I can slip out before the final act.

*When our make-believe relationship
ended, this is what I did for you.*

I smoked on an absent bench
I listened to music loud enough
to bust hymens
I did xanax with my sister
and could not stop sobbing
I set alarms to remind me to sleep
I remembered shards of dreams
in a 5am vacant lot
I smothered my face in pillows to remember
what fresh air smelt like

I did something bad
that made me feel good, *but only for a little while.*
I didn't mean to think of you thirty times today.
But when you found out,

you swooned and attached like a spirit in search
of an object to haunt you as desperate as I.

But what can *I* do when I find out
I didn't want you after all—
humiliation is a small price to pay to feel wanted.

Lichtenberg Figures, Distraught not Divine

Each afternoon strikes the hour you were born.
Here, the green pastures maketh our milk and honey affair,
each cruel reminder of a love that you scorned.

You answered, and saved me from wild oxen horns,
yet left me stranded in this valley of lilies, where
each afternoon strikes the hour you were born.

What happens when we die, will our love be reborn?
I haunt the wuthering willows with wilted prayer,
each cruel reminder of a love that you scorned.

I am a foreigner to your touch, our caress stillborn.
Yet, you left branches brazen on my breast, lightning there
each afternoon, strikes. The time you were born,

I held my breath, it is the hour that I mourn.
I cherish exile, this tomb I have become, leave me to despair
each cruel reminder of a love that you scorned.

Is love as strong as death, while jealousy cruel as a storm?
Faith lost, in death shall be restored, and achingly I am aware
each afternoon strikes the hour you were born.
Each cruel reminder of a love that you scorned.

Remnants

You are like the remnants
of breakfast — the sour half-moon
on the spoon.

No longer complete
and fallen flakes — in the oven too.

You are rubber
jellied toast with
three bites gone
you are broken
frothy shell you
are lukewarm grounds
pan scrapings softened
butter ting of spoons
acidic lactic fatty
you are silence after
speaking squeaking
of chairs with half
the morning wasted
greasy newspaper

You are what remains when I
leave the table.