

Intimate Details

it felt

like you poured gasoline
 under my skin
and then lit a match
 and watched me cook within

like you took a blade
 and cut out my core
and tossed it into acid
 before
 the blood began to pour
from my hollow chest

like I knew I was dead
 before
 I could feel pain

but I was not dead
 so I wrote

The Proposal

continuing the spirit of the moon
 it was the 4th card to fall
 you saw it I saw it too
 right before the blade hit the
 floor a jagged jagged laugh
 a ragged ragged glory

and to the men standing in a row
 with cannon balls
tearing them into—
 horses, horses
 gun powder and bitter taste
 of lead
 we crawled over them
 some of them

were moving begging
but a knife stops that
held in a lover's embrace
hand over mouth
shhh—my baby
shhh—my lady
shhh—my child

the man at the counter

may have a gun
so you have to watch his hands
keep him talking, keep

him talking
while I take care of the body
in the back, and don't
look back—sure

I love this time of year
when the trees look like blood
in speckled spots
blood-speckled yellow

did we buy food for the dog
we should
get him a new bone

the weather could not be better
wind from the north
bringing cool air on top of heat
did we bring a shovel

Mama says the kids
are growing fast
and she don't think Daddy
will last and we can't keep living
this way

and you my love
the only one I would die for
the only one I would cry for
would you cry for me

there's a black oak where
I'll meet you if we
 have to run
haven't the last few months been
 fun
I bought you this ring
I might as well give it to you
 now
 on my knees

if the first shot don't kill
 use the butt of your gun
by not giving in to tyrants

we've already won

somebody ate the moon last night

somebody got a little too drunk
 or a little too animal
 or a little too happy
 with their fingers

who would do such a thing?
take that million watt light
and grumble it down
lick, and lick, and lick it
 not able to stop
or swallow it like a bubble of gum
so much laughter after

a ghost withering through
 gave me the snitch
and what am I
 supposed to do?
knock on everybody's door
 like a Jehovah's Witness
not seeming to care

where they go to church
or if they go
just asking, first thing
out of my mouth
when they open the door
in bathrobes and curlers
with tomato sauce
on their face
and Cheetos on their fingers
looking so brutally bent
on getting back to
what they were doing
before I interrupted
with such a question?

and me, with so many
other things to do
poems to write, moments to witness
potions to mix, dishes to wash
angels to talk with
and epiphanies that will be
arriving any moment now

here I am out here
sifting the hollows
for crumbs—
crumbs that may lead
to a body
or a bloated boy
gloating because he took it
while no one else was looking?
it was right there
hanging at arm's length
about the size of a ping pong ball
more akin to ice cream
than nails
like a globe
a gear, a golden
awakening
just there
just waiting
just so dripping

in delirium
so close, so intimate
so sound

somebody ate the moon last night
and from 100 fevers
I see
popping up over houses
stammering, an S.O.S
for silent vicars

who fixes things like this?
a head chopped off
put back on
a virus leaked
a nuclear reactor
cracked and pumping
radiation into the pool

the turtles trapped in plastic
the bellies of birds on the
beaches
inside bones
that were moving, thriving
living praise of creation
full of bottles and buttons
and beads and brave
attempts to learn
to turn with progress
does the future taste
like anything our
DNA has known?

Somebody ate the moon
last night

And so far, no terrorist group
has taken credit
no news crews have shown up
to get
to the bottom of this

maybe if no one says anything
if no one notices
it will go away
that hole
where the moon was

I mean, did we really need it?
was it all that special?
couldn't we get by without it?
without its
brackle and brickle
and crackle and crickle
and tugging of tides
phasing and phasing out
cross puppet?

somebody ate the moon last night
left half a can of beer
on the mantle
swallowed that sucker
and then went somewhere
and passed out

so we must examine the tape
the phone records
stop all
incoming and outgoing
traffic
hope for the best
plan for the worst
and learn what it is like
to live in exile
to expect the unexpected
to drive the nail home

to begin with the sober truth
like finding blood on a bumper
and retracing last night's steps
sweet peace of saints
what will we do now?

Reminiscence

the way the corner of
your lip curls when you smile

we were lovers in the fight

days like tambourines and
church bells
nights like silk
flavored ice
tomorrow we'll be home
tomorrow we'll be leaving
tomorrow we'll be gone
again

and all this brokenness dissolve
into the river
with the sinking body
with the rising of the heart
moon over Mississippi
old winos sleeping
on the steps of the mission
leaving them new bottles
for their dreams

you humming that old song, Virginia
and your breath
slow and easy
before this thing we do
for our children
to strike back at the wicked ones
to take back our dreams
to take back our religion

soft, pain in the cracks of my skull
falling on a blade
thrown into the air
by the gods against me
by the dreams resist me

and circling like centipedes

curling up in rings in
the rain

there you are again
I want you here but then I think
about the betrayal the betrayal
the trust that is missing
or was it ever there

In the Shape of a Kiss

there's a sweetness in this room
a kiss from the mouth of a river of light
with roots springing under
covering the blade of fear
like a vine of scarlet tendrils
lacing itself around
the sharp truth
the things that cut

and there are flowers
beautiful fragrant flowers
at soft places
in return
and a whiskey burn
that got better
a soft handwritten letter
a soldier of crystalline Jew
tears in a torpor
protocol

sage burned
cold dark geranium
smelling of earth
see the swiftness of angels
we hear the prodigal lift
and fall of surrender
now capable of joy
the swollen tide of celestial favor
poured out

yes, I wanted to know

why I became so different
hard to generate in being
but my voice, a pretense, a solid crumble
of some other voice
I thought I knew

I tap into the turnstiles
I see the rage rising in the boat
and throw out the diamonds
that were weighing it down

I saw in my dream
how the two of us could make it better
how the song could be weather-proofed
soaked in blue flames
inspired
a rat-a-tat-tat
the notes spill on the mat
land in the cover of silence
I wrestle away soft favor
soft mystery
soft acceptance of all
of our wishes
plum sweet
sweet plum kisses
I roll over in bed
and wrap my arms around
the air, pull it in closer
and give it to my heart
I deserve this love
I employ this love
I am this love
in the shape of a kiss