

Where the Scorpions Hide

Crawlers!
Alit in blue florescent,
blended against the creases,
tucked beneath the tongues of cast-away sneakers,
glowing!

I have been searching for you
since I first learned how memorable your sting:
liquid fire I want to feel, but fear;
protect myself
with clapping shoe bottoms and flat-souled
stomps.

Wary.
Close enough to stay distant.
Reveling in darkness
that irks but compels me.

Tip-toed scared, I scurry
past those arachnid wardens lining the edges
I warned myself I should avoid.

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The basement closet across from the bathroom
buzzes electric—
fluorescent overheads signal life inside:

I find her
crouched beneath the bulbs' blue haze,
pen high, ready to red-ink proposals.

We call this closet an office
and we've put the grant writer inside.

Each day she slinks unseen
down the back entrance stairs
to her lair of singular projects and silence.

Her hours—
defined by words; reliant on story.
She's an artist

with a rusted out Corolla and a hand-me-down desk.
Part-time; half my pay.
No PTO like me—

I lead:
Sit headtableseen;
I move bigshoedloud! I
have arrived.

I don't belong here—

My inbox dings
the reminder my value lies
where numbers graph my worth, but

I'm captured by the hush that seeps
from this quiet space adorned
in due dates and ideas.

I'm hypnotized—

Like a child again
toeing the margins of the Off-Limits places
where the scorpions hide.

Oh! I envy your clawed confidence, closet dweller.
Sprawled close—
poised for catching life.

Let me taste the tip of that birthright
burden, writer.

Creep!
Crawl inside me!

Take me to your quiet creases
and I'll give you *all*
my shoes.

Did You Hear the News?

The week we lost the queen,
no one could find me.

I was away
foraging early urban apples, late-life plums, and Chicken of the Woods.

I was alone
but for the salmon-feathered cranes bugling their camouflaged presence through the cattails.

I was distracted
by the outstretched ruby necks of the conversing Green Heron across two lifeless cedars.

I was too busy
waiting for the dragonfly's neon emergence dangling dangerously close to the water's edge.

I missed the desperation
of my phone's ringing grasps for my attention.

And then,
(you'll never believe this),

they held
the funeral
without me!

Blue Trees

I've
 never much
 understood Lego instructions
 or even the brains of children who understood
 why the white blocks really *must* touch the blue blocks, or why
 they'd even work that hard for a motorcycle in the
 first place. I've actually always hated
 Legos, but in a pinch, no
 better
 options,
 I'd
 build
 blue
 trees.

I've never
 much understood
 me. Why
 I couldn't just love to
 play like the others.
 That simple joy of
 connecting the colored pegs like
 the paper
 work
 said.

But
 I guess
 maybe
 some
 of
 Us
 just
 need
 to
 hate
 Legos

because one of us must be ready to show them how to grow rivers of blue trees.

**Reflections from the rented
room at 7 Saxton Street**

I wonder if I'd just been told
around two decades ago,
back when I was cheeky-bold:

You're trapped, Soul. Find poetry.

I wonder if it would have taught
me to take slower morning
walks, bypassing years of naught?

Striving is not freedom's key.

Poetry is

how souls

fly

free.