

Rain Song

Once, I had prayed for rain,
On a Houston afternoon when the sky was
green,
And wind swept up the potted plants,
When down-stream rivers ran still,
So as to say they did not run at all—
Sing, muses, of the prayer I sang;
Once, I had, prayed, for rain.

A Copy

Catastrophe deterred
is an invalid
A sculpted figurine; a copy
I did not know that life was easier blurred
I was so insipid
Only in dreams; a copy
Remember when the wild flowered
With all we did...
Consolation, my darling. Leave me-; a copy
The vacuum demurred
You whine like a kid
That's not me; a copy
If only I was preferred
Time permitted
Empty bones. I feel; a copy
Longings stirred
I made my bid
With time its just-; a copy
All the skill and still; not cured
That I return omitted

All of you only; a copy

Half Dream

“She blushed and looked at him as the garden flowers look at us when we walk forth happily among them in the transcendent evening light: is there not a soul beyond utterance, half nymph, half child, in those delicate petals which glow and breathe about the centres of deep colour?”

-George Eliot

What of the pillar of salt?
That pillar of man-made-flesh,
Desire half-stone?
Propped up, half-arm, like
A tree, roots under-hung like
The mischief of a planetarium,
Gently sloping down to two
Downy-pale, snow-plowed hills,
patterned like the portrait of a quilt

What of the pattern-stamped
Eye on my neck?—like an
Elephant’s trunk— scraping
Away flour like a baker, cake
Tin. Eye, opening and closing
Like the mouthpiece of a lady,
A duke, some woman, half-man,
Some dream, half-dream.

Prom Queen

Put me in the line of fire
With his hands around my hips
Come again, on the frosty window pane
Maybe next year, I will have a date
I said tangled rivers
And how I would bring him
down to the football field,
and running, the bottom of the hill
Imagine me twisted and woman-girl
Lips against, fishing-lined
In the silhouette of ballerina
And a false-haired pirouette
Another day and my statue not in vain
Merchant of Venice, Milo of Venus,
Cut and jagged
Pink candle and chaplain-bodice
Plastic thigh and purple nylon boots
And his passion rising
At my keychain-charms, not in vain
But the guide-lines of a weapon
Blueprinted and his hand on my thigh
Under the night
Grinding on me around the others as the
room swayed
And my gums whirred
My body not in vain
But a pilot, in the perchance
Of a plane.

Cigarette

Yesterday I ate a cigarette
Dangerous worm who burnt my throat
Painting that filter blue

Here now I felt that spitty mix
Of not-colors in my stomach—
My not-stomach on fire

I lined my linings with burnt sepia
If I could cut that thing in half
With a rigid implement
And shave my neck like clay
While thinking of horse hair
And my bubbling flame
Under the white lighter someone would call
blonde

In the dark I am/was pushing
My finger hard into the spiked circle
And sliding on slides with a click
And a paragraph

And silly emo kids pass their hands
Over flames in the dark
Thinking that's what I am:
A flame in the dark
Well they know that you can put their fingers
together
And mimic a gun or put it in your
Mouth and think of swallowing a cigarette- a
pill
Or you can push your fingers back and call
it a bluff

And unbridled cigarettes burn houses
Houses, once unbent like I-arsony,
blasphemy
Could a gun pierce my wrist?
My ear and love and bullets

I felt like getting high

And here I lie
Down in the plane of inverted vomit-Sargent
Rolled in, rolling my rug over me
And swallowing

Adaptation

In place of my desire which we drove on
In an open-back convertible—gray— no,
silver—
No gold; a trans-am which we drove on like
Lewis and Clark—no, Bonnie and Clyde,
How we sped faster and faster like Jesus
Standing on a pair of flying ducks—no,
brought
horizontal like the Virgin Mary on a
threesome of
Siberian huskies—no!— tigers,
How we sped hurtling to that edge like a
cliff—
no, like the rock-faces bosom, careening
down—
no, jumping down—no, sweeping down,
down,
down, they laid us out like Barbie—no,
Paper—
no— Amish, faceless, wasteless,
tasteless—no,
wax! Like wax dolls: in place
Of my desire which we drove
On like wax dolls, wax dolls
Wax dolls!

My Headache

My headache is my prince;
“you need to ground yourself”
the therapist said to me—
I moved from a downwards-facing
corpse pose, I moved onto my knees—//
“take a knee,” my coach once said,
“or sit down”—// I bowed, dragged,
pushed my fingers out in front of me
like an island seamstress, sowing
the idolator’s coin— it was marine

My headache is my headache
because I worship it like a fiend;
Imagine my horror when I clawed
each woodpecker from another
one of those dead trees that
the lantern flies had consumed inside
and out—how they consoled
me by lifting their wings and shaking
their maroon spines
flapping each spoon with a
clickety-clack-croon;
Each conciliatory nod was
always another joke about doom

My headache is molded like a cylinder;
each wooden couplet sanded down,
a plywood tenner,
how I dance with smoke to make some
sort of sad croak
about a Rastafarian lost in the
desert—you untie their
dreads

My headache is played on the finely
tuned chords of emotion; now each
metal string is wasted on a bass,
each arpeggio scourged in the lower
octave, the sound of westerns, Charlie,
and the paneled doors that swing:
Señorita!

My headache is my headache and I
shall never give her up—she sways
in sine waves, each new sidewalk
step is paved. Every motion in
my mouth is something like a memory
of fried chicken and rice—// my uvula
has the spelling of a line through it
and smells like Payne’s Gray putty
in the solar plexus of my soft palette

And my headache is like a deity,
like Christ, who is passionate.
with an electric accordion, Gary
will play Mr. “Don’t Cry” comma
Jesus another passion, impassioned
Imprisoned, unbidden, impassionate
“Won’t you Gary?” the sea sponge
rung, floating in 1, 11101, non-binary the
Chinese executioners wand, the
Orient?

My headache only likes even numbers;
I take my open oath under the sky,
With my hand above my heart, I raise
It, the hand that winks at you, at me
Looking like an open eye; a Sikh’s
headdress would be acceptable too,
to my headache, my headache, my
headache whom I love, who I shall
never leave and who shall never leave
me—the truest of friends, allies,
equals—we are so happy!

Red Apple

At the cadence of a hoof beat
Canterly, danterly, spangled
and spanterly— a' hunting we will go

The drum-beaten-melodied-rouged-red
Brick rolling across the garden
In well ordered, neatly commandeered,
Pond-placed, and long-faced lines.

Red bricks at the flush of a face
Chagrinned, and trussed like a thanksgiving
turnkey, whored up
On the table, lips cardinally and chemically
Effaced

Seized in rosettes of red-blue-green
Leaves in sets of the singing queen,
tumbling down to the castle of despair—
green-blue-red; a' hunting we will go

Untangled and mumbled, the straight-
lined satin of well ordered hair,
Plaited and d'or-ed with 'the last
Thing this family could afford'

To swing that dandelion-ed wine
Enguirlanded with Persian rugs
And enslaved with rubies over the
Edge of a cliff— to hold the
Wall with a tripping tongue

Enguirlanded, enfractalled,
Tumbling down to the castle of
Despair, eyes-wide, pale faced,
Echo-chambered, blue lipped,
Pink-pussied

Murdered and congratulating
Shaft— carnation tipped, blue
undies, lace-lipped, steered in
the direction of a post partum

pride—insanity—a' hunting we
Will go

Hoof beat—knife beat— drum beat
Lolita awakens—her teeth
Unravels and unsung in leaves of
Grass

Sleeping Lolita, filtered and
Spinning, funneled down the
Cotton highway, fennelled with
Sheets of paper-frosted glass

laid down on potato-sack-
ramskin rug and trapdoor-linoleum

and cried.