

The Performance

I've never gotten the hang of this tongue;
reed thick it blasts notes like a muted clarinet
and the songbird song
of peers in conversation is tantamount to the buzzing of the windchimes
long since clanked.

And yet the page seems so inclined to listen.
As pen by pencil loops the words tightening around each
line breaks silence and I am snatched up
by talon and by tone:
a soaring stillness breached by the whistle scratch
upon the page.

And then I go to speak,
breath heavy,
fighting the gravity of the open diaphragm.
The bass drum booms into the throat.
I swallow and all or nothing breaks my slapdash semi-sweet semi-smile,
gangly arms shaking un-feathered,
this mouth, a beak, unfit for the curvature of words
and page-less and word-less
I borrow an excuse to leave the stage.

Love Poem

“one upon the other...
lips meet,
eyelids brush,
and you feel it in your very soul...”

Another damned love poem

“And I couldn’t give a damn!”
The same spittle from ears overflowing
with miraculously vinegared honey.
The siren song of car crash,
the horn billows violent in the breeze from the neighbors next door.
The quilt from which you forgot to remove that final pin
you relearn how real a pain in the ass can be.

Your aged eyes are hazy from glaring at the screen,
your back is tilted and wildly unstretched.
And their hands are in each other’s again,
you rub below your frames and glance up to see
if they were ever separated from their
three other torpidly slow unions.
Like cymbals in the hands of a tightly wound toy,
their meeting cacophonous and explosive
bursting your ears and already overwhelmed brain.

The pace of love was the speed of blood
but now it ebbs by like time spent in a spreadsheet.
It’s been a while since you considered the romance
that is spelt out in the blanket page.
You wrap yourself deeper in your tea bag
and wait for the melting wax of bawdy symphony
to finally uncover its rest.
The kiss is never true, and never lasts,
and smells like wilting rose petals
as far as you’re concerned.

But somewhere beneath the itching skin, you know,
That each thought was coaxed lovingly to life
by some burning, boiling brain
like the slug you pulled from salt
who is now well-fed, and curious, and Jim
from the mason jar dwelling on your desk.

You watch him bubble his way up the leaf,
humming a tune in sign language with stilt stretched eyes,
he munches, more than happy.

“intertwined...
two as one,”
A mass of pulsing flesh
“this love...”

A Nasal Take

I wonder if our obsession with cleaning
has killed the mixing of scents.
I have walked by bakery, fountain and dump
in the span of four minutes.
I am assaulted by the bead of flowers,
By the brush of exhaust.
Even sweat belongs to the frightened animal,
darting out the house, around the block,
and back home.
Shower! Quick! Else that scent might be seen by
the boxed up, those few we still are willing to meet
in the grandstanding smile of the camera.

I know intrinsically, the motion of the scent,
like fire wafting from some unbidden source.
I stand in the arsonry of sensation,
the flames of the wood burning stove
shoving bagels up each nostril.
I am being tailed by the stench of
the overzealous application of balsamic vinegar.
Once the Windex and Hertel, the Dawn, the Tide, the 'Breeze
Lysol, Head and Shoulders, spitting natural and pure,
have all accumulated in every crevice, every crease
the war is over, finished, done,
I'm left to wonder on whom it was waged.

I am newly surprised by the thickness of scents
bath salts and toothpaste, old boots and rusting keys.
I'd pay for the hit of sawdust that crawls unexpected,
the suburbanite rotting of basement books and carpet stains.
I am kidnapped by the smell of nostalgia,
from body, torn to the freshly printed newspaper.
Don't be fooled by the criminal nature of the nose,
don't fall back to the stale water and grinds.
The smell-less remains will decorate the bedspread,
Fashionably covered in hibiscus and deodorized by
the exact same antiperspirant
that I have used since I was twelve.