

Soul Merchant

I once loved a soul merchant.

I found him years after he left the shadow of his father's checkbook,
and the midnight kisses of his mother's silent love.

He was poor, proud,
and I turned all of his lies into promises.
Not because he asked,
but because my time was already spent lying to myself.

He sprinkled my thoughts into rolling paper,
and offered the smoke as a sacrifice to the sky.
He told me I smelled like revival.
I told him revival smelled like shit.

He stood on street corners in clothes fashioned out of burned books.
Bartering with a sea of people for the untapped resources they provided.
"How much for your disdain Sir?"
"Miss, allow me to take that fear off your hands."
"What part of you do you hate most? Let me have it. I'll give it a good home."
Most people offered themselves to him freely.
Making him the tycoon of unexplored emotion.

My merchant was the master of his trade.
His free provisions became an intimate currency.
He vowed he would make us rich if I would give him give a piece of me for free.

"Let me multiply you.
I will make you vast."

He bought my love
for the staggering price of brown liquor,
and traded parts of me with merchants and clients alike.
I would see strangers wearing my fears and desires on chains around their
necks and wrists.
I heard a young girl tell my first memory,
I heard an old man whisper my name as his dying breath.

"Names that you truly love are hard to come by my dear. He needed yours."

I became his personal mine.
The deeper he went the redder the ruby.

I am barren.
I watch others raise my hidden treasures as their own,
and cringe at the names they gave them.

I once loved a soul merchant,
but now we call it a partnership.

He only tells me "I love you" in my dreams
and only touches me when he is drunk on the sad thoughts of others.

He says it is safer this way,
and I believe him.
Because belief is the only part of me he left whole.

I Talk About That Boy Like He's Mine

We wrote our promises to each other on brown paper sacks
and used them as life support.
Breathing in your handwriting until all I could taste were your misspellings.

How we are Hungry

When there's a lull
Sweet Girl,
In life or in song

Count the blond hairs that grow faintly across your arms and chest
name them--

Because it's the invisible parts of you that sing the loudest.
Too bad you're the only one who can hear them,
too bad you destroy them at the root.