

Lucid Dreaming.

### **When Memories Come Calling.**

I should be doing chores, but instead I am wielded to my couch waiting for my abandoned to-do list to scream louder than the ghosts of my childhood, that demand my attention. Hungry, neglected children. My memories pool around me, like the melting ice cream in the ceramic bowl on my coffee table. I bite my nails, not realizing, undoing two weeks of careful trimming and filing. My nail biting habit was a product of my anxiety, the first outward sign of my pessimistic foresight. Well, other than the tears on my pillow, as I cried myself to sleep worrying about global warming, terrorists, and the starving children displayed on the glossy pages of The National Geographic. I gnawed on my nails like a rat trying to escape a cage and in later years I'd come to see my body as that cage, no longer gnawing, but cutting my way free. My toes are dug into the carpet, feet stretched out now, as if poised to run. Another time, another day like this one, found me ignoring my chores in favor of my latest collection of library-borrowed books, a happier reason than most I have today. Apathy consumes me, a fat woman eating cake. I wonder if I taste like chocolate, or perhaps a lemon pound cake, like the one I made last weekend. The phone is ringing and I am pulled out of my own mind, long enough to glance at the Caller ID. I remember when most did not have it, even my family. You answered and hoped it was not a telemarketer or some lonely relative who would not stop talking. How strange it is now, being able to reject a caller without preparing awkward excuses for after you pick up the phone. I see it is a friend, but I press the "End" button to silence the ringing. Probably wants to talk and get my advice, but what do I know? I have not even done my dishes. Instead, here I sit, wondering when it was that I learned that monsters are real, but don't live under your bed? Perhaps most suffer from nostalgia, but nostalgia this is not. I breathe deeply, not so much for relaxation but to remind myself that I am still here. Even though I am lost in pet graveyards, toy dinosaurs and the occasional Barbie. Tired of my own brooding, I lurch to my feet and start towards the door. I don't know where I am going, but my feet want to walk and I feel as if I am following them. My to-do list is but a whimper in my subconscious, as are the dishes that I left to drown in soapy water, scrub brush bobbing crazily, like a buoy in the bay.

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From my pillow, my mind has projected a scene that my body cannot enter,  
for only dreams can live there. Diaphanous, out of reach, yet they are more alive than I,  
in my world of warm flesh and solid shapes that cast shadows into the sphere  
to which our dreams must flee. Color has no name and time has no measure,  
but scents burst forth, lilies on the breeze, and sounds hang in the stillness  
like handkerchiefs on a clothesline. My solitary passage through weed littered yards  
and forgotten grounds is surrounded by a sheet of night, and dusky shapes that twist from  
within, writhing to escape the tangled borders that imprison them. A moon lies in a cradle  
of clouds, threads of moonbeams spun on midnight's spindle, woven into a cloak that drapes  
my frame. A whisper of moth wings, soft as a longing breath, float somewhere above me  
in the star-studded sky. A chill, a shiver, shakes me to my ivory bones and my breath  
is suspended in the boreal air, like a tuft of fog that crawls from between stilled lips.  
The retreating moon casts a pattern filtered through the gnarled branches of the  
groaning trees, spindly shadows on the ground, while the stillness is rippled by  
a keening wind. I am tossed into the darkest corners of my mind, but before light  
can cast its truth, I reach upward as though drowning, and wake within a twist  
of sheets encasing me like the shroud of a corpse.

### **A Taste of Summer.**

Barefoot summers on a dusty road,  
foggy mornings from my bedroom window,  
the scent of lilacs on the mountain breeze  
anticipating blackberries on the tongue.

My tangled gold hair pushed back,  
away from my face,  
bucket hooked over my arm,  
I press forward through the bushes  
though the thorns bite my ankles.

The thickened soles of my feet,  
do not fear the sharp little teeth,  
but the tender skin of my leg  
does not fair so well.

I reach out to grasp a cluster  
of sun-warmed obsidian gems,  
their sweet juices nearly bursting  
from within each seeded globe.

The first few berries plunk into my bucket,  
but the next handful I cannot resist.

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I press them to my mouth,  
tasting sour-sweet and sun.

An hour or more passes,  
but I do not have a taste for time;  
only for my berries, the sun,  
and mud-pies under the porch.

When the air feels cool on my skin,  
I reluctantly end my harvest.  
Noting that half of the berries picked  
were stored in my belly, not my bucket.

I show my treasure to my mother,  
who ignores my purple stained skin  
and reddened lips around white teeth,  
while transferring from bucket to serving bowl.

The sun is setting outside kitchen window,  
my feet are dust covered and juice dotted.  
My belly is full and content,  
for I have tasted the first taste of summer.

I am grown now, and it has been  
many summers since then,  
that my feet have touched  
graveled road or berry thorns.

Now I welcome summer  
by turning on the air conditioner  
and bemoaning the humidity,  
what it will do to my hair.

Time seems to hurry without me.  
Gone are the days when time was counted  
by berries picked and mud-pies baked,  
now I count by ticking clock.

The only picking I do now  
is from shelves and bins  
at our local grocery store;  
is this bruised, what's on sale.

But every now and then,  
I pass the display of overpriced  
fruit; berries stored in boxes,  
bucket picked by someone else.

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I choose a box of blackberries,  
raising them to my nose, checking  
for freshness out of habit,  
and plunk them into my shopping cart.

Within me, a small golden  
haired girl leaps with joy,  
anticipating blackberries  
on the tongue.

I close my eyes amidst a sudden  
lilac breeze and fog that kisses my skin,  
and I wiggle my shoe-shod toes,  
imagining the feel of dusty road.

At home in my kitchen,  
I pick a berry from its box  
and press it to my mouth,  
tasting sour-sweet and sun.

There are no berries left  
when my husband comes home,  
but my belly is full and I am content,  
for I have tasted the first taste of summer.