

Poetic Fusions and Sonnet Variations

MY SONNET'S VOICE

To be a "true" sonnet, must I not have some rhyme,
And beat with a rhythm, one two, and one two,
And illuminate love, and keep iambic time:
Three four and five six, after seven I'm through?

*Now I should start and step quickly, and take from your eye
Deeper than bone a flame-starting caress
That leads poems like me to a sheet to draw nigh,
As you whisper: responses can only be Yes
But I'll putter and patter, pull back from your touch,
Recede from your pen, will not over-expose,
If you don't see when you are asking too much
(and too quickly), not allowing me No's.*

When I'm ready to give birth to our word-based romance?
I'll Yes forge my feet ready and undress for our dance.

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“TRANSLATING-WHAT-I-HEARD-A-POET-SPIT” SONNET

[for MK Asante]

Woke up end of summer, claimed victory.
Bloody-warred summer, dint make no sense to me.
They said it couldn't be done, but we done done done it:
Turned their bloodied summer into poetry.

See, their manchild killin' ways just wasn't meant to be,
Nor their triumphant, self-centered trumpin' goin' on,
Nor their new Jim Crowin' in old penitentiaries.
We used spittin' word swords to cut that stuff down.

We spit for our cousins, booked across three wars,
Banged a left at every light and we spit some more –
For our sisters, brothers, mothers, yeah, we evened the scores,
Redefined summer time, honored ancestors.

So yeah, that's what's up with summer time and me.
Nothin' much, 'cept my spitting claimed victory.

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WASHINGTON DC: A SOUL-LESS CITY

Here, in this politically urban sea of fleeing illusions
and fleeting superficiality, along vendor-guarded streets,
I search street-wise eagle-eyed for the shine of a perfect pair
of earrings, the pair meant for me to claim and to claim me.

In the flow of this surface-city's toxically glazed days, yes,
I am determined that a perfect shine will emanate
From the glittered weight of evenly spaced
Intricately designed suggestive textures.

Like obscenity, I will know it when I see it, just as I taste
the substance of this city surviving in underground
ever ebbing colors painting the meaning of the dusky lives
kept hostage here, treading to survive in transitory gleam.

Wearing my earrings when they're found I'll then worryingly wonder
about my reflections in the waves of women washing by me lifelessly.

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CHANGING PRIORITIES OF “POETESSES”

They pondered their choices: Stay with men,
Or re-submit to Poetry’s demands again.
Men? Who dependably drop them down
Into wells where cold waters drown

Their souls yet never quench their thirsts?
No. They shivered at that. Their first
Priority with all its risks would be
To re-connect with Poetry,

To wrap their calloused hands around
The pulsing torso of word sounds,
Entwine their toes with metric feet,
Snuggle with raucous rhyming beats,

And massage the metaphors. Only then,
Collaterally, would they consider men again.

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OH! ROSE! SO NOT A ROSE!*

Oh! Rose, that blooms precociously and fades long
before the morning dew, from stem to petal not given
to permanency, with lack of passion in your song~
your gray ash bloom does not evoke sweet heaven.

You must know that lava and not love will flow
from you, dooming heartbreak as the hot slide
Of your burning ash and hell-spewing glow
Covers a lover's path on life's mountainside.

Oh, Rose! with your paltry bloom prematurely born,
Pushing passion upward, outward, before its time,
Releasing a wilting scent above your stem of thorns~
White putrid fuzz will top your unnatural decline.

Expect, oh Rose, to be exposed when the world turns up its nose
At sweet turned stank, and un-names you as Oh! So not a Rose!