

SIXFOLD SUBMISSIONS: POETRY (THREE POEMS)

“headlines from the junkyard”

I read in the news today that it's the worst time in history to be in your twenties
and though I can't reasonably say my life would be much better
at the start of World War One or Two or Vietnam
or that I'd prefer an H-bomb over a virus
I will say I never thought I'd lose Roe v. Wade

I fell in love for the first time and that was beautiful
but then I lost my job and he lost his ID and let me tell you the DMV doesn't care if you cry or
even get down on your knees and beg for a chance
you just gotta have an address on your bank statement sir that's just the way it is and yes they
know nobody gets paper mail from the banks anymore but they don't really care and why would
they
no one can afford to risk unemployment these days

like Bonnie and Clyde at the scene of the crime
I slid my hand into his coat pocket and we slipped away
the only thing that would have made us feel any better was if we had been on horses
in our own spaghetti western
but then I'm reminded I was never taught how to ride

we watch as kings and queens are rebuked for thieves
so maybe I don't want to be a “good example”
I've personally learned more from the bad ones
see a good one would tell you not to do drugs
but a bad one would say just make sure whoever's giving them to you does them *first*
and that tip might actually save your life
at least that's what I read in the news today

“heels on cobblestone”

satin sheets for those who don't change after the party
and the afterparty becomes beers on the back porch of a stranger
long ago was the night you once were
candy pink lips stained pinot noir

sunglasses help for a smoke break in the bathroom
lock the doors and summon the woman with the blotting papers and a pinch of cocaine
enough for a true swan and too much for the dogs outside

one brow arched to the man who has no quarters
hands this cold must be alarming
the pool table buzzes well beyond midnight
as we feast on pizza leftover from the art show
a goodbye is adoring to the ears of summer slumber

“where is misogyny”

it's in the stains on our clothing from a problem you never had to deal with
it's in the movies we grew up watching, fetishizing, romanticizing, glorifying our trauma
caught on 35mm film and now in technicolor
and we gave them precious Oscar awards
we showered them with gold

it's in the hours spent combing, brushing, plucking, shaving, curling, polishing
to shapeshift into a desired, no, demanded perfection
oftentimes to impress you, achieve a status rating of good enough, to earn acknowledgment
for some women—and by some, I mean about 736 million—anything to avoid violence

it's in the songs on the radio
the ones we still know by heart, the karaoke favorites
abuse allegations are just part of the ride
I find it sometimes in myself, disguised as a preference or a rule I have not before questioned
suspicion of the self splinters the brain
am I secretly evil?
am I unwittingly insane?
I cry from the shame and embarrassment and ridiculousness of it all
then someone calls me out
“stupid bitch”

it's in the anger that you treat like some sort of joke
it's in the pain that you tell me I'm faking
that I myself treat as a part of my comedic routine
it's in my head all of the time, lying next to me like a lover
it weaves into the fabric of clothes, clinging onto the fray

it's in the books we read, classics and contemporaries
they're going to hate me for saying this but it's even in the Bible
written into the laws of the country I live in, one that once prided itself on freedom
almost becoming a sign of the times
so for the last time, I'm not asking you or begging you but demanding that you don't dare tell me
that misogyny doesn't exist