

Where does love rest?

Love is that moment when
The body softens into the soul
And the mind turns into rain pattering from the gutters after a storm.
Dripping onto the pavement
That may be saturated;
But the streams fall into the cracks,
Where the worms rest beyond eyesight.

I file up the walkway when you're away,
Open the door and
You're the light switching on at the end of the night.
You're the shadows under the staircase as I creep to bed.
You're the thoughts in my head as I'm getting undressed asking myself
"What's next?"
You're the feeling of safety as I wrap the sheets around me.

You're the fire in my belly as inspiration hits.
Hours pass when I should have been asleep.
You're that relenting acceptance laughing
"You can think of poems in the morning."
But my mind is stubborn
I go into the Notes App and write a line so
This one
Isn't lost into the ether of night's end.

You're the Sun waking me up on a day I don't need to set an alarm.
Through the cracks in the curtains
You still seep in.
Reminding me the bed is cozy
But the world is waiting –
Not for me –
I'm waiting around to take part in it.
Because this is the most beautiful time of day
Beauty where you don't have to say anything
When you hit the leaves and glisten like a chandelier...

Damn,
Wait,
Let me stop myself:
Am I idealizing?
You are not my light
And I am not the darkness you fill.

Not only is that dependent
But,
Frankly,
It's a simplistic dualism.
You bring balance,
But I am not an extreme.
It's a disservice to the both of us
To make you the in-between moments –
The ones that glue life together — when
You're the times when I marvel at the force of the monsoon
Instead of intellectualizing my way around it.

But I am soaked.
I need to get home before I catch another cold.

You're in each moment –
The underpinning –
The tether that reminds me of who I am and where I came from without seeing it.
No map needed:
Left up ahead.
Looking through the window from the outside
I realize I left the light on.
The shadows creeping show me you've come home.
And the door is unlocked because you saw me running up.

You meet me in the doorway exclaiming:
“Why didn't you bring a rain jacket or check the weather?”
“I was floating...”
You laugh in that way you're giving space,
Not taking it.

So,
What's next?

Fresh clothes and a few hours explaining our days.
We weren't there for either of our respective moments
But with the distance gained
In our words and nods
We are cultivating
An us
Between where our eyes have met.

Not the in-between
But the resting place.

After laughs and tears your head rests on my chest with silence.
You don't know how my past felt –
Nor I yours –
But we listened in the present.
Is that my heartbeat melding with yours or is thunder cracking?

Even when the rain gets louder
And down a bolt comes knocking trees,
And the lights start to flicker
Until they go out entirely,
I'll start holding your hand as we find the candles.
Because this may be fleeting
But you remind me
Life exists with both my feet on the pavement
And we can create something step-by-step
In the soft mud beyond eyesight.

Dynamic

The desert isn't desolate:
A western idea to assume
If processes aren't obvious
They're unimportant.

The saguaro isn't stunted
Because it grew a few inches in ten years.
It's gradual –
Not incremental
Like 2050 goals in a twenty-year drought –
It's emergent
Like the blooms fruiting then falling to the ground without harvest;
The wind carrying a seed to the safety of a Palo Verde's canopy;
One monsoon balancing a summer of 110s.

An ecosystem's interactions are not superficial:
Microbes beneath the soil mean as much as the Sun.

Integration

False scarcity:

A learned habit of always looking for purpose outside of me.

Who knew all this time

Abundance was the current inside that underpinned this life?

But

Not mindlessly expansive to no end,

This isn't a buzzword to excuse

Unhinged individualism.

Abundance rests in the learned responsibility to live every moment

Unhindered by grief,

Or, really, giving the room to also let love and trust in.

After the breeze softens

The grass continues to

Oscillate and when it

Nears a stop

A bird lands on a stalk to peck at its capsules.

Personally, I've been learning thoughts create action,

And with a reorientation I am

Examining what it means to feel worthy in place.

I'm letting go of second guesses -

I pose the question then

"One two three GO!"

What was that first thought?

Quiet and unsuspecting before drowned out

By a loud

"Should have."

Actions then create habits,

So I am reevaluating

And challenging my lack of trust that bred self-destruction -

With a few motions to go -

I contemplate sober behind the remnants of smoke.

"It's not as bad as it used to be!"

There goes a rationalization

Lacking compassion towards grief.

I am recalibrating to step into the careful consideration of

Forming discipline -

Self-awareness embodied in self-assurance.

Habits reap character,

And although fundamentally unchanged,

I have shedded much of the armored exterior.
Trading flight for settledness -
If I stop running,
If I savor this moment instead of extrapolating it's a memory,
I'm sure the landscape will have details I couldn't have noticed
Inferred from quick glances out of my peripheral vision.

Character then forms a destiny -
Predetermined?
That doesn't define me.
Accumulated...
I am trudging through the high grass
With gentle steps to not disturb the poppies.
I want to smash their centers but,
Deep breathe,
That's a story for another poem.
The silence has seeped into my marrow,
But I've heard that's the most nutritious,
When it simmers into broth.
I'm not defined by what's been blown through my body,
I'm impacted by residual remnants but -
God damnit -
I am releasing the tension and
Making a feast to transform the harvest.

So now, I'm ready to look outside -
I stop on instinct -
But I am no longer hiding behind inhibition:
Let intuition lead.
Patience to see the robustness of the hues playing with the tips of South Mountain
Rather than tapping my foot viewing it the Sun's obligation to touch the horizon.
I am ruled by vitality,
Not autopilot,
But there's still this funny balance
Of having enough self to feel centered
And a lack of that sense to feel connected.

"When does internal scarcity end?"
"When you allow yourself love."
Then the pupil opened
And I could finally see
All that I didn't trust in, out, and beside me.

Untitled

It gets hard when sustainability floats
Used as a buzzword to prove a makeshift point.
When Tesla becomes sustainability
We are so completely and utterly fucked.

But with driverless electric cars
We can jack ourselves off without even needing to look at the road ahead of us
Or even admire the scenes passing.
We can fill up without the smell of gasoline tinging us with guilt because -
Rest assured -
The emissions are coming from a grid that's on the path to integrate solar
By the time the sea reaches here.
And the battery burped out the emissions a gas car does
In one manufacturing.
Polluting waterways on lands we will never see
That were never ours to own to begin with.

It gets hard when sustainability floats
Through words that turn bandaid solutions into a stitched answer
Spoken loudly by someone who, say,
Gained unimaginable wealth from their parent's apartheid emerald mine.
So if it floats it's hollow.
Let's lull ourselves into complacency to not feel the heaviness,
The weight of a hope becoming a "someday" without a strategy to reach it.
Because we cannot belong to a strategy,
Only a culture.
Indulge until all there is to see are our hands.
Survive by using each finger to pay the bills
And after
The palms can have penciled-in me-time.

Because looking at the deeper issue seems a little too pointed.
Accessible, free public transit is just a symptom
And so is the lobbying power of oil and gas
Talking about our car-centric culture with bike lanes in the middle of the road is getting a little
closer
Because at the end of the day it is fueled by the idea that
I
Deserve to get in
And go wherever I please
On the highways that go anywhere
Over the buried houses of redlined lives and families.

And after a day of surviving
I
Deserve to treat myself
And not look outside to the heavy roof
We have abandoned because the twist and turns
Have turned into a tangle, not a web.
I need the rest when I have been out there in the nooks
Or in this Tesla I am too fragile in these four walls to feel the crannies.

It gets hard when
The built infrastructure regurgitates
The soft kind.
All those norms and assumptions
That go unquestioned
But are constructed into trajectories
Because
I
Am comfortable with what is known and seen.
When graffiti under freeway underpasses
Become a nuisance to property
And not a beautiful resistance
There is a missed opportunity for the unseen symbolism
Of claiming space to say
“I was here”
In a home that was never ours to own to begin with.

If it floats
It's probably on a wire transfer
Receiving the notification on the Tesla dashboard
Just as we finish in the handkerchief.
When indulgence becomes placation,
When my life becomes separate from yours
And our intersections are constructed on a groove that takes
Efforted steps to get out of
We will listen to the woman's voice
(Is it generated or recorded?)
Instead of looking around for ourselves to know
“You are approaching...”

How hollow our world has become.
Led to this layered beige box with four walls
Pulling into the garage to our assigned spot.
And in our assigned chairs
We don't look each other in the eyes

And even if we did
We will be that fake kinda happy in the iris' glaze.
Because
I
Am doing great.
I am doing swell.
Floating instead of thinking
Or intuiting
Or connecting
Or hoping for anything beyond grasp.

Shift

I think my fire has gone out.
It sure feels that way
When flames have turned to embers
And embers have faded into smoke.

I think my fuel source is changing.
Before
The fire sure felt alive
When I was throwing pine needles
A big flame conflated with healthy maintenance
Maintaining stagnancy and a smoke blowback
I inhaled instead of dealing with the ash collecting under the embers.

I think I need to blow in a different spot,
Rather than poking at the same ember until it crumbles.

I haven't stopped trying
I am rekindling with consistency
I am expecting nothing but patience
As I lay each stick in an intentional place.

I think my fire has a different definition.
It sure feels that way
When growth has been embodied in new action
And action is fueled with authentic dynamism.