

## Ernie's Villanelle

I want love and who's to know  
except Ernie who lives under the freeway  
and oh my god this just hurts so

He cat-calls as I trudge through snow  
*Mama I love you* as I wander away  
I want love and who's to know

Maybe he's an emanation with a slightly stoned glow  
or maybe even buddhas abandon us today  
Oh my god it just hurts so

But we can never let it show  
that we're so much trash to throw away  
I want love and who's to know

that those of us invisible  
live lives forsaken on the fray  
and oh my god this just hurts so

I want love now but who's to know  
on this dark and dreary day  
except for Ernie in the snow  
Oh my god this just hurts so

## Wrongful Death

My gaze catches the young man  
shining blue black, dreads  
thick like tree roots  
white teeth flashing  
as he tilts his head back  
in joyous laughter  
love pours out

I picture this young man  
on the sidewalk  
bullet hole spilling  
blood blooming like roses  
around those dreads  
as police car lights  
flash red in the night

This beauty, this joy

in a stiff collared suit, lying  
as weary mourners shuffle  
past yet another  
wrongful death

Icarus

do you remember  
days long ago  
when you were learning

to fly

those golden days  
when you were lighter than air

and up you went  
into the stratosphere

amongst white clouds  
where the west winds blew you  
from one thing to another

I know you remember

and then the day  
you went too high

when first you learned

things come crashing down

and who was there to catch you

Spider Web

this sanity is so hard won  
fragile as the spider's web  
woven by the brown recluse  
glistening with late night dew  
tainted with a tinge of venom

still every day I rise  
to make the bitter coffee,  
burnt toast sweetened with butter

bathe and breathe and battle  
these tangled silken strands

and now you demand  
that I tell you what's wrong  
but whatever it is you want  
is more than I can say  
for this has gone on way too long  
so forgive me

if I have nothing left  
to give, this sanity  
is so hard won  
so easily broken  
this tattered spider web

### Degeneration and Redemption

I, slayer of dragons and demons,  
and master of the hermetic balms  
that suck blackness from wounded souls,  
learned from the alchemist of the secret arts.

I, vanquisher of neon-lime delusion,  
eraser of unholy suffering.  
The one who has realized the method  
for purifying the desecrated mind.

I, the heir having eaten bitter  
bile of three generations of decay:  
Granma's pedophilia, Dad's sex addiction,  
my own degeneracy and twisted need,  
have become poisoned.

I, the descendent of holy Jesus on a popsicle stick  
who have learned all this, am tired.  
In the early morning light, breaking over the lapping water  
of the canal behind Trader Joe's  
settle for the moment, and rest.

The alchemist taught me to accept, cleanse, release  
the bitterness of all, the sick inheritance  
I have swallowed whole  
which only I might purify, transform, heal.

And I thought I had done so,  
but the damage, oh the damage  
has gone so deep  
as if to eclipse even the sun.

So I rest on this bench,  
breathing in the mist of dawn  
in the state of supreme concentration  
offering prayers to a God unknown :

Grandmother, I forgive you.  
Father, I forgive you.  
And in the hope of walking whole  
into the blinding light of love  
I almost forgive even myself.

Saturday Afternoon at Trader Joe's

Beloved, fair skinned boy  
runs ahead of his mother  
to get the cart, leaping  
three feet over the bar  
joy and light pouring through, springing  
spirit born of air.

Then there he was, leaving the corral with a cart  
his mother coming up,  
both of them glowing  
as they stop for a moment  
to look at the melons,  
the first of the year.

I wonder: How high  
will that joy and light go  
as a million galaxies the size of a grain of sand  
sweep through him, infinite mystery  
so great that he can barely contain.  
Surely he will touch the stars.