

The Riddle

There's an ineffable feeling that I cannot expel.
This feeling, you see, only belongs to me.
She's not as beautiful as the gowns of a princess,
nor as fragmented as the rags of the unfortunate.
She has the history of relic identical
to clothes on bodies of buried loved ones,
and the dust to prove her unaffected purity.
She enters without warning and she stays voluntarily,
which doesn't bother me in the slightest, you see,
as she makes no noise, no complaint,
nor does she leave evidential prints of her presence.
Attentively, she sits in the back of my mind
and remains unharmed in times of crisis.
Patiently, she allows me space to settle my inhibitions.
Tenaciously, she shields herself from the influence
of unjust conditions I comply without haste,
and she watches me struggle to shift such condition
into honorable consequence.

I guess she could be explained, roughly,
but I cannot guarantee she will show the same shape in your mind
as she does mine, being that she adapts to the life that she resides,
the host she considers home.
You could think of her as a parasite, sure,
but unlike a host to a guest, it is not your duty to entertain her,
nor does she ask to be entertained.
She will not go hungry if she is unfed.
Your hospitality can only go as far as offering her a bed.
If you do, open the windows of her room and let it in some light.
Albeit she may not decay when uncultivated, she does dilate with consent.

If I were to provide her a name,
the name that comes to mind sounds like Hope,
or maybe even Faith, in her most objective form,
but I find that an insult to her individuality,
so I won't reduce her value to a title on account of ethological instinct.
Instead, I'll feel her, as she does not need a name for her to exist.
So modest she is, she still persists without a consciousness to understand her.
Supposing all things are born to die, I find great relief from her buoyant immortality,
and sometimes, she is the only great relief I encounter.

Sappho's Garden

Lost in thought, I trespassed into a private garden.
Accidentally, of course, but déjà vu told me
this happen-chance was destined all along.
The scents provoked a distant memory,
and if I have smelled this scent in another life,
then our souls have never parted.
If I have smelled this scent in a dream,
then that dream could only be
a recollection from another reality.
If in that reality, I did not know you,
then I imagine I would visit this garden often
and torture myself with the yearning.
So comfortable yearning can be,
so innocent my longings remain
until they have matured to inevitably die with me.
Even so, taking this longing to my grave
will mean I will snuggle you to profound sleep for all eternity,
and it will be the best sleep I shall receive.

This spring day is parallel to the glow of a newborn baby,
so the garden has only entered its sophomore phase.
The buds have barely sprouted,
but just enough that they are familiar to the naked nose,
and I'd recognize the aroma anywhere— Violets.
The closer you near them the more vibrant the colors,
ranging from yellows to blues to creams to purples,
petals silky as velvet and tender as love... yes,
this is my heaven; my very own you when I can't have you.
Although, if I try hard enough, I can hear you
cooing and ogling at their beauty,
and if I try even harder, I can picture you next to me,
somehow looking lovelier than their delicacies.
There is much to adore about you, my flower,
but most of all I admire how you adore the simplest of things,
as it balances my inability to abbreviate
the labyrinth of my tired mind.
The sun shines so naturally on you,
and you share it without reserve.
I'll make this promise now and forever
to share my rain just the same.

Since love is only for the righteous ones
and I must whisper my forbidden affections,
I have picked you this copious bouquet to present my secret sentiment.
If this gesture is unreturned and you chose not to wear it proudly on your breast,
I can only hope that in another life, be it previous or reincarnated,
we could revel in this liaison and surround ourselves with its fragrance.
As we both know, my flower, no matter its color,

the beauty of a garden should never be private,
and this is no secret too shameful to be shared.

Recall

I woke up today in a house,
a house I knew was my own
but looked much different
than I remember.

The kind of house one sees in dreams,
unfamiliar yet definable.
In some way or another.

I was tangled in a bed of sheets
that had clearly been slept on
for months without cleanse.

Painted with bodily secretions,
ranging from love-making to menstruating.
Ash, from pipes to papers.
Make-up, from nudes to noirs.

A stranger walks in
with a giant bowl of cereal
and two spoons.
He knew it was my favorite,
but I didn't know him.

But I knew him, you know?
In some way or another.

I wanted to call him a name,
but it didn't seem fitting.
Maybe it belonged to a memory.
What was that memory again?
Oh, I don't know.

He spoon-fed me Wheaties
and folded his feet between my legs.
He kissed me and delicately whispered a Van Morrison tune,
"I never knew the art of making love
'til my heart yearned with love for you."

And that's when I knew.

I shoot up from the bed,
leaving a concave within the foam mattress,
and eye the carpet
as if my feet were going to fall through.

“Hardwood. This is supposed to be hardwood.”
“What?” his eyes follow me in confusion.
“Be quiet.”

I grab a loose end of carpet near a corner
and start tearing it up from its bonds.
Low-and-behold,
blonde hardwood sat quietly beneath it,
as if it’s been waiting for me to unearth it.
Unearth you.

You.
I buried You.
Everything started rushing back to me.

I get up unsteadily and tear down the wallpaper
to find a screen playing back every memory:

The faire
The zoo
The restaurant
The concert
The park
The bed
Our path
A doorway---

A starry night under a deck
Loose cigarettes and empty bottles
A volume so loud I can’t hear myself assess
A voice echoing off every wall;
“I love yous” in infinite delay.
“I hate yous” in infinite succession.

I’m running through this
half foreign house trying to find You.
Who, what, and where are You?
You’re nowhere to be found.
I’m searching behind every door,
rustling through every nook and cranny,
tearing down every trinket of décor.
I’m falling to my knees and crying in my palms.
Where are You?

I cry every last drop
from the ocean of despair within me,
open my eyes,
and let the reality sink in:
This house is empty
and You’re nowhere to be found.

A Letter to the Editor

A dark hallway invades
the space in my mind, my heart, my body.
During my late adolescence,
I assumed these entities
separate from one another.

Now I realize they are one in the same:
their membranes fragile—their barriers stark.
My pain is child-locked within them.
What was previously a sacred shrine,
is now a Delphic crypt.
The hallway, a river stitching
the triad together by the flesh.

Once, upon trying to leap over
my body of water with bare feet,
a hand presented itself before me
and bridged the inches
I would've missed.

His face was too bright to stare at for too long,
but he illuminated the kind of beauty
you would sacrifice your vision for, and many have.
Yes, many have sacrificed much more.

They gave themselves
over to him like sailors
damned on a stormy sea.
When the ship's stern
bowed downward,
they climbed their way
up to the bow and closed their eyes,
bracing themselves for
the painful crash
on the ocean's glass,
and anticipating the pleasant
release of their anguish.

They left this world with such gratitude
of his acceptance, but I can't without explanation.
Which leads me to ask you,
and I deserve an answer at least,
questions too many had not the nerve to ask...

Why on Earth let lightning strike within my route?
Why pull the moon closer to the waves,
tightening their bond like steel corset bones?
And how dare you let drizzle the very same rain
that will soon be my blood,
throwing the future of my fate in my face?
The future that I soon will not see.
If I matter so much,
then where is your mercy?

I cannot submit my love
and have it forsaken, cheated, and betrayed.
I will not let you take me
if your neglect is the very reason
I am to be taken.

There's a million slights
I can survive, of which
your infidelity does not rank.

You say you love me,
but your love is a repository
filled to the ceiling
with recycled hearts.

Every one of them filtering
through an assembly line
assigning sell-by's
and expiration dates.

Those numbers
are merely vapid shapes
in the sphere of your eternity,
and your eternity
shall out-shine us all.

Well, I'm sold. You fooled me.

I placed my loyalties on your spinning stick
and I gave up the reins so I could brush your hair.
Your long, beautiful hair that I imagine
so many men and women have combed through
with the very fingers you must've held as they, too,
leapt over the river.

And yeah, yeah,
I know you told me
to never speak with conjecture,
but to be frank, it's quite arrogant
of you to think I'd care
as I sit here with my feet bare,
no hand to guide me.

And this is quite telling,
considering, as I have
one more question to ask:

Apollo, if you are not helping me,
then who exactly are you helping?

Ophelia

Unrequested,
cloaked figures surround your little bubble,
poking and probing your armor.
You shriek every time they attempt to penetrate
and they shriek back at you, startled and confused.

Unsolicited,
they follow you around,
picking up your footprints just after you
mark them on the ground.
They drop petals of dead roses behind in your place
to show that in the end, you can leave behind beauty
if you so choose.

“They’re actually quite pleasant,”
you think to yourself.
You look back at them on occasion,
and they simply mumble amongst one another in a lull murmur.
Content.
Like nomads without destination in mind;
Like dreamers without expectation to find.
“I wish I could be more like them...” you ponder.

Finally,
you’re near.
You see the edge getting closer.
The vastness of the ocean crashes against
the stone walls beneath your feet.
You wiggle your toes aloft the sharp edge,
just enough to keep your balance.
You notice in that moment the figures are finally silent.
You turn around
and with complete composure
they bow their hooded heads in sympathy,
and you realize then that your thoughts
are not a secret to them.

Throwing your arms in the air,
you let the breeze caress your every pore.
For the first time,
this nakedness doesn’t feel defenseless.

You smile at your friends
as they wave goodbye,
and fall backwards toward the water
just as you would a goose down bed.
You watch the sky expand above you,
and the figures free whatever petals they have left

into the wind like doves' feathers.