

The Butterfly Boy

The first time,
she ever made him laugh
over a thousand butterflies
flittered from the caverns
of his mouth
like a confetti explosion
They skittered across a canvas of clouds;
a disarray of colours
that dripped on to milkweeds
and hibiscus flowers,
pollinating even the flowers
of a dying breed.

Captivated,
the girl spun in circles
with outstretched arms
propelling by her sides,
laughing along as her hair whirled across her face
like vines tangling with butterfly wings
in the dance of the breeze
Her fingertips kissed the proboscis
of every blue-winged butterfly,
and tickled the feet of each hackberry emperor.

Through the alternating colours and patterns
of each wing, folding
 unfolding
The kaleidoscope sky
in which the girl could no longer distinguish
sunrise from sunset
soon began to close in
The jovial whistle of the breeze
became a howl that blew dried leaves
onto the tangles of her locks
and startled the dance of her legs
to a clumsy curtsy.

Then,
in the dawning of her slowing spin
and the tilted feel beneath
the both of her feet,
she found not a single vibrant wing;
heard neither the traces of a flutter

nor the sound of laughter
In the still and the silence
she remembered
 that butterflies are not creatures of all seasons

The Storyteller

I.

The boy
as she'd known him
was born with a quill pointed tongue
that salivated pools of ink
at the sight of a muse
She would always find him
pouring into sentences;
kissing letters on to paper faced girls
Every word constructing into a masterpiece;
a great epic
grandeur tales of adventure
a romantic novella
an anthology of heartbreaks
He was an avid storyteller
who boasted a collection of classics
Every night,
he showed her the paper cuts he wore
patterned by the pages of some obscure contemporary author,
and whispered to her secrets of a manuscript
he claimed, to have never shared before.

II.

The first time he opened her,
she read like poetry to his ears
This complex metaphor
of something so intangible yet
undeniably read
And as he burned through her pages
she saw him, stripped
for the first time,
bare of his lined paper skin
His frame, an empty shelf
Neither Shakespeare nor Dickens
stacked along his ribcage;

neither Brontë nor Austen
could be found in the vault of his chest
Not a single prose
was clipped into the bend of his joints
He had not even kept the letters
she has written
on the parchment of his palms.

III.

‘Tell me something real,’
she begged of him once
Tracing the chipped edges of his spine,
she strained to listen in the silence
while the boy began to recite
names of great works
he had endeavored to live by.

Velleity

Sometimes,
 I swim with sharks and sunbathe with snakes
 but I once met a girl
 who trapped flies in glass bottles
 and counted their legs
 When I asked her why she did that
 She blinked,
 her eyes taking flight as she responded
 'I need something to wish upon.'

The girl lived in a room
 with cerulean walls
 and spider egg light bulbs
 There were no lamp switches
 but the electricity in her eyes
 kept the whole room warm
 enough to hatch even marble eggs
 At least, when they were open
 One summer,
 I invited her for a swim
 only to find that her skin was not water proof
 The wires beneath her flesh crackled through smoked pores;
 fishes burned and corals crippled against static currents
 The girl, with static skin and salted eyes
 refused to sink further than a toe
 for the fear of having her hair ruined.

On most summer days,
 while I slipped into
 fins and flippers
 swimming with the great predators of the sea,
 The girl stayed home
 counting;
 first, spider eggs
 then, flies
 All the while making wishes upon their legs
 She never did learn how to swim
 And I always resented knowing,
 She may never cross oceans for me.

Hand Me Downs

At fifteen, I figured that dreams
 were like hand-me-downs

They didn't always fit quite right;
 hanging loose in all the wrong places
 but papa told me
 that dreams were too costly,
 it would be easier
 to simply reuse them.

Even then, cotton clouds
 would make their way
 into my head
 creating technicoloured scraps of cloth
 Soft silk and coarse linen
 I believed that one day
 I would design a dream
 better than the ones passed onto me
 A blue floor length gown, cinched at the waist
 with gold trimmings
 The beauty of effort and devotion sewn
 into a dress never to be worn.

My mother, she told me
 that I was not made for cutting fabrics
 and sewing together artificial skin
 Instead, I was meant for fixing flesh
 making careful incisions;
 lacerating every tissue of dream and replacing it
 with my mother's
 She dreamt doctor
 not designer.

Instead, I tucked away
 fragments of my own, saving it for my own
 Hoping that my child will thread together
 blankets of my dreams
 One day, creating closets
 of what I should have.

At fifteen, my child
 does not dream of dresses
 and fabric
 They dream of letters
 and building bodies out of words
 constructing stories as high as towers
 and from above the heights of their dream
 I can see,
 they deserve more
 than my hand me down
 dreams.

A Closet of Shoes

My closet
is filled with unworn shoes
I did not think
that I could fit into.