

Ghosts in the Mirror

Alley Cat

She slides through the city night,
caressing shadows to silence.
Wicked eyes come alive
as she pours through my window
like molten ambrosia
and starlight.

Her pale skin soft as the moon's indiscretions,
her nails as long as nine lives;
she purrs in my ear, the language of felines
who wander with lust on their tongues.

She's been here before,
sheds her guilt
with her habit
and yowls
the quarter awake.

Before dawn can catch her,
she slinks from my pillow
to bathe in the streetlight,
I watch her transform:
she twists like the band,
returned to her finger,

becoming a house cat
once more.

In Fallow Fields

In the fields of my father,
row upon row, my fledgling hopes
are neatly hedged; sown in the soil
of silent forebears.
Beside a bourne, in chalk and flint,
I plant my dreams deep
and expect a grave harvest.

The rasping of my father's shovel
has slowed this season. Some furrows
lie shallow, others run deeper.
Through rustic panes
I watch him bend low, straining
against the pull of years
to pluck joy from the loam.

A moment's pause to contemplate
the lone peony, a blushing invader
into precise ranks. Grudgingly,
his shovel resumes its dreary dirge,
churning all; a peony for thought.
Discarding my pen, I fall in beside;
a forgotten page, unplowed.

Toasting Marshmallows

Pierced by a willow spear, the marshmallow blisters; bemoans its heated rush towards metamorphosis. A Phoenix, unborn, the pink skin ruptures, sloughs off to flare briefly; returns to the ashen dreams of a ghost gum. Freedom dies with your smile and I find myself colder; wishing to stand beside you. Always. But that would betray wings as yet unfurled.

Overhead, the cross hangs low. Four nimbus globes dance below, across a lady's mercurial skin. Your hand withdraws to discover a soft mallow heart, licked by the inner flame. Released. Framed in that introspective light I see you hurtling forward, a stellar memory of lost radiance and I wish to tell you: it's the novas that define us.

Between the Pages

The worn, russet couch opens its maw
and swallows me whole. A cool embrace and scent
of old leather finds a chink in my mind's armour.
A vision of you sneaks in. Tanned legs barely covered
by denim cut-offs wake buttermilk thoughts
of caramel ice and sunshine.

Cicada-song outside jolts sleep from the room. I wake
into a twilight summer's warm, mottled hues. Time
moves slowly, my skin breathes out. Freshly-cut lawn
flavours the scant breeze creeping past the fly screen
to tickle my mind. In the depths of the couch, my sleeping back
has unwittingly found your old sketchbook.

Lazy river Sundays seep from pages, as dry as the memories.
Moments and scenes captured in charcoal-scratched stasis,
your hand always as sure as your eye. A pressed-flower fallen
from our Red River Gum is caught between pages. I slam the book
shut and it slides away. You would have smiled to see
how deeply the paper cut.