

Urban Foraging

Once I learned the names of the plants that could heal and feed,
that was the end. Every peripheral leaf was an acquaintance that I had to introduce.

*That's mint, I know her from the square stem.
Garlic Mustard? Yeah I know them. Nosy, invasive, drowning everyone out...*

Outside of work there's treasure in the parking lot,
the barely-soil gravel meridians. Dandelion, plantain, cleavers.

There's good medicine if you know where to look. A patch of empty shooters
is growing outside of the AA building and might be ready for harvest soon.

Every urban foraging guide gives helpful warnings:
Don't gather where pesticides are sprayed. Don't harvest by roadsides.

Be mindful of what you put in your body.
I hear that in cities all the sacred spaces are sprayed with pesticides.

I used to be so fearless with the pricker-bushes, pushing my soft child arms
into the thicket for the best blackberries. Now I'm more careless than brave

kicking up used needles nestled in the deadnettles, catching my sleeves
on brambles that I failed to notice.

Mom handed me down her copy of *Stalking the Wild Asparagus* and I reward her
with a phone call. Regale her of my bounty. This time, lemon balm, turkey tail, ramps.

She says that book is actually so sad, an old resource for a potential runaway.
I remind her of the medicinal plants pamphlet I memorized as a child, the night She and Dad
sat me down and explained why I should never run away. And that's all behind us now.

acid sunset

the world is expanding faster than it can carry me,
and I race to catch up with her. If I put enough weight on my toes
I can feel the gravity change,
 I can feel myself swell with the sky.
there is an ecosystem in the railing water,
 swallowed now by the fuschia reflection and oh oh wow
the clouds! they form a world and if I could just put enough weight on my toes
 I could join them, I could join them! I could be a part of the sky and oh
ah,
 a dr
 a dragon?
 no, a dragon!

 luck, my friend, floats me a companion to protect the house
he's slender and gentle his nose looks like my first dog's nose and
 there's the smoke!
 trailing up and off and if if I could I really think I could

 put enough weight on on my toes to drift

 into the fuschia trail off into the rolling, the churning, the ocean
clouds if I never close my eyes, never close never close

 never close my eyes
 I could float off.

Motherhood

My body is sour today.
The flavor of my image
so unpleasant that my eyes
pucker and wince. Bitter,
is how it tastes to put on
six shirts before settling.

On the best days my soul
is sweet, bones twine-wrapped
in aromatics. Today my sage
and citrus peels are overcome
by the taste of tonic.

I watch a couple place
their baby in the backseat,
look at each other lovingly.
French vanilla, coffee, bergamot,
the mother turns and smiles at me.
Some days my body feels rotten.

To put it simply,

last night I was ready to kill myself
and today I walked outside
gasped as I nearly stepped on a pavement worm

it might not know it, but I do, that
nothing that worked so tirelessly to save
itself from drowning deserves to be crushed

by the great boot from above.

(for Gabriel and Me)

On the outskirts of Voyeurism

As part of my journey of being
okay with “good enough”
I learn to be
satisfied
with existing as a side character.

We forget the value of the faceless figures
that fill the background of dreams, bystanders
that incite pure fear
when stepping out in a new and questionable haircut,
nameless drivers to scream our daily frustrations at
while stuck on the Garden State Parkway.

We’re all a part of someone’s sexual fantasy,
if not the sweaty locker room heartthrob
then at least the unwitting bystander trying to enjoy
a light lunch while a young woman squirms
in her vibrating panties,
practically sick with ecstasy and shame.

What a strange honor, to be included
in one’s intimacy and go about life
none-the-wiser. A background actor in
a wet dream, just necessary enough to live
in the deep subconscious of every person
to ever forget my face.