

If Rebuilding is Four Steps

one.

dissolve dagger

broken-hearted mornings

two.

praise.

observe all that glows emerald &

period of grace born

remember

this world rings ivory,

three.

still. still deeper.

let stillness cover every breath.

four.

with flow thread

again & again

beyond

the Whole fresh.

The Beat

I wish we'd do a little walking in our sleep
wing a small gift of capes
for superheros on the waves

I wish we'd look up
at few choice words that push
through walls to possibility
enjoy the moment between breaths green or
keep clear as quartz-tones

I wish we'd dance
Smooth glide like a reel of first kisses

I wish we'd message creativity
or call fields of coffee tables
at the least slit
test scores with a knife & glean
from bells of potential

I wish we'd hear the bells, hear the beat

Try is the rhythm
And the beat is calling

The Circle's Cycle: An Ode to Audre

*If I didn't define myself for myself,
I would be crunched
into other people's fantasies for me
and eaten alive.*

- Audre Lorde

If I didn't define myself for myself,
I'd have to wear a dictionary around my neck
like a locket. I'd have every word
and every definition
neatly packed into its frame
so that every time I walked it, the locket
would bounce against my chest
mimicking the beat of my heart
until I heard it again. So that every time I took
a breath and paused, I'd have cause
to stop and open it, look at it
"two inches away from my nose"
crossing words out that were moot and pulling pages
that no longer represented truth.
So that every time I stepped, I could breathe easy
being one more word away from the locket becoming a noose.
If I didn't define myself for myself, I

would be crunched into a paper ball
like a sheet with an unfinished thought,
fresh pulp and a half-started sentence that –
I would be packed into ice.
Like a thousand steps on freshly fallen snow.
Like a thousand more, only to melt away
and dry up into concrete. My collar bone
would double
as ancient remains, would
crumble like
statues of the greats. I
would be crammed

into other people's fantasies for me. I would be
their Disney princess, girl next door,
the one
that got away. I would be
a perfect daughter or wife
a perfect life. I would be *honey*
or baby girl, or
"baby, baby you complete me"
I would be straight
A's a two-time graduate
I would be hopes and dreams, redeemed
and esteemed except when wearing cloth and seams

that could double as excuses
for why I deserve
only seventy-five percent of a standard.
I would be a lawyer, or a doctor, something
respectable. I would save lives
and live mine in irony. I would be a 401K.
Maybe just a safe job and I would be lucky
if I had a window nearby.

If I didn't define myself for myself,
I would be an empty jar labelled
Mine. I'd start out full
of honey
long before anyone had a spoon
long before biopsies disguised as tastes
where spoonful by spoonful I'd be replaced
and with every spoonful, I'd be dissolved
and if I didn't define myself for myself,
I would be eaten alive.

& that's just not an option for me, you see
Instead I am avid seeker
humble teacher, warrior &
Zen-occult healer, I am love
and connection, the clear reflection

of the light shone by the flame
inside my belly. I am recognition
of spirit manifesting as breath, as rises
of my abdomen, as ocean wave pressure
at the back of my throat, pacing
this clock of a body.

I am tails wagging and gentle purrs,
clouds lining soft, settling sunsets
water, the cool glide and swish
and the beady drip
from the upper lip
at the peak of the sun's heat.

I am crackling wood
on a night made of dotted-symphonies.

I am fresh pine scents &
unseasonable laments of moments
un-brushed, retouched or faded.

I am the circle's cycle.

I am & I refuse to be eaten
by bone-cold grasps of
steeple-high fantasies. I am
no longer eaten, simply alive.