

Shallow Valleys and Powdered Hills

A Collection of Poetry

Submitted for SIXFOLD November 2016 Poetry Selection

Shallow Valleys and Powdered Hills

The syncopated taps
From edges of old credit cards against a
perfect square of cheap glass
The creased eye of rolled-up Benjamin winks
at the growing mound of feel-good-sugar

The song is
no lullaby--
it stops just
before the chorus

verse: repeat
feelings, replete;
wholly deplete.

Next up.
Line up.
White Rabbit's Nose.

The Talk

Before my courage could balloon to its apex

She pulled the trigger, just missing the graze that would've
shattered the elastic material desperately holding itself
together as it grew larger than its own skin

rather, she unloosened the bind that tethered it to the
pole

as her last act of kindness

she gracefully orchestrated what should
have been my burden
and set us both free

Friend is a Funny Word

The chatter in my room, like helium,

dissipating--

all the while immersing through

the chill of twilight

stillness, I feel

against the knot of emotion

in my grumbling stomach

through the prickling of

tingling twinkle tincture

constellations sharpening through my body

as I navigate my friends' haphazard

conversations

with smiling laughing and belly breathing

I find myself wispily vanishing

into the gallows of my inner sanctum

A deep guffaw threatens to form

but I must resist its departure from my belly

to my mouth and out into the circus my friends are creating

on my living room floor

lest I present myself as partaking in

their presence tonight

My ego, deflated; I, as one of them

Within the reaches of my love resides

the distance I've travelled apart

And even as nostalgia envelopes me

I find myself further away from my companions

Still, nearer to that weathered sentiment

that sparks a daily warmness

enough to deice the veins to run like

the rivers that they once were

thunderously roaring across my body with crimson life

So here I'll be for the rest of twilight

Fetal-positioned on my floor

A breath away from my kindred folk

yet so far from our familiar habits

being the quiet bearer of sanity

for the first time

Dear Brother (part 3)

My words to you
Have gone astray
Lost in a maze,
Scattered for my own sanity
(complexity works better for me)
the blind simplicity of truth
bears too harsh of a witness

Like the pain of putting these ideas
flush on this clickity-clack
keyboard
digital papier mâché spewing silly sounds awry

But really, I'll level with you
Brother.
I invited you into my world and
unknowingly broke our bond
The carnival
we created as youths
No longer plays the same song

Still, the same tune rings soundly in my ear

I was a child too, when I unknowingly betrayed
your (innocence)
The quickest second
melting into your longest moment

and forgiveness, too, can be a sin
if done too wantonly between kin

But I have yet to thank you for
I have yet to receive
-not because of thee-
but the stubborn saint within me

holds the foolish belief that
only a martyr is free

As I bleed
believing that pain is love's very essence
...makes no sense...

I am sorry.
and the little comments we say can
grow into mighty *Hwandos*
boring excruciating holes into our temples
like ice shears forged from stalactites
inside the deepest caverns of my
furious imagination
--the impulse that got us here in the first place--
this race...
against the treadmill of time
inside our mind

Like the force of a thousand armies
tearing the walls of Choson dynasty—
like our chosen destiny
to our final claim

I am healed.
I extend my hand again
feeling the bridge, intact, cutting through the fog

I am here, brother.
Alas, I am with you
'til the end of our manic days.

Labyrinth

When you're faced with a decision
That belies common precision
step back, look through the
transparent lens of the
magnifying glass with the
minute curvature of your
sullen and opaque eyes.

Glance upon the breathing onomatopoeia of the pastel-colored pebbles, the petal-
decorated water ceiling of the musical ripples as it brushes Matisse strokes along
the cascading circles against the shore

Then walk in

Go against any trepidation-
hints of self-conscious musings that create your version of Edgar Allen Poetry -
the manic nether-qualities of it--
especially as if your answer
depended on the very serenity you seek
as you connect your breath to your eyelashes' shutter speed
fluttering madly at first,
then placidly,
then playfully and rhythmically
in line to the song of your inner voice.

Then you may think

and think, you shall--
the invisible cellophane of your iris
has detached itself from the
edges of your cornea.
Bestowed upon you is the gift
of sight

You walk across the edge back
to your cerebral palace
waiting patiently
for the moment to settle;
and once it softly passes

you forget why you were waiting for it in the first place

Each instance that now draws you
closer to that moonlit evening
is a chance to re-disguise your intimate nature and become a beautiful lie --
or perhaps a truer version of a story
retold so often it belittles the sky that fought so hard to maintain its celestial
presence

You care not so much anymore
as you turn the corner towards the end of the path and into the world you came
from

You breathe a little easier
and scrape the bottom of the fountain with
your pennies as penance
The clattering of the copper-plated currency
that resurfaces the shallowest parts of that well

As you find the proverbial remedy in the
daily comedy
you freely imagine all the ways you can make something
out of those silly everything-in-between-impulses that create your cocktail of
creativity
At four o'clock in the afternoon.

You take one deep swallow-
like the bird-
connecting ideas similar to little Weezy
metaphors
-sans the purple stuff

back on your train
-way in the back where light politely kisses
the million fingerprint smudges on the silver
railings dangling empty from the ceiling
as if they're waiting for the bravery
of eccentric gymnastic-like routines adopted
by the daily inhabitants of this communal vehicle--
you choose the vessel and go where you go

attaching yourself to the disposition that your current position is a solution to your volatile volition - really just the sharpest vicissitude of temperament - and that it will save you from having to make that decision.

And then,

you just go.