

Love Poem for Tuesday

You are the bittersweet end of Monday, sweet, ineffable Tuesday.
You are the morning of the week – crouching before the calendar.

You are the voice of Ray Charles – singing of paradise and purgatory,
lifting me into cartwheels through heaven.

You are the early morning tangerine peels. I bury my fingernails into your corners,
separate your layers; taste the thick water dropping over each edge.

Tuesday, you are two-dimensional. You skydive into the Grand Canyon,
mend the hollow bones of birds. You are the sky at night.

You clean the dusty absolution. You stitch together the interrupted wonder,
the unborn child of the unbreakable. You are pinky promises.

You share the secrets of why Wednesday takes on the harsh wooden sun.
I crave the heavy tomorrow of you. Tread water in our double-sided dawn.

I bend into the edge of our minutes, reply to the echo in the turn of your voice,
and I linger in the overgrown light of our noon.

Kitchen Cabinets

I had a drawer in my mothers kitchen filled with Canadian coins from my allowance, eggshells partially broken, a nest of thyme twigs and weeds, scraps of paper I stole from a journals aching teeth. I would carefully place secrets underneath the rotten clutter of my treasure, for her.

My mother had drawers crowded with her own gold ammunition. They were filled with the sticky residue that collects underneath last centuries battle scars, the thin eggshells from her womb. A mother's drawer aches from the weight, overgrown with tumbleweeds.

The kitchen starts getting smaller, weeds tiptoeing into the grout between her toes. They start to strangle every aching crack, screaming until her moldy corners are filled with ugly flowers. Fertilized by the eggshells, the coffee grits, the orange peels underneath.

A mothers fire sneaks underneath her stone roots, running out into the weeds as far as the wind. She carries speckled red eggshells across paved mountains to show her daughters expectant fingers and they are filled with peaceful sapphire, left with only the aching

water. And they know nothing but the aching that they are taught, they hide it underneath the bloated tenderness, the filled jaws of racking fury; they grow mournful weeds around their mothers patchy vegetables, her sorrow like the sound of the first crack in an eggshell.

The kitchen floor isn't as fragile as eggshells or as desperate as sunlight, it is the aching hands of a mother who brings her own children from her body, limping underneath the weight of roots, red stones, bleeding weeds and the empty stomach of a carcass, once filled.

We dance on eggshells, borrow dust from underneath
the aching weeds and keep dancing. Her stormy skin filled
with something saltier than sweat.

Mary

Sucking on Werther's original caramel candies and leaning my sticky cheeks into smoky leather seats, I didn't know what I know now about suicide. How bumblebees die to protect their hives and how children die to protect their religion or the people who think they know what religion is. You knew religion. You knew kneeling in church until your knees bruised, diamond crosses and Jesus Christ. You knew red tipped rosary beads and woolen angels above our beds. But you probably didn't know, in the end, how ironic it was that you died on Easter Sunday. You probably didn't know after the drugs stopped holding onto your mind, that you were teaching three generations that suicide was the easy way out. How every time my mother used *you're just like your grandmother* as an insult, I knew it meant that just like you my illness was one more thing she could blame hers on. Did you die knowing what you had given me? Fancy china plates with red rose rims, your name, the gold cross that I wore for three months after you died. Hand sewn quilts, a knack for laughter and a craving for sweets. My mothers anger, my punctuated sadness, a tendency towards impatience for all things soft or slow and a twisted patience for all things painful or unfair. What you will never know is what you accidently gave me, the years or moments that I contemplated death or the lines of self inflicted survival wounds left long after there was nothing left to survive. I guess you never knew that long after your father stopped beating mental illness into you, your favorite grandson was still beating it out of me. You probably never knew what those scars were from or who they were for. But this poem is for you. You should know that somehow I cleaned the fault lines behind my forehead and the scars are so faded that no one even asks

anymore; and that afternoon in Rome,
if you were watching me cry in that crowded
cathedral, when I asked for you to show me
how to grab hold of the kind of happiness
you prayed I would have, I heard you singing
Ave Maria – Hail Mary, Full of Grace.

Bodies

I make offerings to the body on the days when others
burn curly lambs over sage fumes. I like to boil the water
in my veins, turning them slowly into clotted snakes.
When I list off bodies I would rather absorb than the fleshy
humid skin of man, I think of lions and the way they make love
wrapped in each others claws, or how praying mantises eat
their lovers heads just before conception. I think of the dread
of a dragons neck or the strength in a serpents skin.
I am fascinated by the heartbeat in the spine,
by the moisture in breath; by teeth, fingernails, spidery ends
of hair. I want them to be easy to hold but hard to hold onto,
to feel like gravity and loneliness at the same time. I want them
to leave my lips tasting like faithful regret, my fingers
reaching for the empty air around your chin, our chests
moving into one another like fragments of the same magnet.