

## Disillusionment of a Marriage

Oh the house of denial has thick walls / and very small windows /  
and whoever lives there, little by little, / will turn to stone.

Mary Oliver

## Disillusionment of a Marriage

### Disillusionment

I always dreamed  
of sharing coffee,  
the pot brought steaming  
to two cups  
on a sunrise-lit back porch,  
chairs rocking gently  
in their soothing  
back-and-forth,  
give-and-take rhythm.  
But to my surprise,  
my single-serve machine  
gives me my cup, steaming,  
and I drink it  
in the solitude  
of my office  
with no window.

## Disillusionment of a Marriage

Haze

There's a gray haze over everything.

You're in your corner and I'm in mine, and the cats are in the comfy chairs near the window.

None of us can go outside because the air will make us cough and choke, and our eyes burn and water, and our throats sear in scorched confusion.

The world is burning, and we are safe, the control line holds, but we are stuck in four walls, and they're closing in.

You clear your throat, and I glance up.

But you haven't looked up.

You're researching potential treatments for essential tremor, and I feel it in my neck as I rise,

the offensive

back-and-forth,

up-and-down,

not-quite-yes,

not-quite-no,

half-hearted answer to a question unasked.

You are breathing too loud,

and my jaw is too tight.

I will it to relax, seek to ease the tremor I know is made worse by tension,

the tremor made worse the harder I *try*.

I kneel beside my favorite,

stroke the soft white patch on his chest,

## Disillusionment of a Marriage

and when my forearm jerks of its own accord,  
I glance up.  
But you haven't looked up.  
The symptoms are unimportant once they've been charted.  
Effective treatment, that's your focus now.

But the tremor is bilateral with multiple limbs affected.  
Even I know what that means.  
The newest, groundbreaking treatments are out of my trembling reach.  
I stroke the soft ear, whisper into it,  
"Bird."  
The ear twitches, eyes flash wide, scanning the window.  
He has a thing for birds.  
But I was cruel.  
The birds are in hiding,  
deep in shrubs or trees,  
conserving their energy  
for when the air will finally clear.  
There is no bird.  
There is no treatment.  
I just wanted his attention.  
The flash. The spark. The fire  
of soul-to-soul recognition,  
but, as always,  
there is only smoke.

## Disillusionment of a Marriage

Hooked

I dreamed I had a fishhook in my head.

Hooked by a little girl,

she didn't know what she was doing

when she clumsily cast the line

and reeled me in.

I went to her father for help.

Please remove it.

He pushed, pulled, jerked, and tugged,

but the hook held fast.

I removed myself from the situation,

swam away, but the hook remained,

sticking out of the left side of my head.

I wondered if my brain had been affected

as I went to older and wiser men for help.

Was I using logic? Or was all logic abandoned,

as one after another, they couldn't help me.

The hook was strong and multi-pronged,

and with each catch-and-release

it sank a little deeper

until language was also affected,

and I was no longer able to speak

with any authority.

With each line cast,

my words softened and slurred

until they became inaudible,

replaced by a hazy glow on a pretty face,

hook shining in the sun like a barrette.

## Disillusionment of a Marriage

Chaos

Nobody wants to read another poem  
about Love Gone Wrong.

But what else can I do?

When our marriage  
is on the brink of the grave, and  
you'd rather be dead than alive with me for one more minute.

I laugh heartily, for this is a giant joke.

But no, no.

You'll have none of my sarcastic laughter.

So, I drink the Kool-Aid,  
and I swallow the truth,  
and I spit out the bullshit.

I sing Queen real loud  
and dance like a wild thing  
because if it's not a joke,  
it can only be a metaphor, meant for a song.

Meant for a poem.

Meant for Interpretation and Analysis.

What did the Muse mean when he said,  
"You make me want to shoot myself in the head?"

I spin. I whirl. I write. I sing.

Freddie Mercury said it best, and I can only repeat:

"Nothing really matters, my love.

Nothing really matters to me."

## Disillusionment of a Marriage

### Stone

I roll into myself and become stone

lying against you, hard and smooth and unbothered.

You breathe, slow and even, the inhale and the exhale evidence of life.

I do not breathe. I am stone, and I lie still as all stones do,  
as all of life goes on around me.