

Frolicker

The Artist and the Average Commuter

On long subway rides,
I used to draw the commuter across from me
The man with his hands burrowed
deep in his denim pockets
I'd ask myself--what can I take from him?
Hair: already in quick pencil strokes, like stealing candy from a baby
Eyes: tired, but metallic like the coins I'd imagine in his
Hands: tucked away.
 They must be warm in there, I thought.

These days I see hands in pockets,
Hands where I can't see them.
Hands holding metal.
I ask myself--what can he take from me?
And what would I give
To keep the blood rushing through my body,
and not from it?

Eggshells

I can leave a canvas white
while a paintbrush bleeds.

I can tiptoe over jagged eggshells and fade
into pavement and yellow doors,
only because I'm
An artist.
A dancer.
A chameleon.

But then again,
even the brightest candy
can be sour when you taste it.

And in your eyes--
that shattered mirror--
I only see cracks
in the story you write

when you drag
pens across paper,
and the ink draws scars you cannot erase.
Ink carves deep

like rocks, rocks
in my mouth because
I have no more words.

I showed you where my skin peaks
through the coat of armor that all humans have.

Armor.
Mine was made of canvas,
and paper,
and candy,
and shards of glass.

Atticus from Book Club

My mahogany bookshelf looks more scholarly than yours.
You see, I choose to peruse collections of
The greatest poetry by the greatest poets,
All of which reside within my distinctly superior bookshelf.
And speaking of poets, Emily Dickinson's birthday is coming up--
Feel free to get me a brooch for the lapel of my peacoat.

I ride my vintage yellow bicycle to the farmers' market
to buy dehydrated exotic fruit and organic Brussels sprouts.
Riding my vintage bicycle makes me thirsty
So I always keep a bottle of artisanal water on hand.
The way my artisanal water flows reminds me of the opera
Which I attend every weekend, by the way.

My colleagues and I in the Shakespeare Support Group conclude that
Shakespeare isn't just a playwright, it's a lifestyle.
And we all adhere to that lifestyle every day except the Ides of March,
Because we fear Julius Caesar's unrequited wrath.

So instead we listen to Mozart on our vinyl record players
Under our handwoven imported Peruvian alpaca fur blankets
While we ponder the deeper meaning of our existence

In our enlightened intellectual minds.

The Word of the Day today was “perspicacious”
Which obviously suits my personality perfectly
I added it to my bio on my MENSA account.

I brew my own tea, because after I work out
I don't like to release all my post-Pilates rage on the baristas at Starbucks
Just because they and their peasant-tea are
Too plebeian for my consumption.

And I would appreciate it if you'd stop staring
At my argyle-print sweater vest so contemptuously
Because I have to grab my telescope now and
Ride my vintage bicycle off into the sunset
For an Astronomy Club meeting.

Au revoir.

Write What You Know

I know
that life comes with asterisks,
and parenthesis,
and notes in the margins.
So I keep wondering where the backspace key has gone,
and how to stop needing it.

Bricks and bricks and bricks

There are too many bricks
to find birds that sing and soar,
dripping lavender from their wings.
Too many too tall, when all we have is watercolors,

But we told ourselves
we could paint birds in trees that tower over towers,
even the ones made of brick,
Counting colors on our fingertips

Then the birds washed out in the rain,

Our canvas went blank when we thought
we could fly, too,
our feet off the ground so the puddles wouldn't ripple.

And though we tiptoed, we crushed every last eggshell.
Not one bird left in your eyes
And paintbrush strokes drew only bricks,
and bricks and bricks and bricks.