

## **Wax Poet**

When you tell me I'm  
'Waxing poetic,'  
I sometimes wonder what wax you mean.

Could you mean the finite burn of candle wax,  
Dripping down in pearly words onto the page?

Or maybe you're referring to the steaming honey-fog  
That inhabits first the glass, then the lungs,  
and finally, the creativity within the brain.

When I wax poetic, it sometimes itches like the wax of the inner ear,  
The Q-tip as my quill, I claw around  
For the proper words at the proper angle  
To alleviate me from the discomfort of the thoughts  
Which stick to the inner walls of my head.

Cosmetic insecurity is another reason to wax poetic:  
You apply the lyricism hotly to your skin, then yank it away.  
Though it hurts to gather the hairy words  
Your burning skin no longer feels grimy, and that is enough.

Some admire the completion of sealing away their poetic wax,  
Sharing it with the hands of mailmen and the doorsteps of acquaintances.  
A deliberate, molten dribble, and a stamp, an impression;  
Their correspondence wears wax seals like shields.

Ultimately, the most poetic wax may seem, at first, the easiest forgotten,  
Despite being the most permanent.  
It is buried, driven into humanity's dense tablature  
By the creatives in enough agony to write it down.

## **Happiness in All the Wrong Places, And Sadness in All the Right Ones**

How do you save someone from themselves?

Grey is worse than white and black;  
At least with both you get contrast.

Moonlight and sunshine treat tired faces differently:  
Night's luminescence pushes screams underwater  
While sunlight rubs raw the skin already stung with tears.

So when I suddenly get plopped into a November  
Where my two closest friends hit the peak of being suicidal,  
I have to just be thankful during that Thanksgiving  
That I am not in that same hellish place.

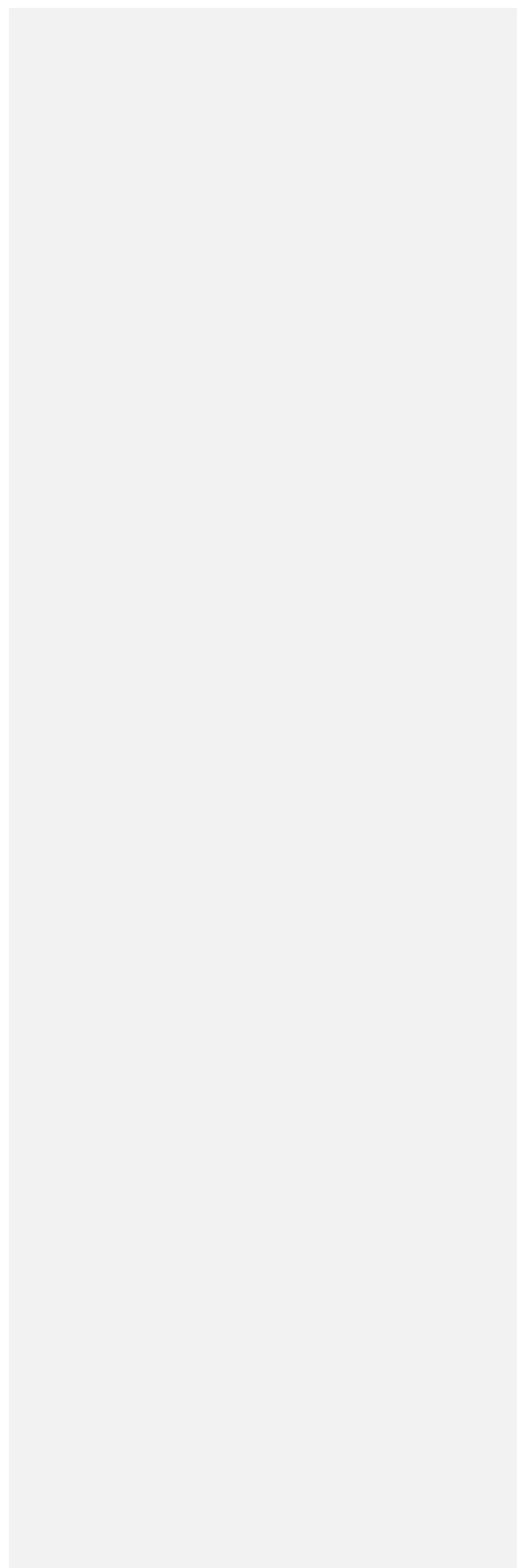
Have you ever tried to explain a color in words?  
That's how it feels to tell them they can be happy,  
How to tell them they deserve to feel okay.  
Peace is indeed a luxury, but it's one you can afford  
Since kindness is its price.

I wish I could do more than send heart-emoji reassurance  
On the static midnights and hectic Wednesday afternoons  
When you both need me most.  
I know it's not my burden to bear or my problem to solve,  
But watching you in such unrelenting agony  
Plants a pain in my own heart as well.

If tacky glue and glitter could rid you of this sadness  
I would buy out the local Michaels.  
Your life would go from matte black gloom  
To a dazzling tacky-glue masterpiece.  
I miss you both as stamp collections miss envelopes,  
The distant traces of damp tongues linger  
Beneath skin too many fingertips have pressed into.

Teary telephone talks make me wish I could look you in the eyes instead,  
That I could rub your shoulders and make you forget  
All the heaping self-doubt your heart's dragon hoards.  
It doesn't have to matter how deserving you feel you are  
Of what the world has or hasn't given you,  
Just let me remind you of ladybugs and rubber bouncy balls

And campfires and all kinds of other tiny miracles.  
If you're unhappy with what you think of yourself  
Then think of something else until that misperception is gone.



## **Sensing You**

I imagine you taste like the turn of a page,  
Or the removal of a coat still covered in snow.  
You also taste like “guess who” hands over your eyes.  
You taste like firework reverberations in your chest on July 4th  
And you taste like walking on gravel at midnight.

You smell like the weight of a video game controller in your hand,  
And the feeling of smiling at the ceiling.  
I imagine your scent  
as listening to a song you first heard at the 6th grade dance,  
And you smell of clinking glasses,  
And wooden beads between your forefinger and thumb.  
I imagine you smell like happy nervousness  
And the breeze that turns wheat into waves.

You look like succeeding in remembering a dream.  
I imagine you look like happy sighs escaping your throat,  
And the jostle you share with strangers on city busses.  
You look like bunching your fingers in the back of someone’s shirt,  
And finishing a piece of art for the last time.

I imagine you feel like a motion picture- one with a dog in it--  
And you feel like following the grain of wood with a pair of sleepy eyes.  
You feel like shrinking depression statistics.  
I imagine you feel like a soap cutting video,  
And you feel like a plain black screen before the credits roll.

I perceive you in such exquisite imagination,  
But an imagination can only take me so far.  
Teach me how you taste of clover honey,  
And smell like a greenhouse in simultaneous bloom,  
And feel like a home I’ve only experienced in solitude.

## A Face, Painted

I love the way your beard lands  
In tiny Van Gogh brush strokes across your cheeks.  
I know exactly the flourish Vincent must've used  
To capture the curl of your mustache,  
And I can internally measure out  
The dollops of alizarin crimson and burnt umber  
He mixed together to build the color

Your skin was painted by Renoir.  
At the very least, that's the way it looks  
In the kitchen lighting of your apartment.  
There's a smoother blending quality,  
Brush strokes that were confidently pushed into the canvas  
With bristle-bending force.  
Again, I know precisely what cyan paint glob  
I would smear into the pigments' mix  
The capture the tone of the skin around your eyes,  
And exactly how much zinc white.

Picasso painted you at the streetlight halfway between our beds.  
Violet geographies mapped over your nose and eyebrows,  
Juxtaposed to the tangerine tone that spreads over your jaw and lips  
The shadows your eyelashes create are bold brush strokes  
Applied deliberately with a steady hand  
Which outline the warm creases at the corners of your eyes.

--And your eyes are Andy Warhol prints, they have to be  
They crinkle with the same happiness of a Marilyn Monroe smile  
And fill me like the smell of Campbell's soup in December  
Besides, they shine in vivid permanence  
Despite only being one hue.  
My heart always finds the whole crayon box alive within them

DaVinci is responsible for your lips.  
I could kiss them timelessly, they're genius  
I could curate a whole museum to celebrate them  
Along with several traveling exhibitions.  
The only regret is to keep them behind glass  
Instead of resting atop mine.

Commented [JT1]: clunky



## **The Dialogue**

There is serenity here.  
Fresh lovers observing  
The silhouette spiderweb scars  
Which the aspen twigs drag across the sunset.

Tranquility resides unbroken--  
Until the first scream.  
Our own mouths open in alarm, no,  
Filthy, human curiosity.

We are motionless, both craving  
And detesting the notion  
Of rushing from our tiny stone jetty  
To see if the shouter needs help.

Our eyes meet,  
And a smile of concern, disgust, and wonder  
Almost journeys across my face, until!  
The second scream.

The tree branches sway with breezy laughter,  
Chuckling at our senseless adherence to our rock.  
My shoulders ride up as I shuffle my hands into my sleeves  
Not wanting the wind to catch them.  
Formerly idyllic, the lake's reflective skin ripples,  
Shaking away the remnants of its calm.

A final cry pierces this upset air--  
The loving, stupid bark of a dog.  
I tug on your cold fingers with mine  
And jest lightheartedly about their transaction,  
Setting aside the realization that the peak of this day  
Was the wordless dialogue of two strangers  
But giving voice to the fact  
That it reverberated between us