

Love Has Always Been a Habit

A boiling in the bones of my nose, I'm face down on too much mattress.

Every moment
since my wife
feels like 4 in the morning.



So hot with exhaustion, I can't sleep. My hands seek familiar forms. My hands find harder shapes beneath them. My hands force and fracture wet again. This was my mother's advice.

hob•ble |'hābəl| verb
[intrans.] proceed haltingly in speech or action:
Debt and habit kept it hobbling along.

These curtains glow a different streetlight. My mind struggles to replace, reorganize wrong silhouettes: the hand-crank radio, my sister's slant-top desk, a small heart-shaped box full of hairpins and fails.

In my mother's guest room
beside the garden
here the sun starts at my feet.
Over the blue and white quilt

my legs are gossamer
in the morning.
I watch as they catch fire,
forgetting I can leave.

Mom, I'm sad.

Why do you want to be sad?

I don't want to be sad.

I want my wife to be in love with me.

She's making me sad.

Is she holding a gun to your head?

Hey you, be sad. No.

It's a choice. You're in charge.

Only you can make you sad. Only you can make you happy.

I can't make myself happy.

I can't even make myself stop crying.

I'm depressed.

Hi Depressed,

I'm Nancy.

Help me water these plants.

hob•ble |hōb'əl| verb
[trans.] 1. be or cause a problem for
She was often hobbled by self-doubt.

If it is not marriage, it is the only thing. It's two thousand breakfasts.

(In the kitchen, the disruption of a fruit bowl, we had always just used Tupperware.)

2. To impede; hamper the progress of; be a hindrance or obstacle to
Love hobbled the disease.
Disease hobbled the habit.
Habit hobbled the home.
Home hobbled the desire.
Desire hobbled the love.

I am bow-ankled and unkind. Something is running in this house, a faint high-pitched neigh in the walls, the rock and jostle of old pipes. I used to think a hobby-horse was a hobbled-horse.

hob•ble |'hɒbl| verb

[trans.] (often be hobbled) tie or strap together (the legs of a horse or other animal) to keep from straying.

In my dreams, we are hobbled like racehorses.

hob•ble |'hɒbəl| noun

[in sing.] The rope or strap used to hobble them.

“(They Long to Be) Close to You” by The Carpenters.

The Coloring Throat

There is a song about your neck.

There are colors at the bottom of your throat that come out when you talk about chess, or when you look up after looking down to avoid my eyes trying to find the colors in your throat.

(you make a wood-tinted sound, like a wind splitting itself at a sharp angle)

Your hands are smaller than mine and make me feel like a big, strong man.

I was so used to being the little woman that I forgot what a hand on my thigh felt like beside a grocery list. (bumblebee humming, light blue with fringe)

My groceries took up half a basket and now I want to make every egg dish for you.

Scrambled:

garlic

dill

Poached:

sea salt

honey mustard

Fried:

Sriracha

Yukon potatoes

Quiche:

Can we make a filling without cream?

Soufflé

Would you eat it even without cheese?

You were making vegan focaccia from scratch for me

and while I chopped garlic for an avocado spread

you danced to The Smiths and pushed sticky black fingers into white fleshy dough.

You work with grease

and no matter how hard you scrub, you say,

I can't get clean.

So I eat the dirt of your fingers.

Weekend afternoons, we're alone

mouths hemmed in coal.

I thought love felt like family dinners in bed.

I thought love was like a mailbox – sometimes empty, sometimes full,

with varying good or bad news, but always there,

always with news,

even when it is no news.

I thought love felt like no news.

I find faults with your body and I don't resent them.

(this is mauve over the carotid artery)

I reach with my hands but you want to hide them and keep them

from white-knuckle fingers. (that wooden sound)
So I take off my shirt and show you my scars, still red
and dimpled, like caterpillar skin,

(when they took an organ from my body, left a plastic plate in my chest)
and the tube coming out of my abdomen with its clicking clasp that leaves an ampersand
imprint on your back when we sleep naked and I hold you against me because my
stomach aches from rejected eggs and I need the pressure.

Though your girlfriend is better at that since her form
fits into the nook of mine pleated
and she really does have one of the best asses I have ever seen or held or held against my
body when I felt sick. (this is more blue and yellow than a pale shade of grey, and wave
sounds – very, very close)