

The Word Want

First, let's start with what we don't want. We don't want a dichotomy that splits us into boys and girls who don't fit the picture perfect. Men and women of questionable race who sneak around in the middle of the night. A tangle of limbs, an aversion to deviants, a counterculture forming the category of merging that no one wants to talk about.

What we want is a blurring of the lines where the boundaries overlap, sharp reliefs where the areas of overlap solidify our relations. We want a language of the grey area where acceptance is a prerequisite and is thus rendered a meaningless fact. We want actions that stand for themselves, actions that don't have to justify why they are, but are willing to do so if someone wants to listen.

We want children that want to be doctors and educators, or else undercover assassins that will rid the world of evil; and if our children can't figure out whether they want to heal, teach or kill, we want them to build and maintain societies or attend to the breaking of rules. We want failures to succeed as artists and farmers, losers to ascend into middling management, and we want the disabled to show us what we don't know about ourselves, what hellfire slumbers in that fleeting twinge.

We want people that deeply feel and just as deeply care, and we want them to do something smart with all of those useless feelings. We want truth and justice and beauty, and we want death death death to take a hike hike hike. And then, we want to know death as the backbone of life, to grow old with it like a spine that takes a lifetime to open and flower.

We want to feel firm in the conviction that everything happens in love, even the hatred that spits in the face of everything we've meant so far. We want to overcome all of our hidden resentment and malevolence, be it towards the mirrors on the walls or the mirrors eating and breathing everywhere around us.

We want our vulnerability to be as valuable as immortality, and the sense to recognize that it always was. We want to go forth without pain, and if pain is unavoidable, we want to take pain with us to where it will no longer be able to hurt.

Note with the Hand I Sent You

Suppose I could spare one. Hope the left will do
as I'd have a hard time writing without the right.
To fill you in on its background, it's always been
somewhat wiry, but don't let that belie its strength,
you can count on it if you're ever about to fall.
It likes oatmeal and seaweed soaps, scratching chins,
the occasional massage in the middle of the palm.
It doesn't like being balled up into a fist or pointing
out faults. Leave the nails a little long, and every
once in a while, gaze wonderingly at the scars.
On grey rainy mornings, play it some *irie* music.
When it starts feeling the groove, give it a smooth
surface to tap along. Offer it a glove as soon as
the air smarts against the cheek. Keep it happy
with plenty of boob to feel and it'll gladly help
you carry groceries when the rest of your hands
are full. And when the world seems too much,
when you need a hand on your shoulder,
it'll be there, you won't even have to ask.

A Bird through the Window

There's a bird in the tree out there.
It's singing a lovely song
that I would like to know the words to.
I would also like to know why I shouldn't shoot it
for waking me up. Why I wouldn't want to be shot
if I woke up someone and left myself open
to their ire. Because there's an implicit
understanding, a trust,
a feeling of affection for one another
as fellow inhabitants of this world,
fellows who share in its space and of its bounty,
who do little harm and hope not to be harmed—
is that reason enough? I could make up countless
reasons why not, but they wouldn't be
very reasonable, would be mostly excuse,
to come right out with it. And so I listen
to its song, and I listen to my irritation
ebb away, and I think the duet they form
is a lovely thing; I think I'm fortunate
to be here, mostly harmless despite my scowl,
mostly unharmed despite my pains,
writing about something
that didn't happen to me as if it did,
because other things like it have happened,
and what I meant to cull from them
something in me chose
to cull from this instead.

Shamafelung

To interpret a man's morality through his decision when given the choice of shame or embarrassment.

I'm a stranger in my own midst.

Even my semen doesn't recognize me.

Got lost on the path up into the cemetery on the hill.

Never made it to a single headstone.

A blackbird neither crow nor vulture nor raven spread his wings at me.

I told him I wasn't feeling particularly sexy at the moment.

He said he wasn't asking if I felt like it.

A flurry of feathers and crunching bone is all I recall of what followed.

How I made it out is the mystery of my missing toe.

Left foot, middle piggy.

When I came to, the nub was already scar.

Looking at the perfect couples on either side, I knew the sacrifice had bought us two more years to wedge against the door, and then, another toe, or if not, a head to roll hooplike over the prairie.

Which it'll be, I haven't yet decided.

I'm open to advice, if you have any worth being open to.

In the Woods at Night

These woods, I know them, or something in me
remembers their dark scent of pine.

Have I been here before? The ground feels like
somewhere I slept once, for a long time.

What is this body that asks itself who it is,
what it is, and where? Those sounds, in the bushes,
without a face, are they life, do they belong to someone?

The sense of hearing wants to claim them for its own,
unless fear wants to reject them, in which case
danger may be imagined, or it may be avoided.

The threat is no less felt for originating in the body
instead of in the night. A threat of its own.
The body or the night? Both, both.

The night's body presses like light against the skin,
but no warmth in its touch, no revelation in its cast,

only this blind, blind searching for context, for a world
where monsters cannot be, for the form of a doubt

that I know, I know is watching from the shadows.