

Poem 1 - For David, who lives on a boat

I'm going
Due to minor things
Delicate mediocrities
Like plums, and figs, and salt, and wings

My syllables are tired and cold
Scrambling the wet and dark for hold
On you, your surface slippery with all your previous departures
This one no different
So I'm told.

My stories cower in the corners of this wooden and crustacean- covered tomb
That reluctantly expels me, and them all, every so often when we seem to crowd the room.
When we get loud, and rowdy with our joys and our dismays
Your crackling home is not one for the chips that fly when mammoth trees are planed
Your home is incensed, and barely contains the kindling and the flammables from your past days
Perhaps that's why you keep it on the waves.

The problem is
I still don't know
Have I been sent here, on this vessel, on this perfectly imperfect shore
To give? To take?
Or just to make a humbler whore?
You see, no one's ever rejected all my fruit before.

And yet I lay here, as my mutiny deflates
And while I slowly pack away my figs, my plums, my grace, my grapes in crates

Hoping that, even when my memory fades
I will always remember every rust and every blue
Of every little bird that fit into that tiny porthole view
And the bruised sky that waxed and waned,

And you.

Poem 2 - On Lanni Smith, the redhead

She was the fruit that,
Red and ripe
Sprawled shamelessly on tables.

How alabaster danced under her gait!
Her feet upon the world consoled
with more than just her feeble weight
And truth be told
The way she loved was fiercer than the breath of dragons in old fables.

Live recklessly!
She told me once.
Demand that you be all consumed
Not swiftly, from a plate, in spoons
But with the patient hunger of wise hunters
Who feast from memory for many moons.

Like nectar, run, down necks of lovers
Travel on backs of hands from lips
Back into mouths and, in a full ellipse
Don't look behind you as your footsteps stain life's covers.

Poem 3 - On loving someone who is far

Birds settle by her window to repose
While weathers lash about between the sky and earth, tilting the shores, passing delinquent blows.
Lovers forego her love. She knows.

She draws the curtains, nestled in leafy folds of inside storms.

Her nature forms
From broken pieces, rotten leaves, burned bridges and a whim
A vessel that barely contains itself, and life, and maybe some of him.

He may be elsewhere, but he's not elsewhere.

And while the ground shifts from her tired feet,
pulls hither the carpeted dusty soil, the fallen murals, wells deplete
And pushes thither the white shores, the unrestricted views
the concrete fleet

She dances wearily, but dances. To their beat.

Poem 4 - My Parting

Grey-feathered, sleeping beast
My parting shares my bed with me most nights, beneath my sheets
This heavy-chested mystic sorrow bird, sometimes it weeps
Sometimes it thrashes 'bout my dreams with not quite fully spread and lightly broken wings.

When i walk out the gate, it glides from branch to branch, not letting me roam far
from the penumbra of its towering, thick, foggy cry of war.

Yes, war. My winged soldier, my parting bird, box of unfinished stories, casket of loose ends.
Rolling out maps, drawing a route that bends and bends, feeding this brokenness that tries, but never
mends.

By dusk, you shrink to hollow feathers, barely bones. Your giant claws can hardly keep you on your
once-majestic and now wilted jacaranda thrones.

I pick you off your perch with gentleness,
my tired parting bird, my Phoenix,
my every day a little less.

Someday we'll wake up, and we'll walk outside
Where ocean winds will blow me open.
There, from inside me
you will rise, inside a swallow.
And you will fly, my parting bird, and join the others of your kind in their wild frolic, in their ecstatic,
perilous, ever ascending lie
Across the blue sea, and the even bluer sky.

Poem 5 - The woes of one who always leaves

Winged things string past me as the cups of dawn spill over with conviction
Sad thoughts, cushioned in downs, kept infinitely warm by their abysmal friction.

They bounce, gently at first, against my temples
Then boldly loot my vaults of sleep.
Jubilant, then, for chests of gold
They had no arms to carry.
Now they weep.

My days in every home are numbered
And squinting women make me cut my trees.
My soul calls fellow souls to join the journey
Only to ask them, at the border, please, to leave.

The eyes of places and of mothers and of beings that I stripped of me
Follow with bated breath as I thrash my way free
Joined by a radius of bleeding roots and tired, calloused feet.
My bags heavy with all the love I sowed, and reaped, and could not eat.

There are no resting places on this road; no solace for this exiled queen.
I am condemned forever, just to chase the distant backdrop to the current scene.

One day I'll break under the weight of your forgiveness. Here's my testament:
I can't make my way up the jagged rocks that line the rivulet to that forsaken, starry firmament.