

## Musings from a rooftop deck. XVIII

I never liked the smell of ocean air.  
The heaviness of heat and water  
meant to weigh you down,  
sap you of your strength.  
The bits of sand,  
mere remnants of mountains,  
compose an endless beach of moments  
when something good,  
and strong,  
and durable  
was worn down to nothing.

It was the waves that drew me.  
To be pummeled and beaten,  
the rising crests carrying me down  
to the shallow troughs,  
always the troughs,  
which took me to the shore.

Like the land before me,  
I'm worn down to nothing.

It isn't so much a dream to be here  
as a brush with reality.  
The unrelenting tides demand my mind  
and I give it willingly.  
Was it not here,  
on a calm placid day,  
that I first realized I'd become broken?

Broken.

Broken.

I keep writing that word  
hoping it will fix me.

I spoke it as I drank the waters  
of the Mississippi.  
I carved it in the trees on the  
sloping valleys of Wyoming.  
I imprinted it in the mud that  
tried to keep me in the canyons of Utah.  
I howled it with cayotes  
and sliced it into my arm,  
gifting my blood to the rocks,  
rubbing their dirt in my wounds,  
asking, begging, pleading,  
just this once,  
here and now,  
make me whole!

But then again,  
I never much understood the notion  
of completion.

There's a terror to finality.  
There's a terror to the known.  
Isn't that, ultimately,  
what drove me from you?

Yet this isn't about you.  
Or maybe it is.  
I can no longer tell.

But here in this swamp,  
mired and rancid,  
I can think only of salt –  
the one redemption of sea breeze –  
the anathema to thirst –  
and of you,  
whichever you are,  
always the latter.

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## The Fall

It would be so easy to jump.

From here  
it wouldn't  
take  
long.

Is it true my heart  
would burst  
before I even met rock?  
Can what's broken  
even burst?

Is it sacrilege  
to sacrifice  
under Angel's Landing?  
Will they save me  
with their  
wings?

Force my hand  
to heresy  
when I beat their  
chest,  
curse their name,  
demand of their arms:  
who are you  
to decide  
my fate?

What a dream it is  
to fall.  
What a nightmare it is  
to fall.

What a wonder it is  
to think  
that in just one year  
I did both.

It would be so easy to jump.  
Just a body.  
Just me.  
One moment and  
gone.

It should be so easy to live.  
To soar like the birds –  
eat  
like the kings –  
laugh  
like hyenas.

These rocks have enough  
red.  
These trees miss  
their leaves.

For now.

*Be patient.*  
*Go slow.*  
She pulls me along.

*The view is ahead.*

It's always ahead.

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## Undone

I want to be  
        undone.

In my younger years,  
before the realization  
that nothing good  
        can last,  
I would have loathed  
        the idea.

In more recent years,  
despite the realization  
that nothing lost  
        is found,  
I ventured onward  
        for you.

To be made unwhole  
is not to be unsolved,  
but to be hunted  
and chewed.  
Now scarred and callused,  
you ask to be remade.

But what if happiness is to be  
once mangled;  
To be taken apart,  
looked at in whole,  
and *hated*  
for everything that you are.

By you.  
        And you alone.

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## Repercussions of overexposure

When you told me,  
on the phone,  
the sickly pallor of my skin,  
did you not realize  
the chunks  
that had been bitten from me  
by gluttons in the night?

Did you not realize, too,  
that you had been among them?

I rip my tongue  
from where it rests,  
and supplicate before you.  
*Here lies my treason,*  
*as you see it,*  
*take it as my shame.*

I cut myself in pieces,  
and leave it for the crowd.

Not blood, nor ichor, nor meaning  
pours from all my wounds.  
Mere water, and salt, and anger  
lie among the wake.

And so you take it.  
And so they take it.  
Saying all the while:

See here,  
the folly,  
of thinking more than God.

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## Finally Free

This body of mine,  
hated in my youth,  
on that park bench,  
where words tore at my flesh.  
The seeds of revolution planted,  
I conspired with my mind  
to lessen myself.

A lesson in lessening.

My home base is my debasement.  
In that basement,  
hidden in the cabinet,  
glass stuck in my palms,  
I laughed at my stigmata.  
To be attacked is what I wanted.

It wasn't for you that I fell,  
though I did it all the same.  
Self flagellation, in my imagination,  
left far fewer scars.

But it's scars that we've wanted  
to let us know that we've lived.  
A body perfected  
by a mass of imperfection.  
A living reminder that I  
am more than just my mind.  
A living reminder that I  
will never let it win.

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