

Poetries from the Middle Ages

1. I think Heaven is Like This Beach

I think heaven is like this beach.

there is an ocean.

sand.

old white people.

But instead of advertisements for dolphin cruises and top-tier parasailing, there would be ads for the things you need in heaven.

an earth pass.

wing replacements.

halo whitening kits.

heaven would certainly sound like this.

waves crashing and a New in R&B Playlist.

you can see children in the distance and imagine their sounds.

but they are far away and all you hear is the waves and new music in the genre you love.

kid noises, laughs and cries, are only memories.

you no longer have to endure.

the water is clear.

and only home to water.

nothing lives in heaven.

You can put your feet in and let the water come all the way to your shoulders.

2. Hell is This Balcony That Overlooks the Beach

hell is this balcony that overlooks the beach

I can hardly hear the waves from here

what I can hear is

music from the Mondo Ice truck as it plays a tintinnabulation on repeat

not loud enough to drown out the crying baby at the pool below

the splashes are less than the waves

fat people do flips

and stand around in still water

kids run and scream

I can see heaven from this

fourth-floor balcony

with the blue hightop

and four ugly chairs

I am sentenced to one

The railing is the gate

for which there is no escape

there is no crying in hell

you gotta keep your poker face

3. being and being in love

no one explains to you how bland things get as you age

I smell

neutral--

like unscented soaps and lotions

The musky smell of youth leaves you in your mid-40s.

Even fights with my lover are civil

quiet.

democratic.

Lover quarrels of my youth

used to be an all-out top-of-your-lungs

throwing-watches-out-of-car-windows

because

"I don't have time for this shit!"

profane arguing

with someone who smelled like the earth

and scorched dirt

and rotting fruit.

today I argue with a

"I don't like where this conversation is heading."

and graceful exits

and mediations

with someone who also smells

clean.

No one tells you why everything smells inoffensive or

about how the bleeding pain of

broken hearts

or headaches from yelling young love and hate and jealousy

is replaced with constant pain in your knees and

shoulders

and hips from sitting at desks

and trying to get back in the gym.

we've convinced ourselves that we are building meaning

by building decks.

and doing well at work

will ignite fires

that only burn sometimes

nobody can pinpoint or plan for the fire

it may reignite after one of you reads an article about

spicing up your sex life

or a friend texts to meet for lunch

or someone else finds it interesting that

your lover grew up Baha'i

it returns and you feel the way you did

that one day you spent in a San Francisco park with wine and

beautiful shoes.

4. Goggles and Growth

47 years as an Earth dweller
and I never learned to swim.
My planet is 71 percent water
My zodiac is Cancer
I am drawn to bodies of water
But just to gaze and wonder.
I never learned to kick
breathe
or fling my arms in the ways that allow
the body to live with the water.
loving side looks from my daughter—a natator on her dad's side
I would do the thing my body and cosmic birthright compelled me to do.

Both waterproof and transparent,
My goggles—an acrylic contradiction
able to protect my eyes
but allow me to see.
protection from the water that may hurt my eyes
and from the embarrassment
which hurts my ego.
They let me see my daughter,
My new teacher
waving to me in the water,
our home,
smiling proudly that her mama
is learning to swim.

5. Being happy

Happiness does little for poetry.

Pulses remain steady
the heart never aches
it leaves little for the brain to
conjure
nothing is secret
pleasure is pumped
on a consistent basis
A steady flow
from a pipe
constant in diameter
at constant velocity
It is as unnatural
It is scientific
A formula for

blinking and breathing.
Sometimes it is a real smile
With teeth.
It knows not to fear
It is aware
Records play familiar songs

There is one season—Spring.