

Everybody's Boy
By Matthew A. Michelangelo

How wholesome you must seem,
How noble you must be,
To abide by the hubris of your father's hand.
Am I now an idol torn, a muse destroyed?
Did he steal you? Did he smite you?
Can you not confide in me anymore?

My little Icarus,
Do you not remember your dreams, good lord?
Well, I do. You are more than a son,
More than the wings left scorned,
More than those eyes, sky-blue and worn.
Do not forsake me. I did not forsake you.

My little Apollo.
You've become everybody's boy.
Yet what of me, your Hyacinth?
To whom must I pray, to whom must I turn
When you treat me like a lying prophetess?
Look at me! Looking at look through my eyes.

My Nemean Lion, when have you ever fixed your gaze on the floor?
You were a warrior for us once. Are you no more?
What is the point of being everybody's boy,
When it costs more than your very own sword?
You were why I battled Troy. Yet here you stand before me—
A Trojan horse.

I was your little Aphrodite.
How dare you erase the kisses I gave thee?
I resent you for letting your light be consumed.
I tried to bottle the acrimony in your eyes,
To lock it away where Pandora could never find.
Yet somehow, your whiskey-neat voice fled.

Withheld, only freed when demanding I remind you
Who you are, I cannot; I know only the name.
Both of us are fools, though, my Eros.
Lying that our eyes have not frozen to ice.
I've mistaken Furies for muses, sure.
Though you turn devotion to ruin.

Swore my eyes would turn your whole body to stone.
Have you lost yourself in the illusion of glory?
I made you an endless day; a skyless night.
Yet, you grace me with blight.
To whom must I pray for the return of a king, forsworn?
My Sunbarer. My Little Lyre. My Apollo. Return!

Of Ink & Ivy

By Matthew A. Michelangelo

You're English ivy, clogging my arteries—
An invasive wonder, siphoning
All the natural splendor from me.
A quaint prison intertwined with the trees,
Flowers, and weeds.
Does the forest know your true qualities?
You will hoard and steal the light of day.
Mischievously, you will climb and snake, disguising
Your insatiability as a stoic personality.

I would've given whatever you needed.
Would've watered your roots in the rain.
Why did you suffocate? What did you say to them?
All of a sudden, Eden confuses the words
Conspire and commiserate.
You're ink that defiles these pages like a Rorschach blot
Left me with an illness I can't fabricate.
Blood, sweat, and tear stains.
Why will no white-out obliterate you?

Why are you always there, in the words,
Impishly exhorting my ruin,
Twisting every word I write, bruising.
Turning my pen strokes to blasphemy,
Tempting me to write down what I promised never to tell.
Stop swearing up and down that my poems
Are spells. Just another way to gain sympathy.
My love, you do bad, all by yourself.
You're the one who crafts curses—
That not even I would intonate out loud.

It's futile to smudge, burn, or scribble you out.
I can't tear the pages counterclockwise enough,
Nor angle my knife perfectly to, press down and
Slice you through and through.
No, it's always you. All the salt world,
Springked around my door would be useless.
It's always you.
Hunter green leaves that infest my words.
It's always your likeness crawling under my door.

I wish I could tell your daddy how
His golden boy is tarnished brown—
That his golden boy was never golden anyhow.
His sweet baby boy has always been ink and ivy,
Sick and thriving—a monster on these pages
that he swore to me, he'd read.

Allegheny Crayfish, 2001
By Matthew A. Michelangelo

Twenty-five years have passed,
I still think of those August mornings,
The heat being the only air to breathe,
Playing in the creek, past the field
Where my great-grandmother's sunflowers
Transformed into castles of gold.

Oh, the hours we'd spend in the sunbathed canopy
Creating legends of who to be, just you and me.

We forgot about the weight of our burdens,
Like how a mean ol' king split us up,
Putting us in different throne rooms.
Hard to believe, we weren't actually adventurers,
We didn't discover any uncharted territory.
The Allegheny crayfish weren't leviathans nipping at our feet.

No. Our Job was to jump from rock to mossy rock
In a tumbling hopscotch until the sun bathed in the water beneath,
Turned the creek into sherbet-colored lava.
I told you not to steal the treasure. Fear not!
The lightning bugs have awoke to join the fun,
To home glory! May I ask, what happened to us?

After we packed up our excursion,
After we returned to civilization.
Everything changed.
I know we weren't on some hero's journey.
I know this town isn't meant for boys like us
But why did you stop speaking to me?