

POETRY AT THE BACKYARD

September 14, 2022
Tahoe Poetry Collective



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Tree Personal Ad

Marcy Risque

I am

splendiferous & strong-limbed
a little rough around the edges
tall, well-proportioned, and mature

I like

Winter rains; can deal with hot & dry too

I am

pungent of spicy earth moss sugar

I enjoy

companionship and plenty of space

I like

to feel the air caress me
to touch tiny droplets of moisture on my tips

I aspire

to great heights and
therefore need support

Am seeking

a balanced amalgam:
moisture-temperature-light

I want

to put down deep roots and
a bed that's soft yet firm

I'm looking

for ideal conditions for stability
to reproduce
for my seeds to thrust outward
into the expanse
of centuries

Tahoe City

Marcy Risque

An ancient volcano
Now lake
Nestled like a jewel
Fed by mountains
All around
This year's drought
Sucking at its shores.
Here for tennis camp
For Aidan
I sleep
As one drowning,
My body needing
Rest as if it can't
Get enough oxygen.
I look for my bearings,
My mental compass
Searching—
Who comes here
With the latest cars
and shiny demeanors?
To me,
It's a foreign
Country.
A resort
built solely for
Recreation and this town
The same—but underneath
It all the forest stands
Humming with its
Own ethereal music.
Aspens whisper
Their secrets
In the meadow
Breezes, every leaf
Turning in the sun.

Tonglen, while I walk

Marcy Risque

While walking in the woods
tiny twigs
crunch & snap
underfoot.
I think of things,
of beginnings & endings
How it would be ok, even
fine,
to end
as a tree does,
its limbs softening down,
back into the ground...
Dogs bark me back
to the present
I inhale deeply
pine, cedar, moist decay
A fertile bouquet
a prelude to more growth,
we like to say
I think of skies
and other places
cities, farm or jungle,
endless prairies whose
horizons merge with nothing,
Slow rivers in canyon shadow
winding tunnels
under prehistoric towns
fishing boats, seabirds
children kicking a ball
somewhere
And the ancient ones
their faces marble etchings

I imagine voices
singing faint bells soft
wind
of people laughing
and doors closing against the
night
Somewhere a child cries out
Language spills off tongues
like wet music
Across the world
there is a stampede
of dust
and somewhere,
the sun rises.
I inhale thoughts of chaos
hurricanes fires
sorrow & misunderstanding
and exhale sadness
and love
I breathe in
Elephants, polar bears
rising seas
and breathe out
warmth from my heart
which radiates
outward from a depth
of stillness
a potent longing
for wholeness, for all of us.

A Short History of Yesterday Morning

Marcy Risque

Such stillness on this peaceful morning
After the tidal waves of wind
Yesterday—torrents of air
Pushing the tops of tall trees—
Energy the crackling kind.
Then a little later, a spark somewhere
Smoke wafted through our house
As I emerged from the night
Waking and walking through rooms
Wondering about whose burn pile
Or maybe ours from two days before
There was no smoke in the sky
And I thought no more of it
Then neighbors called “be ready
To evacuate soon”
And my mind reeled
As I hadn’t prepared
And was unsure what to do first
In my robe having breakfast or was
Subsequent hours spent packing
Adrenaline my friend
As I went through motions
focusing on the exhale
I put things away and washed dishes
And felt ridiculous doing so
The sky was blue and clear
Wind dancing pushing pulling itself
Cat carriers on the front steps
Ready and open like mouths agape
And to my astonishment
Each cat waltzed into each one
We went about our day
haltingly listening
For changes or news

In the evening we put some things away
But part of me hesitated still doubted
Now—on this warm still morning
In May—I hear birds, water, insects
There is peace in this tiny kingdom
Dogs, cats, and donkey standing
Like a still life
Sun behind trees
As if the possibility
Of erasure is impossible
Even as I know full well
It is not

Your Birth (For Ivy)

Marcy Risque

In a timeless moment between smile & received smile,
in the tumbled rocks that roll from river mouths,
in the clash of swords
and the war between worlds
and the love that spawned this poem;
in predawn twilight you tumbled
with rocky mountains riding shotgun over granite,
stones' long shadows cresting & plunging
to form the earth's mantel
You came with streams of light,
filling every opening & electrifying
atoms into form
while eons of shape-moving phenomena
evolved you came, laughing
your way across clouds
With two-leggeds & four-leggeds you joined
The tumult of evolution
In all its slimy wonder,
Careening in and out of life
in all its myriad colors

2
There you were, molding tools in fire
Tearing meat with your hands
Jousting with the knights
Watching with the ladies
A handkerchief catching the breeze
Ships traversed wet wilderness
In search of spices for kings,
There you were,
Gliding through desert seas
Of raging sun, you caravanned
With camel hordes

And music carried you
Through the blizzard of centuries,
The quest for life repeating itself
Again & again
In the human pool of prayer & destruction
You have flown, are flying
Through centuries of torment &
Wonder, your body the grass blade,
The ladybug,
molten lava of the uncreated, of
desire reproducing itself

3
It was all there and it is all here,
You & protozoa & fungi,
You and vast oceans of consciousness
Waving & flowing through millennia
Fields of flowers and humans sighing
Singing & dying, the very life
Of sticky life, continually birthing itself
Rolling into the past and back from the future
Your own body in its dancing cells of love,
The conquest of the unnecessary
The drive for completion &
The knowing of all creation
With eyes that see the beginning
As well as the unending

Heart of the World

Marcy Risque

We see that things are changing
Yet the moon rises nightly
Its luminous face silent, witnessing

Kindnesses everywhere
And light's piercing beauty
We sometimes don't see

Roads in the far north buckle
The opal sky trembles
While heat rises vaporous

Some of us are afraid

Yet here is the moon,
Mirror to our own stillness
While the sun-gold hills wait,
Listening

A sadness fills, then empties
Opening us to the deep heart
Of the world

Tenderness is a rising tide
Available to us always.

(Fake) Car Girl

Miranda Jacobson

2015

I got my driver's license six months after all of my friends. The reasoning was a mixture of my mom's fear of her first born driving a car and the lack of money we had to pay for the classes required. So I waited impatiently while the rest of my friends began to drive while I was studying for the permit test.

My first driving instructor was a loudmouth man who held the steering wheel the entire time I drove. His hand rested at six-o-clock, just above the place where my thighs met. My hands shook on the wheel and he told me I was a bad driver and if I weren't so afraid of authority, I would have told him he smelled like last week's asparagus and he was a shitty instructor.

The next time I took a driving lesson, it was with a woman named Robin and she smoked cigarettes every thirty minutes. It's hard for me to remember being sixteen with Robin and learning to drive, but I do remember she came to my driver's test and sat with my mom. They were smoking outside together when I drove up, and when I told them I passed they both tossed their cigarettes to the concrete in celebration.

2016

My first car was a Ford 1991 F250. The only functioning mirror was the driver-side view, my feet barely reached the pedals, and the alignment was so off, I could turn the steering wheel fully twice before the car would actually begin to turn. The seats were covered in cigarette smelling stained carpet that felt soft to the touch, even after all those years. My mom bought it for me for \$1500 and I drove it everywhere.

I learned in the truck that I loved to drive just to drive. I'd pre-choose playlists and spend hours driving around, learning the complicated streets of my refinery suburbia that was Benicia. My boyfriend at the time used to laugh at me when I'd pull up to his house in my monstrous truck blasting Taylor Swift and wearing shorts so short I'm surprised I didn't feel more shame wearing them in front of his parents. But that was the other thing about having a car. We didn't have to stay at the house anymore.

We started by driving to get food, driving to the movies, doing things no teenagers, or anyone, for that matter, should be doing in movie theaters, and then fooling around in the car before we went our separate ways for the night. We went to San Francisco on the weekends, went to Berkely for lunch, and went shopping at the mall way too often.

Back then, when we were sixteen, I'd like to think we were really in love. It makes me happier remembering the truck if I remember us in love when I had it (mostly because I can't stop seeing his face scrunch up in a mixture of laughter and love when I pulled up to his house the first day I had it).

2016 (con.)

I've been in two car accidents in my life. The first was the day of my junior prom. My friend and I had just got our makeup done at her house and she drove us to the store to pick up some kind of flower I still can't pronounce to this day, and someone T-boned my side of the car. It was low impact and we were totally fine, but that was the day I realized the world is full of people who really have no idea what they're doing, especially behind the wheel of a two-ton piece of metal that could bend faster than I could. The fear kept me from letting anyone else drive me around for quite a while.

The second car accident I was in was two weeks before my eighteenth birthday. A guy I was talking to rear-ended me on the way to school and totaled my new car. (His insurance company said they fixed the problem but the car still doesn't drive so you tell me.) At the time I was driving my second car, a 1992 Dodge Stealth. It was a deep blue with a faded paint job specked with rust and dents from my inability to pay attention when I opened a car door. That accident taught me I could be the best driver in the world and still just be at the wrong place at the wrong time. It also taught me it's impossible to attempt to date a boy who totaled your car.

My first boyfriend used to text and drive a lot, which I honestly could have been okay with if he was any good at it. But the problem was he would look down or not have a pre-chosen playlist and decide to listen to Frank Ocean and then he wanted to hear Post Malone, and in all the time he was looking for the song, he was also swerving to avoid the things he was about to hit.

We went to his frat formal and took his friend from high school and his date. The entire time I clutched the side of the door while we drove up I-50 and he told me I needed to relax before finally falling tired of me. No one else was worried we were going to fly off the side of the road as we got further into South Lake, higher up the mountain, driving as fast as I would normally go if I was driving. But I wasn't.

2019

I don't like loud noises.

Let me rephrase. I don't like unexpected loud noises. The feeling is similar to what I would think a hammer against my skull feels like mixed with the feeling I got when Loud-Mouth put his hands above my thighs on the steering wheel.

So least to say, I really hate car alarms. When I turned twenty I was living in the dorms of my college campus still and on the weekends, car alarms would go off and the only thing I could do was stare up at my ceiling, praying to a God I highly doubted that someone would walk outside and make the sound stop. But hours would pass and I would question my sanity and then finally it would be silent as if there was no noise at all. The air was clean of the impurities that came from the man-made metal and then we could all sleep again.

In between these times I had faced hardships, like almost losing my mom, being rejected on every level possible, and going on a date with depression. But the mornings were always the same; a car alarm and my acceptance that the next day would always come.

Now I see car alarms when I walk down the street and they are silent. Bright, penetrating light against the cold air night that leaves my eyes chasing after yellow dots in its wake. I don't hear the noise and I don't know if it's because I've blocked out the blaring or if it's really not there at all. Now I'm stuck seeing the pitch-black night on my walk home illuminated with piss yellow lights and a high pitch sound in my ear trying to replicate the noise I know should be there.

I still hate loud noises but I never thought I'd miss the sound of a car alarm.

2020

My car for the last three years has been a 2008 Scion XD that some guy I slept with nicknamed 'The Toaster'. The white paint was fresh when I bought it, but over time began to resemble snow that had been walked through by dogs, and then a few kids after school, before finally being pushed aside by a shovel. But when people got inside they'd comment on how big the inside felt or how it was surprising I could be such a clean freak yet my car looked like I might have lived in it. The Toaster took me across mountain ranges, spending hours chugging along I-80 to Reno to visit a man who moved without asking me to come with him. I used to sing some song about driving to love, but sex in my car after six years so the roommates don't know isn't love, and my mechanic agrees with me every time I say it. So it must be true.

The difference between this car and all the others is I helped pay for it. I've invested hundreds, if not thousands of dollars fixing broken parts I only sort of understand, pep-talking the damn thing as if we're friends that get mimosas on the weekends. The people I know will come and go, sit in my front seat and tell me they love me, but at the end of the day, it's just the car and me.

Driving down another road that'll take me to my next burst of success; and sometimes the loneliest road truly needs to be traveled alone.

2021 (Tentative)

I spend way too much time in my car, driving to people who only sort of care about me, hiding from people who actually love me, and leaving the things I don't want to carry inside in the back seat like it's my closet. But the car is the only thing I have. The only thing I can call mine and mean it.

I find myself wanting to be in the car more than I want to be anywhere else sometimes. I hear people talking to me and I feel people brushing past me in the places I need to be, but I can't stop thinking about packing a bag and tossing it in my car, and leaving. I don't know where I would go but the idea of rubber burning against cracked tar melting in the sun in the name of taking me somewhere new reminds me of how I felt the day I saw my mom and Robin throw their cigarettes on the ground in solidarity to my success.

Like I could do anything in the world because at least someone believed in me.

2015

I dream about driving down the road and right out of this small town I call home. I don't know where I'll go but I just feel lucky I have a car to take me there.

SOUPSONG

Aimee Lowenstern

Originally published in Barzakh Magazine

Oh no. Oh no. I am me.
I am me within this dough-dense body,
and I can feel time thickening around me
in a clear and humid broth.
It's boiling this made-up meatsoul,
my soft and ghostpearl intricacies
melting into grease.
I watch everything I have ever done
cook down down down into nothing,
though their flavors grow stronger
and stronger in the stuttering pot.
By the scent of me now, I am sure
I am rotten. There is no hunger I could sate.
When they open me up
with their forks, they will find
the strange texture of my pinkpoached brain;
their lips will curl back
in disgust.

Eclectic Love Poem

Aimee Lowenstern

In the process of being published and cannot be printed here at this time.

Recipe

Aimee Lowenstern

Originally published in The Healing Muse

Took the remains of Eve's apple and made a scrumptious little fritter.
Took the body of Christ and made French toast.
See how love can transform things? Let me feed you.

I want you to eat well.
Took the pomegranate from Persephone
and made a curd. Eggs, sugar, butter,
it's very easy. I'll show you sometime.
It's amazing how red it is,
how little I think of blood,
these days.
See how love can transform things?
Come to my kitchen and we'll make scones.

In Situ

Scott Green

Martis Valley, CA May 2015

I followed the boy
towards the stream.
Clouds spit rain slowly,
thunder rolled,
eagle soared.

We stepped over sage and coyote brush.

Ceanothus

We came to the stream,
it narrowly split the grass.
Steadily flowing past,
ribbon of water.

No water would course its path in a month or more.
Its ribbon would vanish before
a Cancer moon would visit a
Sierra black night sky.

The boy stood by the stream.
Holding an arrow leaf,
He innocently asked, "is this a willow?"

Stream flowed
we followed...
I beckoned him to the small rise.
Black soil
rich loam in a sandy place.

An out crop of gnarled rock.
Lichen covered
Not good for mortars.
Not good for grinding.

But there the boy saw them.

1 2 3 4 tools

Artifacts
left behind.
Stone artifacts
lithic tools.
Bifaces
Obsidian
Basalt

Left long ago
still there.
Placed by hands no longer working
no longer
gathering
cutting
weaving
mending
holding
helping
carrying
comforting
cradling
nursing.

Tools made of rock, placed upon rock.
Thousands of spitting storms ago,
millions of raindrops
snowflakes
hailstones.

The boy
9 years old
Starting new memories in new places,
left alone in time.

The Cave of Two Hands

Scott Green

The coolness was a shroud
The rough surface black from ancient fires
That warmed brown bodies
And chased black thoughts.

A hand, another
Above me
Next to me
A hand like mine.

A man
A beast
A message
A sacred place.

My breath, pacing
My lips dry
The art on the rock
Secretly breathing, secretly telling the message:

"We were here. We will always be here."

Oben Ohne

Jonathon Burton

This poem is being considered for a poetry contest and cannot be published at this time.

you see, I had to leave for a bit, get lost
to find out what my soul wants and at what cost,
what shall past and what will stay
what will heal, what will remain...
out of this grief process.

you see, I had to lose a little out of everything
to write about being an adult since you were a kid,
because that's what life will teach you, right?
it's either black or white, run or fight.

you see, I had to either feel too much or become numb
before I learned to admit my feelings instead of playing dumb
and at the end of all the struggle
I am becoming grateful for living outside of the bubble.

grandpa said "no crying with the whole being",
and to protect my energy when I visit new hearts
because the pain of being alone
is worse than losing what you love.

all I wanted was to heal my consciousness
to write about the stars, flowers and love
but instead I learned to grow up and dry the dead flowers in my journal
because I was still afraid to lose.

grandpa always looked at me helplessly when he knew
it will again cost me my peace of mind
to save people that imprison my soul in claws
and then wondering how it still beats restlessly.

Marveling lost love

Elise Dixon

Marveling lost love,
reverie for their consequence,
Accomplices christening sorrow upon this surviving moment,
As the inviolable angels just now,
Safe passage silver and purple,
Glory where They all -- pray for an occasion, an occasion of you.
archangels are, so, very, fostered ...

Love and Hate

Elise Dixon

love and hate
both at attention
attending to seared souls
altering love into tears of asperity
flaming loathes into teary composure
hearts asunder
beneath shades of pretend
bloating lives into fuck all (naught)
waves of instance gone awry
leaving lovers squandered in a recess of ascetic.

Words

Julie Morrow

Know the power of your words.
Words that calm,
Words that love.
Make her wild with those words.
Words that make her explosive,
Increasingly impulsive.
You have to know that she's a book,
Open wide for your cursive.
Love that love with
Written words.
The spoken verse
so perverse.
But in a way that
makes her safe.
I love you but
I know I cannot say.
The way she feels is
So intense.
I don't know why she moans.
Feeling in ways that are like poems.
I'm so intense, am I alone?

Don't really care

Julie Morrow

So sick of standing
Apathetic Anguish
Appreciative of beauty
but not enough
Don't really care
Want to see
the way it is
but not enough
Finding meaning in a bug bite
but not enough
Don't really care
kinda want to see you
I'm facing down in the sand
turned around in his grave
Gonna cry today
but not enough
Don't really care

Children of the Underground

Julie Morrow

Children of the Underground
Is on Hulu.
A nationwide event.
And that it is.
An epidemic hiding in plain and legal site
Documenting the trauma of the everyday.
To find out that Faye Yager
Is the Harriet Tubman
Of our time.
Willing to sacrifice to
The Underground Railroad.
I am her and she is me
Oh Faye
The things I would say
Most of all Thank you for all that you did.
For the mothers and children, you surely did build
An empire of strength
And ways to escape
The legal persecution
And the American way
I want to see it in real-time
What she did with her life,
it resonates with me and our strife.
And I love her. I give her my trust.
This Harriet Tubman sent down for all of us
An underground railroad for you and for me.
An underground railroad for what we will be.
This is just fucking nuts
An all-out epiphany
No need for validation.
This is the reckoning.

When You Love a Poet

Sage Taylor Kingsley

When you love a poet
Be prepared for unbridled words of adoration that will make you sway and swoon and swoop,
eyes awonder, body tingling ...
When you love a poet
Be open to pulsing words of prurience that make you delirious, head spinning, cock hard/pussy
dripping, jaw on the floor, tantalized, mesmerized, hypnotized...
When you love a poet

Know that your wanton wordsmith is always, always searching for the perfect prose, the right rhythm, the lusciously lascivious length that can come close to doing justice to your beauty and power and fuckability and goddamn GRACE...
When you love a poet
Accept that your every move is a mystery, a mastery of sex and sin and senses and salvation, and you will be—
YOU WILL BE—commemorated.

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The Heart of My Hand

Sage Taylor Kingsley

I open my hand
I see what beauty lights upon it
whether dove, butterfly or your hand
I do not grasp or squeeze or you would fly away, wounded
I may caress you gently
I may sing and coo to you
I may gaze at your splendor
I may feel the soft weight and warmth of you upon me
stay awhile
move away
the beauty remains
if this is love
you will return
next time I will land
in your hand
another time
we will fly together
the heart of my hand
is open.

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Flame and Flow

Sage Taylor Kingsley

We are Sun and Moon
We are Air and Earth
We are Flame and Flow
Finding and Unbinding
Gracing and Embracing
Igniting and Exciting
We are Sun and Moon
We are Air and Earth
We are Flame and Flow
Embodying and Emboldening
Centering and Ascending
Illuminating and Radiating
We are Sun and Moon
We are Air and Earth
We are Flame and Flow
We are Sun, pouring into Moon.
She receives him, reflects him.
Shines.
We are Air, caressing Earth.
She feels him, flowers him.
Nurtures.
We are Fire, heating Water.
She spreads, steamy.
Gleaming.

Wildfire

Sage Taylor Kingsley

wake me with melting kisses
quake me with our blisses
bide me with soft licking
ride me with hot pricking
fill me with your prana
thrill me with nirvana
praise me with your fingers
craze me with lust lingers
adore me with your gazing
explore me with limbs blazing
spoon me with time tender
swoon me with your splendor
behold me with caressing
enfold me with possessing
lavish me with desire
ravish me with wildfire.

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“Women’s Rage Is Mighty Magic

Sage Taylor Kingsley

our grief is palpable
our outrage is sacred fire

lovers: rock your women
harder, softer, your touch
is their anchor now
mothers: hold your daughters closer
kiss their foreheads
as they preen their wings
and sharpen their
swords
sisters: our eyes make magic
out of
mayhem
(we remember how to do this)
for now is the time
and mighty is our battle cry
shaking the world whole

boundaries dissolve
we merge flesh, form anew
tickling universes’ edges
swallowing worlds
transmuting all that is
with this electricity
a thousand lightyears away
aliens with big eyes
and far too many arms
look up as we climax, and say:
“Wow, that was a big one!”

Your Words Are Your Wonder

Sage Taylor Kingsley

Your words are your wonder.
scribbles of ink on tree skin
Your words are your wonder.
seemingly random streamingly wanton
Your words are your wonder.
‘Why this word and not that?’ Pokes Monkey Mind
‘Later. Write after blahblahblah,’ pipes Distractor.
‘Nobody cares. Nobody listens. Nobody reads it. Why bother?’ Pounds Critic.
And yet, ever, always, still, I know:
My Words Are My Wonder.
My way
My wisdom
My whimsy
My whys
My wows
My witchiness
My wit
My words
My wonder.
So, go.
Write and speak and listen and blissen
and shine and sing and whisper and share
and tell your goddamn blessed story because
You’re the ONLY ONE who can
and the world needs your wonder
and your wonder

feeds
you.

©2022

©2022

“When Was the Last Time...?”

Sage Taylor Kingsley

When was the last time you:

~ thanked the Sun setting the world aglow, contemplative, complete, content?

~ greeted the Moon with arms wide open and halo crowned?

~ soared from star to star with your eyes, mind and spirit?

When was the last time you:

~ locked eyes until time's veil slipped away?

~ linked arms and danced until you sank down, body happy, spent, heart uplifted?

~ laughed so hard you lost your breath as you found your joy of living again?

When was the last time you:

~ kissed “I love you” to every single inch of your glorious self?

~ tasted sweat, sex, skin, crying with the beauty of it all, walls dissolved in wildness and water and wonder?

~ heard your own voice in the dawn chorus as you sang the new world into being?

And when will be the last time?

my sense of wonder returns

expands

renews

the more time I spend with birds

the less with worries.

©2022

SPIRITUAL RAP #1: “ReJoy Sing Truth”

Sage Taylor Kingsley

You are a piece of God

You are at peace with God

You are Infinity

Divinity

at ease with God.

You are a ray of Light

You are a bay of Light

You are Brilliant

and Resilient

on the way of Light.

You are the voice of Truth

You make the choice of Truth

You are Courageously

Outrageously

Rejoicing Truth!

You are the art of Love

Forever part of Love

You remember,

Shining Ember,

You're the Heart of Love.

You live a sacred Vow

Your Words of Light, your How

In all your glimmerings

'N shimmerings,

Your power: NOW!

Where am I, if not here?

When am I, if not now?

How am I, if not this?

Who am I, if not me?

What am I, if not nothing everything?

Laughing

I remember my way home

Smiling

I remember I am already there

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Karma (Blackout Poem)

Karli Watson

Karma
The Snake eats its own tail

Freedom
Death

Diamonds
Immense Pressure
eventually

Wanting to be god

This obscene need to be perfect
Always messy, dirty, grungy
obnoxious, unsettling, purely unsmashable

Longing for the moon
Glass
need to return and set free
never able to let go

Lost

Spin on the wheel of fortune

And all is recycled in time
peace
happiness

Everything cracks under pressure
Damage

Jesus's
Disgruntled children

be good enough

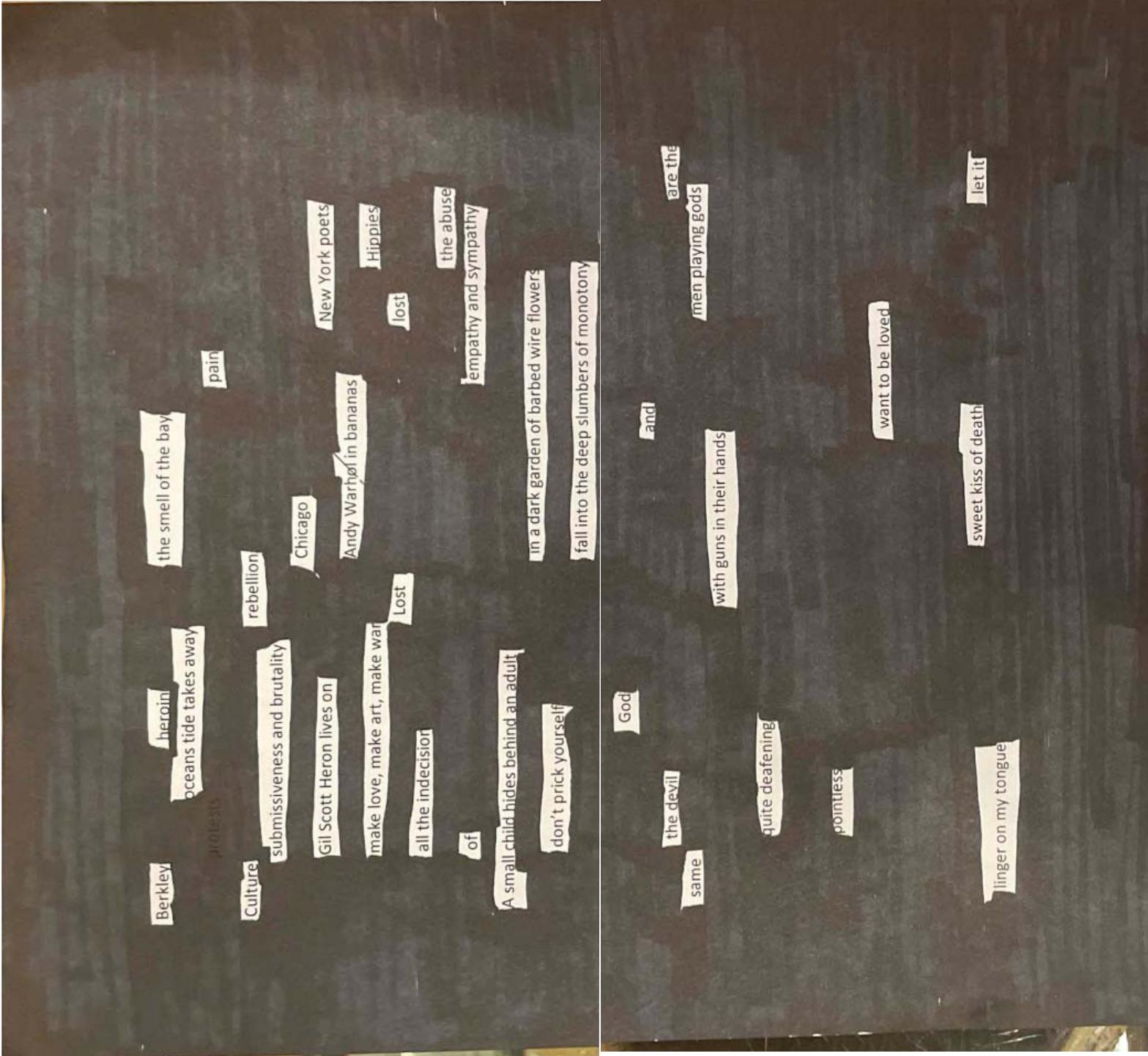
The meadow
The chain grows longer
burden
and maybe in love with you

Skeletal but whole

gluttonous and empty

The sonnets of someone's eyes feel empty, maybe inside lies a vastly desert

Always a sanctuary, always a cage, always chained by misguided rage



“I thought your face was a ticking clock,
but i was wrong”

Karli Watson

Your face is an adjective!
Your body a noun!
Presumably we are all authors,
Writing books for the big library in the ground.
That's why I spend so much time in the graveyard.

Smiles are tempting, silly little similes',
But I think you secretly like the allegory of my frown more.
Your face is an exclamation point,
Exaggerating my nervousness.

One time I met god in a mosh pit.
She told me to shut the fuck up and
Loosen up a bit.
One time I saw Jesus asleep behind the wheel of a hearse,
talking in his sleep,
Mumbling some Kerouac free verse.

Your eyes are a sonnet.
Some Shakespearean roulette wheel,
Laced with LSD,
Gambling my future away like pennies.
Your lips won't sink the Lusitania
But they only loosely hide your fangs,
Poking out like broken door hinges, into an abandoned house.
Your tongues a cherry, sticky, sweet and ready to pop from all the secrets
you hold.

I saw God once at the supermarket,
Waiting in line for the butcher's block,
Maybe to feast, maybe to kill.
I saw the virgin Mary kissing a woman once,
In an alley way.
They both had flowers in their hair.

Your face is an adjective and your body a noun.
Somewhere in between your heart and head lie a factory of verbs being
pumped out.
That's why I spend so much time in the graveyard.

Overboard

Hayli Nicole

Once I lost a poem
to the ocean.
in a dream on a boat
floating idle under the Milky Way.
It was a few days after a full moon
and nothing terrible had gone wrong.
So when it was carried overboard
by the wind into the sea,
I cursed the moon
for the chaos it brings
and for stealing words
from my hands
without warning.
I wondered if I could
rewrite what was written
but I knew the words
wouldn't be the same.
The feeling was different now;
blanketed by regret
for not keeping them safe
to begin with.
I tried to imagine them
into a new existence
before the ink
bled into nothing
but it's impossible
to replicate creativity
pouring through
scribbling hands.
For poetry flows
like swift currents
past untouched beaches
on islands unoccupied by man.
Poetry is in the sand

churned out through time
taking different forms
so far from its original shape
it is no longer the coral
or the shells
or the rocks
it once was,
but a grain
in a magnificent landscape
shaped by the movement of water.
Nothing could compare
to the rising of tides
inspired by the moon
and worshiped through time

as the giver of life.
So when the sea
swallowed my words
I didn't feel worthy.
For the ocean is the poem
I could never write
into existence
even if I tried.

Dearest Dublin

Hayli Nicole

I remember our first crisp morning together.

Tangled sheets
cocooned my jet-lagged body.
I allowed the warmth to swallow
my being whole.
The skies were blue,

but it was the beginning of spring.

I had never heard birds sing
as if they were praising
the presence of the sun.
Their whistles were the soundtrack
to our first days of being home.
There was a nip at the neck
distinct in its stinging.
My California blood was still warm
but not warm enough
to keep me from freezing.

We were like two lovers
leaning into each other,
learning this new land
with Pinch me, we're dreaming smiles.

For miles,
we followed the river
weaving our way through the city.
We were pretty certain this is what
happiness looked like.
Our hands intertwined
dreaming of what our days would become.

We had no knowledge
our new home
would be the demise of our love.
See.
In seeking your shelter
I lay roots
in faulty foundations.

Your appeal
was promising
but the yield was never as promised.

I never found
what you said I would find.

Your patterns unkind,
you left me in the dark.
assuming I could pull myself
from the depression
of your constant grays.
So many days were spent
dreaming of how to escape.

I traced your silhouette
with the gentle hands of a new lover
I knew the intricacies
of your every corner,
but our intimacy
was only one way.

I remember the day I discovered another love.
I was somewhere under the Burmese sun
and you were here
promising you had begun

to change your ways.

So I came home
to you,
but something within me
was different now
and there was no going back for us.
It rained the day we decided to end.
Like every feeling I had been burying inside
burst through a wide-open sky
and poured over me

like the first time
I felt the sea meet my skin.
I couldn't tell
if the wetness of my cheeks
was that of the rain
or the pain
of not seeing this coming.

I retraced those first steps along the canal
leading me straight home.
I combed through memories
collecting pieces of the shattered past
trying to piece together
the bigger picture
all the while
wondering where it all went wrong.
This was meant to be my grandest love,
but love doesn't live where it used to.
It's winter's arrival
and I will be returning
to lands unfamiliar.
My heart is yearning to stay
than return to the pace of life
unbeknown to me now.
It seemed as though
we had more time.
Was it really two years?
Or was it a mirage within a dream
I'm struggling to wake myself from?
Everything feels lucid
but you never did
feel like the real thing.
The shade feels colder now,
but the sky the same blue.
The frost of the winter is making room
for new blooms
to breathe life
into the grey mornings again.
Except I won't be here to inhale
the scent of a city being reborn.
It's strange

how I haven't even left,
but already I see you changing
as if my presence
was of insignificance
because a new lover
will soon take my place

if they haven't already.
The season of change is upon us
pulling us back in the directions
we were meant to be heading.
I've been dreading this goodbye,
my dearest Dublin,
but if there's one thing I've learned,
my dear,
all beautiful things
must come to an end.



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