

cock

By Chenoa Ashton-Lewis

Poetry editor Hezekiah writes: 'Cock' is wistful longing. "except for the taxidermy rooster on the dresser / it stares at me / when i sleep / when i eat / when i drink..." and "i don't want to not touch / please give me touch / give me back your touch" ...a deeply moving and insightful poem written by a womxn through interesctionalist eyes on her journey through a life of transformation—the language here is prayerful and hallowed yet real as blood, vital as air. And there is the haunting question that rises through the tumble of words? Cock? A stuffed bird or a body part? HS (Font size and spacing is poet's own.)

cock

feeling god
i won't force it
i meant good
feeling good
singing to myself
when the other else
sings to myself

there's a window
and a tree on the outside
no leaves, it's sleeping
but it's still alive
you know?
we're still alive
even if we are barren
solemn with our fragility

other window
egg yellow wood frames and
white old english slats
ain't much beauty in that

except for the taxidermy rooster on the dresser
it stares at me
when i sleep
when i eat
when i drink
when i shit
when i masterbate
when i sleep
alone
it keeps staring
but i don't even think it's looking at me
are they ever really looking at you
or a reflection of their self through you

it's early
late for me
6 am sun rise
i'm facing the wrong side
lonesome branches
cream panels and frames keeping me inside
from touching

i don't want to not touch
please give me touch
give me back your touch

THE POET SPEAKS:

My middle name is Zazen, which literally translates to seated meditation and is the Buddhist study of the self. For me, poetry is kind of like Zazen. It is me stripped down in my honesty, my loneliness, my tragedies, my contempt. It is a conduit for the pain, hedonism and halcyon past that inspires me. I'm mostly talking to myself and whoever else is willing to listen, but is anyone ever listening or are they listening to a reflection of themselves? Poetry is a reminder that there is a difference between a Chenoa and an idea of who Chenoa is. To me, it is finding wisdom and revelations in places I didn't even know existed. They usually lie in the liminal of each line. 'cock' was inspired by dreary Chicago winters, the trees that remain dormant for nearly half a year, the last day of work on a 2-month long television show and a taxidermy rooster that sat on my dresser.

AUTHOR'S BIO:

As a Black, White and Jewish womxn, I seldom write about my racial identity in fiction, non-fiction and poetry. I've examined race since I was conscious and as I approach a quarter of a century, I am more fascinated with exploring themes of birth, sexuality, death, family and substance dependence.

I double majored in cinema production and creative writing at DePaul University, and was a staff-writer for Shredded, a web-zine developed by womxn and nonbinary writers. My published works include: op-eds, poetry, short stories and cultural photography projects. Unfortunately, the web-zine is no longer active.

Currently, I am quarantining in Glen Ellen, CA and learning about being a organic wine-grape grower while babysitting a 60-gallon barrel of natural wine I made in October. Before, I was an Associate Producer on a docu-series about a transgender woman's rise to prominence in the auto-industry of the 1970s.

I split my time between Los Angeles and Glen Ellen where I am building an off-the-grid yurt to live here more permanently.

