

# F reElaNce Edit O r   ○○○ ○○○ ...

By Ziggy Edwards

**WHY I LIKE IT:** *Poetry Editor HEZEKIAH writes...* Ziggy Edwards is a dilly with a loft bed in Pittsburg, *Mount Pit?* PA. Claims to her distinction include and are no less limited by, “my carpeted kitchen, my ridiculous divorce.” A. A. Milne, quoting Winnie-the-Pu (a closeted Taoist practicing Daoism—an esoteric forking from Calypso music) ‘*a hug, said Pooh, is always the right size!*’ And a *snile* is one of those sneering smile I’ve grown so used to reflecting. I bet, *sans regret*, Ziggy has some experts in the light-to-dark art of the grinning grimaces, ‘Kissing the Wall.’ Here goes, “...its bright crack breathing / harsh and brilliant, ebbing paler now.” “...its lips worn to a white hole.” The two titles, ‘Lady Elaine Fairchilde’ and ‘Metapeanuts’ are tied for the record for the most lines I have ever highlighted in a single poem. If you don’t read them both, it would occur to me, you have no business on this site. If “the moon never closes its eyes,” neither does Ziggy Edwards...*(Spacing, format & font is poet’s own.)*

## Freelance Editor

The old master told his class  
that when I was young  
I would sneak out the window,  
down the side of my parents' house with bedsheets  
tied together. He did teach me  
back then but I wasn't creative enough  
for any exit except the door. We both knew  
he made up the story, but I still believe  
he thought it was true.

I'm not protecting the old master's fantasy:  
I prefer his version of my life,  
the whole of which he hasn't told.  
He visits my third-floor walkup with a stack  
of manuscript pages. I sit  
across the table and sip tea,  
wondering what he thinks

of my carpeted kitchen, my ridiculous divorce.  
Without comment, he writes a check.

## Kissing the Wall

Sunlight survives in this room as small currents  
stirred by hot wind blown in on travelers' rags.  
From her shadow-logged couch the woman greets each  
tired pilgrim in the long line, rinses away  
the road's magnitude and peril with cozy  
patter: *Oh, you're from Oxnard? So was I once.*  
*When I was a girl, a singer with your name*  
*had fame among 12 billion souls. We never*  
*met her, but we all danced a style miming sex*  
*to pirated copies of her voice.* She points  
at the door to her right, its bright crack breathing  
harsh and brilliant, ebbing paler now. *You're next,*  
she tells the group. *Go ahead in.* They always  
wipe their eyes, grinning like rescued castaways.  
They all file past; each pauses before the taped  
and glued portrait, its lips worn to a white hole.

## **Lady Elaine Fairchilde**

Endowed by your creator  
with wicked rosacea & resting bitch face,  
you took up every irrational cause.

Now you're enshrined  
near his sweaters & shoes  
among the husks of good citizens.

We know he did the make-believing,  
could have molded you all  
into frictionless neighbors who never  
provoked low rumbling notes  
on Negri's piano.

Of a sizeable population  
truth-serum'd by moving fingers,  
you got the harshest hand.

O Lady Elaine, have you found peace  
without that querulous voice?

## Metapeanuts

"My creator wouldn't make me gay," Marcie announces to bulge-eyed humanoids peering through the classroom's fourth wall. She avoids Peppermint Patty, wears a red skirt, and often broods at a certain brick wall, her drumstick arms folded on the ledge.

Linus cuts school to stand nearby, reciting quotes and Bible verses to the strange observers while Sally cringes. Franklin tells the gang he wants to get abducted. He resembles the aliens more than anyone in this town of terrible dancers.

The little red-haired girl begs her mom for sleepaway camp. Everyone knows the bald kid likes her—and because she'll never return his gaze, she's coldhearted. No one knows her name. Snoopy remains unfazed.

Lucy won't be caught dead on Schroeder's piano; she'd be judged pathetic. Sometimes, in the inky black night, she sneaks out to meet Charlie Brown in the park. Only then will he try for the football.

## **Moon Myth**

Shamans tell a moon myth:  
it turned to watch us  
and neither smiled nor frowned.

At the Sacred One's birth  
its mouth fell open; it wept  
tears that later crushed us.

How did it judge our cave fires,  
plains crawling with herds,  
burnt meat at the base of the monolith?

The shamans say we  
were different that time; we made  
birds gods could not imagine.

We ate with our mouths full,  
wasted the wings with such pleasure  
that the moon never closes its eye.

Distrust made the oceans die.  
Our Sacred One is riding flames  
through the heavens to smite out

that eye. They say we will know  
the moment His Judgment arrives.

## Otherwhere

They were wild and bored, not yet human, inhabiting ponds and forests beneath a weaver's silver hair. They lived and died without being born. And a young child at the surface stirred with a comb, annoying them in eddies of silt. The old weaver saw the child seeing tired animals bobbing on shallow waves, formless beings that were not yet human and could become anything. They loomed in her darkest ponds, hoarding snips of silver hair that drifted down.

She spawned her own forest despite fish in her bowels nibbling the walls. Despite the man waiting with a net in a clearing where trees stopped and water instantly vaporized. She was weaving herself a blank screen. A wall of sound made from howls wild beings make when they exit the trees, when a wave throws them on the beach and recedes violently to weave a tsunami. She was screaming herself awake.

Once, when I was that child sitting next to the weaver, I held her comb and extracted one long strand of silver hair from its tines. I tried fishing. But they'd met humans; they saw my face as a net. They sensed my name as a net and ignored the strand I offered as a ladder out of the loom. Instead I tied that silver strand to the frame and carefully descended. The old woman never noticed (or noticed my absence after it happened).

They welcome cold brackish water filled with silt and tiny bits of ourselves. She has no milk to lure them, just her eyes and her pity. She sighs before choosing another strand. It makes her happy to work on silk dresses I will never wear.

I met her oldest son near a no-man's land too far for tired animals. Her son went swimming in his clothes, which didn't make any sense. I told him it must have been cold that day, in the water, and he smiled. He said he escaped the trap. He asked me to return and tell the old woman a message. She wouldn't believe me. She'd watched psychics on TV.

He said it didn't matter: You don't have to believe truth. The message swims a frigid channel of months and years. Other beings will enter from the next room. Then in a moonlit womb the message can climb ashore, exhausted, collapse into waiting arms.

## **Peeing and Nothingness**

I know and respect the silent pissers  
whose heels barely quiver  
in the next stall; who rustle toilet paper  
to seem busy while we pour out our bladders  
in champagne sopranos or glugging bleach gallons;  
who wait in Zen-trance  
while we wash our hands,  
check our hair, creak the door open  
with our elbows. Silent pissers understand  
through shyness or witness protection  
how everyone sings her own traceable song.

**THE POET SPEAKS:** *Creating or consuming art asks, "What's the point?" and guesses at an answer. In my free time I enjoy an omnivorous diet of books and spit out poems with the occasional side of attempted fiction. More often these days, simmering chunks of articles exposing small-scale corruption. Here's hoping poetry continues to cast a good spell on life's minutiae and make me less cowardly about truth—however that turns out.*

**AUTHOR'S BIO:** Ziggy Edwards is the proud owner of a loft bed. She lives in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Her poems and short stories have appeared in publications including *5 AM*, *Confluence*, *Main Street Rag*, *Illumen*, and *Dreams and Nightmares*.