

# a boy named **GL—U E** et al

By brian rihlmann

**WHY I LIKE IT:** *Poetry Editor HEZEKIAH writes...‘A Boy Named Glue’ is a truly beautiful expression of a love that died, or lives on un-revived. Reminiscence is a negotiable instrument paid in advance. Like Confederate money after the last retreat, reduced to a value for collectors of antiques: “stiff cardboard pages / seem reluctant to turn,”... “the two high school sweethearts / standing before the minister,” “to reveal the now gaping chasm / of the initial fissure”... “all the angry faces / a frantic and angry world / driven by something / I have never understood,” “the rub always lies / in the wanting” If you have any remnants of a past that needs reconciling, Rihlmann’s your revenant, haunting, piercing and beguiling. Yet, hilariously diverting as a dishwasher or cat...Whatever you do don’t miss the second two: “but if you grab at my tail / you’re gonna bleed” They’ll leave you in stitches.(To maintain poet’s spacing each poem is on its own page. ‘HOTS’ in action! Please scroll down.) HS*

## **A Boy Named Glue**

in packing to move  
I found it again  
nearly forgotten  
she gave it to me  
perhaps a decade ago  
now I thumb through it—  
clingy cellophane  
stiff cardboard pages  
seem reluctant to turn

the two high school sweethearts  
standing before the minister  
the lifting of the veil  
the kiss  
dodging the shower of rice

and after—  
the drive to Myrtle Beach  
the honeymoon suite  
her lounging on the bed  
with seductive eyes  
holding a glass of wine  
him standing in the bathroom  
in his fruit of the looms  
face half-shaved, laughing

they said their forevers  
it lasted a quarter century  
two years of empty nest  
was all it took  
to reveal the now gaping chasm  
of the initial fissure

I was just 21  
it became my excuse  
to stay drunk that year  
as if I needed one

it's probably been my excuse  
for much more  
than that

## **A So-Called Normal Life**

for me, was not to be  
I knew it early  
shuddering at the grind of routine  
school, sports, homework, bedtime...  
nauseated at the sight  
of manicured lawns  
behind white picket fences  
traumatized by visits  
to friends' houses  
with large, rollicking families  
appalled at the sound  
of screaming toddlers  
perpetually overwhelmed  
by the chaos of everything—  
traffic jams  
crowded shopping malls

all the angry faces  
a frantic and angry world  
driven by something  
I have never understood

yet you wish to point me back  
toward the impossible  
insist I could've had a great career  
been a wonderful husband and father...

if only I wanted it

the rub always lies  
in the wanting

just whose wanting  
is it anyway?

## **A Work Of Pure Fiction**

she finally agrees to meet  
and over drinks she says  
how educated I seem  
then asks if I always wanted  
to be a dishwasher  
and I say Yes, yes of course  
It's the profession of choice  
for we intelligent but unambitious types  
Well I'm glad your dreams  
came true then, she says  
I thank her and ask  
if she's ever been fucked  
by a dishwasher  
Why no...no I haven't  
and I take her back  
to my dingy rented room  
get her wet, first,  
with my rough dishpan fingers  
then give her a blue collar ride to remember  
and send her home smiling  
to her fat fuck, limp dick,  
six figure ambulance chasing husband  
who asks—  
What are you so happy about?  
And why are you walking like that?

## **I'm Just A Cat**

I've finally figured it out—  
I'm a cat—a cat disguised as a man  
the reincarnation  
of some rough alley beast  
I'm sure that's it  
the shrinks missed it, but  
it explains all my misunderstandings  
with my fellow humans—  
I like to nap...a lot  
sometimes I lie on the floor in the sun  
I'm lazy as hell  
but boy can I move, too  
when there's a bird I crave  
I sneak in and out through the back door  
stalk prey silently and unseen  
hide in odd places—  
rooftops, abandoned corners  
top of the fridge, if I could  
I watch you people with bemused contempt  
and a different kind of love—  
a wary kind that burns cooler  
and more distant than yours  
I acknowledge that you feed me, yes—  
but I can also hunt...and I hunt alone  
I don't want you stroking my fur—  
most of the time  
I don't want to be bothered  
by your baby talk and bullshit  
ask me stupid questions  
and I won't even reply—  
I'll just look through you  
with my yellow inhuman eyes  
keep on rambling and I'll pad soundlessly  
out of the room  
leave you there alone  
muttering to yourself, thinking—  
how rude! but no...  
a cat's just gotta be a cat  
don't ask me to change, man...  
and, by the way—  
I usually keep my claws in  
but if you grab at my tail  
you're gonna bleed

**THE POET SPEAKS...***My poetry is almost always inspired either by my own life and struggles, or the lives of others I see every day. I tend to notice the most unfortunate among us, the ones others have forgotten, the loners and outcasts. I've been influenced by more small press poets than I can name here, and also by the heavy hitters I read in my youth, Nietzsche, Dostoyevsky, Camus, etc. Also by the lyrics of hardcore and heavy metal music which has been my everyday poetry since I was in grade school. As far as why poetry is important...well I used to think that the best poetry was the confessional sort that would let me off the hook for being human. I used to think I could write myself out of my own hell. Maybe I do, sometimes. Briefly.*

**AUTHOR BIO:** Brian Rihlmann lives and writes in Reno, Nevada. His work has appeared in many magazines, including The Rye Whiskey Review, Fearless, Heroin Love Songs, Chiron Review and The Main Street Rag. His latest poetry collection, "Night At My Throat," (2020) was published by Pony One Dog Press.