

Grandma's Sonnet

Our story begins with a little girl
Story unknown and life ahead of her
Future an undiscovered ocean pearl
Anything she could possibly prefer

But she goes into high school and soon meets
A tall and thin boy who just steals her heart
And he also knows she makes his heart beat
And so they get married and their life starts

He gets a job and they buy a blue house
On the corner of downtown Marblehead
Where a baby bump stretches through her blouse
And soon they must buy a new bunk bed

Their hair begins to go gray together
But how could they have anticipated
That her heart hung on just by a tether
Until that fateful day it was fated

But she survived against all of chance
And pushed onward to see her grandchildren
Grow up beside her with a loving glance
With her husband next to her the whole time

I love her to the moon and back again
And wish her happy birthday to the end.

Leaves

He stands a man rebuilt
Of flesh of my flesh and ruin
Sewed together puppet
Hands of stone and small pricks

His strings are cut
So I come apart at the seams.
I do not know of light
Beyond what i am told
Authority moonshadows cresting on faith

Wish to rebuild
Fix the strings loose
For if the puppet were mine again
I could learn how to cut mine as well

The leaves of brown and yellow
Go nicely with his checkered shirt.
Feeble fabric flaking
under my fingers
He doesn't see.

I watch him rake them
Halo dimming, heart beating.
Puppet master
With his own strings.

Docile Welcomers

There was a bird on my window today
What is that supposed to mean?
Some say each piece of existence has reason;
Gulps of wind swayed by a toddler's dance,
Repliet cold condensed on November panes.

It's wings spread wide
Arms of docile welcomers;
Flap once, twice,
Feathers framed by lost echoes
Present only in the most intimate.

How long do birds live for?
A year, or two;
Only ever long enough
To watch hatchlings lunge outward,
Far beyond recovery.

And the bird looks familiar-
Old faces seen habiting relics of younger men.
Reach to feel. Left to rot.
Feel as though I have been caught.

Come back! Dear bird!
Don't leave so soon!
We have until the afternoon!
I wish to share this deck with you
Where must you go

Where must you go so urgently?
Can we not stay here
In the complex cavity of now?

Theories of an End.

Fear is fickle
Such imagined ploys of mind
That are used to trick and twist
Our ideas about those around us.
When I envisioned the end of the novel
It was not your name as the title.
Written in crass lines scribbled on very last
Like the rey would sting you with his prong
If you swam too slow.

The book was slim, but still very dense
You liked when I read you
My favorite lines.
Ample to pick from but never enough.

Carried on your back was my personhood
Though, I didn't know you had a purse.
I wonder if you held any more next to mine.
I wonder if I can sustain its weight without you,
For it is heavy and misshapen
By youth and sprouting berries.

I never saw your book,
Instead imagined it, alone.
Thick papers coated in beeswax and car perfume.
With eared corners and rippled tears.

The Infant wallows in modern limelight
Craving warmth and safety again.
As I, now, crave a dramatic re-reading
Or a sequel.

They call me Satan

Madison Lofmark

Throne of thorns and unshed lies
Name carved deep in stone
Brand on cattle
Soon to be slaughtered

Poison pit, sweetened skin
Field of grass and flowers.
They called it freedom,
To tie the noose.

From favorite son
To biggest foe,
Bringer of light-
Prince of darkness.

Crown crafted from
Bones of lambs
In wolf's skin.
Unaware of their piety.

Torturer of tortured
Temptress and tempted
Muddled virgin
Horns of dahlias.

Fathers creatures blame me
Their own petulance and sin
Arbiter of justice
Or origin of the unholy.

Guilt

This guilt is so hungry!
a ravenous bee sucking
all the iced of a flower
a yellow rusted teapot
pouring lukewarm water
into the ceramic mug
wrapped in the embrace of your skin.
we sit, pages separated by the spine
of a new and pre spoiled chapter
where you are the reader who thinks
they know what comes next.
perhaps it was wrong
to set the forest ablaze
just to see the fire dancing in your eyes.

Electricity

i watched a bug fly
into a green metal zapper
it's wings flapping
uneven yet determined
so desperate to reach the light
that it thought would be
it's salvation
a breath of love
blown by the hilt of a dagger
and i winced as it's
delicate wings
flashed in a pillar of smoke
while surrounding children
laughed
sweet with sugar-sticky hands
found myself asking
why a creature would
fly so close to the light
even as it set their wings ablaze-
nature's undocumented icarus.
then i saw you standing in the doorway
under the peeling stoop
with the glow of the nightlight
on sunken soft cheeks
and all at once knew

Chimney Sweeper

You haunt me with your remaining echoes,
A spirit dancing between my teeth—
A memory I want to share, a
Moment in particular where I feel your
Presence missing.

The man cleaned our fireplace and I
Watched as he climbed his ladder
Rung by rung
With his flashlight on his head
And a parchment in his hand
And I waited for him
To find you in the brick.

I can hear the rodents in the pipe
At night,
Scattering through the holes
Bullets have made in the wall.
I hope they find warmth in the ashes
That the cleaner will dump in the trash.

Maybe someone will
Put them to good use.

On Young Love;

You don't love like you do when you're young
and unaware of stain they say
and I stare at them and know it.

ocean water is black
softened toes dipping
anxious as a child to leap
curled on the sand piled
on each other like grains of which
there are billions but only two.

The tide comes in and pulls lapping at our ankles
when you take the plunge
but it is I, too, who feels the water-
the heaviness of it. the cold peace of it
unexplored. untapped.

your hair smells of salt and old
dining room tables that have been set already
with the finest china
begging to be used just once.

raw. pure. porcelain. untouched.
I smudge it just to watch it stain
and the dish vibrates with purpose.

The water creeps and runs on your forearms
as you hold the plate and clean
after a meal, nourishing. warm.
I wrap my arms around your middle
Feel the heat of it
like a blanket made of no other worthy material

I am an addict to your skin and there is no saving me
and so i know the water is dark
and my youth is raw
and what lies at the seafloor is unknown

but the porcelain is safe inside of steady hands
and the blankets are folded and tucked away
and even if the plates break and the fabric thins
at least they will have been used and loved
at least they will know what it's like to have purpose

and as i feel your chest near mine
tides of breaths hot and nourishing
and eyes glowing with a polished message,
I, too, am willing to tarnish
for the chance at such a worthy smudge.

The Square Closet and Lion Cub

You walk up the stairs
third one from the top creaks
like the whine of an old dog.
Wooden planks stained whiskey-colored and glossy;
don't let your foot slip.

Plastic totes pushed against the wall;
maybe if they're close enough,
they will be swallowed by the mint paint.

Dull and basking streetlamp gleams
through the center window you walk past.
the woop of an owl, you think,
is loud enough to dull the roars of Lions
from where you left.

Door knob cool in your palm, the click of a twist,
toys scatter the ground
a stuffed monkey with a top hat
but a square door as tall as the counter you can
Just
see over, is what you go to.

It is cramped and dark, the carpet
scratches like sewing needles
but in here their roars are a little quieter,
and the darkness isn't suffocating
so you close your eyes,
fluttering as though stricken with a breeze,
and think of a glowing street lamp.
The cub of the lions

Mints

You gave me handfuls
And I rolled my eyes
The clear wrappers crinkle
On top of my thighs

When you forget once
You seen attuned to cry
I tell you not to worry
We have plenty of time

And now the
Blue light casts
Glowing shadows over
The eyes I had rolled

Clenched in my fist
Plastic digging in
It leaves round, red circles
Where your hand should have been

Why had I scoffed?
Why had I ate them?
Your offering of everything Taken away then

A wet drop falls on
Right there on the plastic
Can you not see?
I am driven to madness

Maybe you're out there
In CVS,
looking for coffee
and car games and rest.

I've got only one
One final wish
A wink an "I love you,"
A handful of mints.