

*A Hundred Little Deaths*

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Preface

I never want to have children, but I enjoy having sex. Similarly, I view my poetry as an act of subversive self-indulgence. When creating this poetry collection, my main goal was to feature various speakers who also found themselves reflecting on their experiences with sexuality and gender. Additionally, this work is inspired by my own experiences as a queer Latina and from the many other people who were kind enough to share their intimate stories with me throughout my time at Point Loma Nazarene University.

Yet, *A Hundred Little Deaths* does not stop there; it also explicitly and implicitly situates itself within a much larger theoretical and cultural conversation. As a literature major and women studies minor, I couldn't help but latch onto theorists like Micheal Foucault, Judith Butler, and Bell Hooks after being introduced to them in my classes. In fact, it was those theorists who helped me understand, articulate and own my desires.

Regarding prominent cultural references, *A Hundred Little Deaths* is littered with allusions to everything from Mary Harron's *American Psycho* to Frida Kahlo's "Self Portrait as a Tehuana". However, as someone who has experienced trauma, I found myself fascinated and personally invested in our culture's discourse surrounding deviance. Thus some of the cultural references I used were in regards to true crime.

Ultimately, I decided to structure my collection into four parts. The first part, "Narrative Lingerie" includes the foundational vignettes of my collection. Subsequently, the second portion of my collection is entitled "In Bad Taste" and deals with the more provocative poems about desire. Next, I entitled the third section "Feminist Blow-Up Doll" to highlight poems in the collection that show speakers confronting the performative aspect of female sexuality. Finally, I entitled the last section, "Exposure Therapy," to compile the poems that deal with speakers who are asserting agency over their sexuality.

One  
*Narrative Lingerie*

If sex is repressed, that is, condemned to prohibition, nonexistence, and silence, then the mere fact that one is speaking about it has the appearance of a deliberate transgression. A person who holds forth in such language places himself to a certain extent outside the reach of power; he upsets established law; he somehow anticipates the coming freedom.

-Michel Foucault

*American Psycho's* Extended Ending

It's two a.m.

I am ten

and watching a sex scene from *American Psycho*.

*pause*

*rewind*

*pause*

*rewind*

I watch it for the tenth time in one night  
confused as to how Bat(e)man could be so mean  
jealous of the women who were on the screen  
I never knew that human bodies could do that  
a beautiful red headed woman does something obscene  
Bat(e)man bends her over while watching himself in a mirror  
I begin to cross the wrong wires  
I begin to want bad things  
he spanks her  
my little jaw hits the floor

*pause*

*rewind*

*pause*

*rewind*

I watch it for the twelfth time in one night.  
Something comes over me and never leaves.

How to Split an Existence

You anticipate “the coming freedom,”  
relax my clenched jaw,  
and unbutton my pants.  
You tell me about hedonism  
while spelling out desire  
on the inner crook of my neck.  
I smile at your cottage-cheese-covered ceiling  
and think about how lucky I am  
to want something,  
to become a feeling.  
I compose the first poem  
vaguely inspired  
by a fragment of you.  
Then, you break me in two.

Misplaced Hunger

Spilled snow cones crunch  
underneath my weight  
I celebrate my eighth birthday  
waking up to snowflakes  
laying kisses on the ground.

I wait for a return back to earth  
or any piece of solid ground.  
Slipping in between movie theater seats  
I rub my arm against yours  
and you barely notice me.  
I am born during maitnees  
and die in front of the concessions.

I wait for a return back to earth  
or maybe I just want to go away.  
Disappearing behind my frizzy hair  
and moonlike face,  
I am nothing more  
than the hunger of an old God.

Can I trust a man?

(I want to trust a man)

Finding my father's pornography  
at the age of nine  
(a Freudian slip made by the divine)  
My mother swallowed swords  
but won't give him a blow job.  
(Let's not dwell on this one for too long)  
Someone put their hands on me  
(Uninvited, I remember that vaguely)  
but after the third time I sought it out  
(I was tired of being a victim)  
I asked my mother why  
people say rape is a bad thing  
if sex always feels good.  
My mother never answered.  
(My sexuality has made a victim out of me)  
I seek out crueller hands than the ones  
that first fondled me.  
(If I can trust a man)  
I want to trust a man.  
Maybe  
    perhaps  
sex  
doesn't have to be  
something taken from me.

I Put a Curse on You

When I was little and cried those tears,  
God might have accidentally heard me.  
When you put your hands on me  
and ushered me into a chaotic age,  
she put a plague  
on you,  
one that you still  
are answering for today.  
She enforces justice  
even when I beg for your mercy.  
She says,  
*No one gets to  
defile a blessing of mine  
and not wish they were dead.  
Even to touch her feet  
would be one of the greatest sins.*  
I spent nine years hiding my toes  
and cursing at Her flock of sheep  
all for nothing,  
because She heard me.  
She heard me.

Self-Possession

She was pretty  
in a way  
that made me

    want to kiss  
her breasts and  
feel my way up  
to a promised land  
I had never visited.

    I shoved my tongue  
down her throat  
in an attempt to  
    taste a flavor of woman  
that I could never be.

I took her hand  
and tried to  
arm wrestle with divinity.

The Bird and Her Keeper

He holds her with heavy hands  
and I see the whites of her eyes.

Her soaked plumage

smells sweet

but reeks of compromise.

For her,

womanhood is a nest

she drops out of

and a springboard of

God's creating.

Orange Crest, CA

You are the greatest love affair I never had.

The making of a silk noose and  
living proof of our strength in numbers.

Would you bring flowers to the graves  
of the people we used to be?

I would.

Our tears

and the way you used to drive  
are things that I will never get to experience again in this life.

We grew up in spite of ourselves  
and tried to eat our parents on the way out.

Wherever I go

I always bring along all  
the many versions of you.

This time I brought the one

I never knew:

The one who was distinct from myself.

A Season of Understandings

My tongue is splintering,  
and all we can do is watch  
as years of stomaching the impossible  
catch up with me.  
The useless parts of myself fracture.  
I leave them behind like dead leaves,  
and they burrow into the ground.  
I will come back to harvest them in the spring.

Nature Does Not Always Succeed

I did not come out  
in a way that deserves applause.  
I was dragged kicking and screaming  
not from the closet  
but from my Mother's kitchen pantry.  
I tried to soak up my tears with bags  
of uncooked rice  
and when I bled I treated it as nothing  
more remarkable than cans of tomato paste.  
Womanhood ushered in by screaming  
was what I learned to mark myself against  
and I memorized the language of femininity  
at gun-point.

The Lover's Losing Lantern

La Luna is shoved  
    back into the ground.  
Her hair sprawled out  
    across a pillow  
is a sea of stars now.  
    We dip our fingers  
into her Milky Way  
and watch  
as the Big Bang  
undoes itself in front of us.  
We hold our breath  
while running our hands  
over constellations  
and settling into our own unrest.  
La Luna flings opens her eyes  
    at the sound of our sighs  
and hides the parts of her  
    that we touched in the night  
and I think we've fallen in love  
with la lotería despite how often we lose.

*Two*  
*In Bad Taste*

She went to bed with men as frequently as she could. It was the only place where she could find what she was looking for: misery and the ability to feel deep sorrow.

- Toni Morrison

A Virgin's Wet Dream

I'll open up like a sweet flower;  
warm and wide.

The morning dew collected on my petals  
will make it easy for you to come inside.



Need

I don't need a soul mate.

I need a soul cage

or something to contain me.

Another body,

to hold the parts of myself  
that are too many.

I Go Chasing

Running, jumping, and rolling  
head first, arms wide  
into your constellation comprised  
of everything you've ever loved.

Laughs thunder  
through the streets,  
limbs flail  
under sheets.

Do you know about love?

It seeps onto notebook pages  
and springs up from the ground  
like unwanted weeds.

Love wraps its vines around our necks,  
and we giggle while we feel it squeeze.

Andromeda's Mother

Gently gliding with me across the room, she dips me backwards and makes me her broom. She tells me I look prettier during times of crisis and that I enter my prime in the darkest hour of the night. The wind howls through me, leaving me more frigid than I care to admit, but still she glances at me every chance that she gets. Orion's belt was just the beginning. Now I am a constellation in my own right, and the world keeps on spinning.

A Butterfly Sucking Nectar

I'm too awesome for a third date.  
I stick my tongue down your throat  
a butterfly sucking nectar,  
preparing you for the hummingbirds  
that will come after me.  
(The ones with bigger and harder beaks.)  
Trust me on Friday we will be making out.  
I will taste your sticky sweet  
and my fingers will leave  
covered in your pollen.

Butt Stuff

You tell me what to do, and I like to listen.  
I shove three fingers into my black hole.  
You like it when I stretch oblivion.  
I beckon you to follow me,  
to eat your way through the milky way,  
but that is not your kink.  
I want to take you where men dare not tread  
and where I happen to take up residence.  
I implicate myself, but I don't care.  
I dispose of the great disposer  
and leave him weeping  
in nothing but his underwear.

Samantha

(A found poem using transcripts from the Roman Polanski rape trial)

Thirteen

Two rolls of film

Took off my shirt

I don't want to get anymore pictures taken.

He was rushing me.

In the jacuzzi.

No wait.

I don't know what it was.

I was just standing there looking at him.

He took a few pictures.

There wasn't enough light.

No.

No, I got to get out.

I have asthma.

I can't.

It's okay.

It's too cold.

No I don't want to go in.

No I have to go home now.

I was afraid

So I just went

And sat down on the couch.

My underwear and a towel.

No I won't.

I have to go home.

He reached over and kissed me.

I told him no

But I was kind of afraid of him

Because there was no one else.

No.

Come on.

Let's go home.

Then he went down

And started performing

Cuddliness.

It means he went down on me.

He was just like licking

And

I don't know.

I was ready to cry.

I was kind of going

Stop it.

Come on.

Let's go home.

Sometimes he was saying stuff

But I blocked him out.

He started to have intercourse with me.

No stop.

It was in my underwear.

It was in my underwear.

How It Goes

It starts with doubt  
that spreads like moss.  
It weighs on me like a rock.  
It dogs my every step  
and is obviously smelled on my breath.  
It lurks behind me.  
(I see it out of the corner of my eye right now.)  
It smothers me when I try to sleep at night.  
It is written on the faces of the old and young.  
It is the sound of an incessant hum.  
It teaches me how to survive a hijacked body.  
It makes me go love-numb.

Vacationing in Sodom

Our mothers are ashamed of us;

Two girls.

Wrap it.

You are after all a professional.

Die a hundred little deaths

&

Get back up again.

Our bodies do not fit.

Our flesh is cement.

Wash it.

Get the soap

&

Lather it.

Dry it.

Put it back under the bed.

Our mothers are ashamed of us;

Two girls with stunted potentials

Spending our springs

Vacationing in Sodom.

Disposable Desires

I chase it out with love  
and massive amounts of saliva.

I run it into the ground  
while no one is looking.

I swallow it like my mother swallowed swords.

I stomach it like it's a nonnegotiable destiny.

I wrap it up and throw it away.

A Repeated Indiscretion

Making the wrong choices

In the name of affection

(In the name of attention)

A repeated indiscretion

(I am getting good at this)

Talking myself off the ledge

(Pushing buttons I never meant)

Touching people I never met

(Victimizing myself)

A repeated indiscretion

(I am getting good at this)

Venus Fly Trap

The point of pleasure  
is pain.

Venus fly trap  
is my middle name.

I open my legs  
to you.

I beckon you  
with my pink innards  
and try to force  
an impulsive decision.

My sorrow  
knows no bounds.

I lure you in with the  
scent of rotting flesh.

To love me is to have sex  
with taxidermy.

Lilith at a Gas Station

She grabs me by my hair  
and makes me lick the juice of fears:  
God's angry spit  
that just fell from his mouth.  
Now it pools around the base of her biker boots.  
Now she shoves it into my throat deep down.

As of Right Now

I give my firebird its daily dose of coal,  
(watch as I stoke its embers)  
I draw my knees closer  
and try to be content to remember  
how I baptized you with flames.  
A tiny seedling,  
I could have grown you into a full plant  
(into an ethical man)  
but I am no mother figure.  
I did not want to lay down and die with you  
(at least not yet)  
too sweet for my beak  
I spit you out  
and accept  
that I might be capable of caring for a man.  
(as long as he is less sugary than you)  
I made you weep for three weeks.  
It took me five to conjure up the courage  
to collect your tears in person.  
I use them like the dirt  
uses rain water;  
to create something new  
(to make myself a person)

This Feels Like Nothing

I smell of corn syrup  
and bottles of mistakes.  
I am a woman unraveled,  
an item misplaced,  
and a lack of personal space.  
I turn a man on  
and push my restart button  
but this will still not do.

Roadkill's Favorite Lady Friend

I find bad people  
and spit them out clean.  
A maggot, I leave the bone meat free.  
I am roadkill's favorite lady friend.  
They come in me  
and walk away less obscene.  
A woman in dissociation,  
I find ways to cope with the sensation  
of constantly being filled with filth.

My Mother Has No Name

alejandra,  
built like a pair of chopsticks  
you leave us with nothing more than splinters.  
you take your shaky leaf legs  
and exile yourself upstate,  
another failed attempt at making yourself whole.

antagonist of life,  
they drown you in prescription pills  
and you discover a new vice,  
one that will not give you children.

our medusa,  
you hiss and scream  
at everyone and nothing.  
the neighborhood kids  
call you a witch.  
an exorcism,  
they cast a spirit out of you  
and it sets its eyes on me.  
I learn to love the way I look cut in three.

Some of Us Never Learn

A misinterpreted Nine Inch Nails song  
picking off sweet strawberry blondes  
one by one  
hands bright red from a virgin's blood

How old were you the first time  
you wanted to possess something?

Tricking girls into your room  
into your van into your life  
only to devour them.

Teeth to skin.

Some of us  
never learn love

only lust.

Coming of age  
in violent technicolor

A Ted, Eric  
or Dylan.

Men are wolves  
and I am expected  
to raise them, to love them,  
to forgive them.

(Good Riddance)

Bend my legs backwards.

    Hold my soul upright.

Don't look away from me, now.

I swallow you whole

    but you pull yourself out  
over and over again.

My mother said it's a miracle  
she ever got pregnant.

I am not my mother.

I dodge the divine gift,  
counting down the minutes until  
it's gone.

I eat sushi and laugh at the fact  
I almost lived for something  
that would dare to take me  
away from myself.

The Woman at the Well Meets a Buzzkill

When God returns

She finds me with a bloody nose and a smirk  
standing by the well where my grandmother's grandmother was first cursed.

She asks me if I'm ready to admit  
that the way I've been living is wrong.

I roll my eyes at her and shake my head.

I'm much too proud to be a victim of content.

She tells me I will never make it to thirty  
if I keep this up.

That if I want the spirits inside of me to shut up

I need to change my life.

I stare at her and sigh.

I wait for God to leave my side

but she won't.

She sticks around and kills my high.

*Three*  
*Feminist Blow-Up Doll*

[T]he way in which the body figures in gender and sexuality studies, and in the struggles for a less oppressive social world for the otherwise gendered and for sexual minorities of all kinds, is precisely to underscore the value of being beside oneself, of being a porous boundary, given over to others, finding oneself in a trajectory of desire in which one is taken out of oneself, and resituated irreversibly in a field of others in which one is not the presumptive center.

-Judith Butler

Cry of the Deviants

I take my anger with me into my twenties,  
drag it by its ankles all around  
the house my father built.

I hate the Book of Job  
because my mother learned to love it so.  
I slam the kitchen cabinets closed  
and try to find a way to live like a man  
in the body of a woman's fleshy clothes.

I sever the head from the human body  
and find new ways to behave autonomously.  
I become the hanged man  
and lose myself to the bottom  
of my mother's kitchen sink.

I separate from the crowd permanently.

I take my anger with me into my twenties,  
drag it by its ankles all around  
the house my father built,  
and when my neighbors complain about  
the noise I'm making,  
I'll start to sing and rage even louder still.  
With both my hands I'll grab the closest man  
and get on both my knees.  
I hate the Book of Job  
because divinity is ripe for the making  
and I am not my mother.  
I refuse to live my life waiting.

Breaking Up Comes in Stages (Even If It Repeats)

I drop my feathers  
when you come around.

Stage one I block all calls

(or chase you out with fire.)

Stage two I feast on all my memories

(or make a man into a God.)

Stage three I wash you off of my skin

(or I swallow your remaining residue.)

Stage four I puke

(or the universe snickers at the sight of me without you.)

Stage five I chase it down with liquor

(or I don't and instead bask in the taste of my own bitter.)

Stage six I find someone worse than you

(or someone better.)

Stage seven I do not find someone better

(or I get who I deserve.)

Stage eight I become a quitter

(or I learn to respect myself.)

Stage nine I become a different archetype

(or I become the one you left me for.)

Stage ten we break up again

(and this time I am all the worse parts of you.)

I shed my scales

every time you leave.

Keeling Over

My own sex escapes me, and  
you force the compromise  
in between my thighs.

It leads me face first towards bliss,  
takes me back to watching palm trees  
from outside her window, and  
turns me around inside of myself.

Lady Lemmings

We were young girls  
learning how to become willing victims,  
dreaming about the first time  
a man would choke us out of love,  
and singing songs of rope with smeared makeup.  
We talked about rosebudding  
over school lunch.  
We were young girls  
in search of something more obscene  
than what was imposed upon us  
before we were even thirteen.  
Bruised apples and soiled clothes  
from the minute we were born.  
One after the other  
we were thrown into the dark.

I'm in Love with a Reptile Man

He shape shifts so much  
I don't think I have ever truly seen him.  
If you asked me to identify him,  
I really couldn't.  
But oh god, I love the feel of how he flicks his tongue  
and how he always remembers our anniversary month.  
I know you won't believe me,  
but I assure you I am not misleading.  
There are many others like me;  
the chosen witnesses  
of a love conspiracy.

A Disease of My Own Making

It doesn't matter if this moment is fleeting,  
it is my own love I am seeking.

a kiss

    a twitch

both are foreign to me.

A tender moment that makes up for my broken infancy.

Help me learn to drown so I can learn to swim.

Tell me that I am sweet.

Her Body Is an Empty Gun

and so is mine  
yet you never even  
had to spend a night.  
They called it statutory.  
We called it a prolonged murder site.

Your brother's wife begins the clean up

and I make you the origin  
of all my feminine rage.  
The maddest of all the furies,  
I make men like you  
the victims of my maiden name.

Your brother's wife begins the clean up

and I remember her and with her comes you.  
I try to scrub myself of this  
but not even a church will do.  
You make women like me  
seek divinity in droves  
only to make us come back to you  
every Monday empty and alone.

Your brother's wife begins the clean up

and reminds me  
that we could never be  
your brother's keeper.  
She says she'd never clean  
a mess for free  
and that you can only love men  
after they leave.

Your brother's wife begins the clean up

and shoves women like me under the rug.

We watch from rolled up carpets

as she defends the right of men

to make our bodies into empty guns.

(Not) Ashamed

I am not ashamed  
of what I did  
but when I think  
about the many different ways  
I cracked myself open  
and soaked up your skin  
I feel something.

Casual Encounters with the Fourth Kind

I looked for God and only found aliens.  
Not with green skin or jet black eyes,  
instead they were all around five foot nine  
and wore one hell of a disguise.  
They didn't know a single human emotion  
except pleasure.  
I let them probe and abduct me.  
I was dragged farther  
and farther away from my home.  
When I was with them, I felt my soul roam.  
It watched as they experimented on me.

The cold hardness of their beds  
felt like a coroner's table.  
I was embalmed when  
I should have been loved.  
My make up was wiped off.  
My dress was unbuttoned.  
I tried to cry, but  
instead I laughed.

It felt so good  
being killed and revived  
in the name of creation.  
The insincere chemicals  
coursing through my veins  
kept me up all night and day.

The Sublime Falls Short

A weighed-down water lily,  
I sink underneath the pressure  
while watching my small ripples  
turn into monstrous waves.

I waste a season getting high,  
shove my face between your thighs,  
and lose myself in a non-life  
just because I can.

A natural disaster raging over homelands,  
I become a hedonist  
and a pervert (only for a day).  
The werewolf in me howls and shakes;

*I want to go back.*

*I want to go back.*

*I want to go back.*

## Moving House

I let a piece of myself die and I try to make its going away feel nice. I grab the candles my mother never let me light and try my best to perform its final rites. I spit on Spanish moss, go numb in my hands from the sensation of a loss I can not name, and try to avoid seeking out someone else to blame.

Everything must go, so I put up the sign up myself. I pace anxiously around a house that is no longer mine. The grief hits and cars skip quickly past my for sale sign. I should've liquidated the home I made out of other people's sighs. It's been thirty weeks and still, not a single buyer is in sight.

*Four:*  
*Exposure Therapy*

To know love we must surrender our attachment to sexist thinking in whatever form it takes in our lives...To practice the art of loving we have first to choose love-admit to ourselves that we want to know love and be loving even if we do not know what that means. The deeply cynical, who have lost all belief in love's power, have to step blindly out on faith.

-Bell Hooks

A Burning of a Witch

There are no aliens here.  
The mess we made is ours  
alone to bear.  
No ancient being.  
No godlike machine.  
It is simply the work  
of each other's  
collective undoing.

I turn inwards  
and let the hurt  
burn me.

I become a woman ablaze

and humanity's most recent attempt  
at instilling order  
in our lives.

But, despite how much we try,  
the annihilation of a whistleblower  
(even if it is me)  
will never be enough.

I burn for no reason.

Catholic Guilt

Bone breaker,  
I let you overtake me.  
We melt together  
as you shatter my knees.  
You make even moving my face  
take more than a mountain of muscle.  
You make the tears run from my eyes ribbon-like  
and the blood I weep bring out the color in my saintly cheeks.  
All this happens while our Great Mother sleeps in clean sheets.  
Yes, God is a woman and all She did was use me.

A Calling Card for Decay or Something I Do to Myself

Parts of me begin to slip through your teeth's openings  
and settle into the lines on your face.

A calling card for decay,  
I become the final stop for all expired things.

A polar express  
that leads to what kids can't digest.

An I love you spoken too soon  
and a funeral-themed honeymoon.

I said it once, do I really need to say it again?

Where God Couldn't See

Seeking out the fruit of Eve,  
you found me drunk on desire and red wine.  
A liberated spirit, I had become too free,  
convinced myself I was godlike  
and embraced a false sense of immortality.

A succubus,  
I sought out my partners  
in order to figure out "me."  
(In order to make sense of *this*.)  
In order to feed.

I breathed you in.  
(I felt the safest I had ever been.)  
You called me the goddess of fertility  
and I laughed, telling you I was barren.  
You said that's not what you meant  
and christened me the origin of all things living.

A death doula,  
you guided me with your finger tips  
towards my first death of many.  
I gasped and let you hold me  
where God couldn't see,  
(at the end of a beginning.)

A God Flung Out

You

    move me.

Fixating my eyes

on your chest

the absence of

misplaced flesh,

a correction

ordained by you.

A God flung out

from its religion

finds itself

(in my bed)

    wanting

to place kisses

on my neck.

Craving your hands,

I am an alter boy

bruising my knees

eating your sacrament.

I run my fingers

across the ridge

on your chest.

You are so much more

than my object of desire

(You're complementary to me.)

The Reason I Stayed

I tasted

power

when I

put my mouth on it.

I liked

the grossness

of it all.

The pleasure

followed by

a delicious shame.

I went back down for seconds

and figured I might as well just stay.

The Prize of Floating

Simple joys

grab me by the tongue  
& change the topic of conversation  
for once.

Salt water

slaps me in the face:  
a month comes & goes.

No one knows  
if we're in love yet.

I learn to float  
instead of drown  
for the first time in my life  
& that alone is enough of a prize.

Two Perverts in a Public Park

We go at it while  
you chase a moan of mine out of sight  
and all the way back up the children's slide.  
    I scrape my knees on woodchips  
        trying to get my high  
and you bend me over next to the swings.  
Snickering, we take turns playing in the sandbox.  
You stop what you're doing  
    and look at me.  
I lose my virginity for the second time.

An Overdue Thank You

A lizard flings itself into the pool  
and you decide to rescue it.  
(It never thanks you.)  
I tread water like a drowning child  
and you smile at me.  
The answer to my Mother's prayer:  
a motivation for me to go to therapy.  
A lizard dries itself out by the pool  
and you show me how it's doing great now.  
(It never thanks you.)

The Pleasure of Being Known

No one wants a love poem  
especially one written by me.  
So, I only open my mouth to taste yours  
and try to ignore the words  
that stay stuck in my teeth.  
You push my legs apart  
and I learn to move past the hurt.  
Infact, I start to savor it.

A Fattening

You slip off my satin sadness,  
    and I learn how to be sweet.  
Squishy and malleable  
even as my muscles are stiffening,  
    I am molded  
into something new  
(into something that can accommodate you.)  
My keeper.  
    My complement.  
My last tie to the land of the living.  
Everything with you is a fattening  
(a gaining).  
    Pound by pound.  
Inch by inch.  
In spirit, heart, and presence  
I become the biggest I have ever been.

An American Miracle

America goes out with a whisper.  
It tries several times  
to give birth to something fully alive,  
but it is on its fourth miscarriage  
and optimism hates to lie.

This world gives way to nothing, and  
I save you a seat next to me  
to watch it all come to an end in good company.  
You arrive a bit too early,  
but it's okay  
because we are both still learning  
and I need to accept that all things eventually end.

You kiss my neck, and  
America's latest stillborn  
breathes a breath.

I Still Hunger to Occupy You

Desire takes on a new face  
and makes me lean into you.  
It gifts us with the power  
to bask in each other's presence  
without needing to taste the other's flesh  
every five minutes.

Now,  
we are returning our fingers  
to their rightful hands  
and reclaiming  
our individual demands.

After

I lost my sexuality in a car's backseat  
and found it several months later  
moaning and bent over a motorcycle.

My mother should be ashamed of me:  
A young woman whoring herself out  
in the names of joy and liberty.  
I accept that they were right;  
this world is fallen  
and all I can do is orgasm  
to the thought of what comes after.

A Sigh of Pleasure

I see every shade of blue  
and fall deeper in love with you.  
I allow the memories of sex laced with care  
to guide me through this painful affair  
and all I think about is you  
when the doctor sticks her hand inside of me  
in a vain attempt to eradicate my despair.

I fell in love with the concave of your neck bone  
and even now as I lay in sterile agony  
I know with certainty that all I want is you.  
Womanhood feels empty without  
being in your arms.

Our Wedding Night

With your hands around me  
I close my eyes and slam shut.  
I scratch out my freckles,  
rip off my lips,  
and undo myself.  
One by one,  
you watch as I  
        unhook,  
unhinge,  
        unbecome.

Persephone's Statement

I take my perversions with me;  
they're my family's greatest inheritance  
and I think they are starting to suit me.  
Yes, this stage of my life is spent domesticating sin.  
I am not my mother's daughter,  
I wear the face of something much older  
and I make sure he understands the severity of that fact.  
With my hips,  
I carve the names of other people's Gods into his skin  
and his mother smiles because that's how he was conceived.  
Afterwards,  
I go back to sucking on his fingers  
and pretending they are pomegranate seeds.

When the Coyote Saw the Moon

My father speaks to me in movies.

My mother simply laughs.

I chase the humane

and let it over take me in the sand.

I welcome my own two fingers.

I go coyote-like and laugh at the moon.

I exist a million different ways in a single moment.

I die a hundred little deaths

and live a hundred little lives with you.

Quotations Are Reprinted From

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