

Smith Union, Tailoring Words

There must be greater reprieve
Than sitting and sipping coffee and

Writing,

It's a low form of relief.
Especially with the belief
That defamation is only more

Insidious

In writing. Even in the prettiness
Of poetry, it smacks of profanity.

Such is a struggle.
To conjure up images, weak
As you broke my heart
Is to hardly fondle meaning.

To say that my heart
Holds, for you, a clever
Admixture of goodness and,
Alternately, badness
Is dancing around the phrase:
Damn your eyes.

(Do you see? Where
I wish to speak
There is flatus;
Where I give you
Utmost disdain.)

How it would be more fitting
To draw or paint you a diagram
Of my soul's graceless shifting.
The diagram would resemble
The early stages of ovulation.
Poor thoughts made tangible.

I am dissatisfied with my clothes.
Each article implies *you*, as I
Remember. Bearing the wearing
Of memory comes unconsciously.
If only I were more romantic,
Or less cheap, I would trash them.
Then, I would wear words.
And by necessity, they would
Cover my obscenities. All foulness
Shall be reserved for the tongue.

[miles above the endless brown earth]

miles above the endless brown earth
clouds paint with shadow
the ranges and valleys below
reminding the ageless desert of its own impermanence
and the stubborn winter sun
smiles from above the clouds

and I know the dances we dance
when we can't hear the music
but we marched into the december dawn
stronger than in september's warmth
and we let the ocean lick our wounds
let the ocean teach us
to dance again

it's been a long time since we slept with windows open
and the lines on her face
blur like rocky peaks into vast grasslands,
miles below
blur any distinction
between love and pain

but water laps the shore at Higgins beach
where we sat in tide pools
against the pink falling sky
and a solitary white bird
paused in migration
to share some waves

Quill

The

Aubade

Sweet breath heaves over mind's landscape
Abandoning the din of articulated glow
The necklace of moments gathers
Drawing in the dark iridescence
And I lament that time's garden has a path

Rising and falling, foul whispers of departure
Without, I would embrace the blazing edges
The celestial alchemist commences habitual magic
And my fingers weep to caress bleak air

Shadow consumes thought at break
The azure watchmen fade
And I linger on the sound of you blinking

porcelain bowl oil spill

my head is full of violins and smoke
as on my knees, bowed to the toilet seat
i gag gasp sputter spit & cough & choke
& pray *god please let's keep this short & sweet
i am a violent wretch* & though i hate
my gagging genuflections in this stall
my body i pollute, i desecrate
so god please let me help me lose it all.
beneath, perfection pounds; love still eludes –
unattainable, unattained as of yet
the grace & form my gluttony precludes
thin like a rail - thin like a cigarette –
...i wash up reeling bleary from my sins
body empty, head full of violins.

Silvia, Darling, You've Made It So That

One by One my Heart's Strings have
Snapped like a Piano Tuner under Stress
Destroys the Cherry Wood baby Grand –
her Mercenary Needs and Love of Money
Trump what should be Love for the Instrument
and its Desire for Tender Care.

she Twists and Turns, making the Strings
Sharper and Sharper, like around her little Finger,
and soon the Wrench Gives as the Taut Strings Snap,
and she should Care and Admit her Folly,
offer to make it Right again, but instead
she walks Away with nary a Glance Back,
wiping her Greasy Hands on her skirt
and moving on to the next Piano.

To Covet

She asks, "Have we met before?"
Her lips are an illusion –
two slivers of fable.

Because the mouth is an absence,
like a letter slid under a door,
or desire.

Her pupils awaken into themselves:
an infant slinking back
into the womb. A dress
the color of wilderness.

The question hangs like a witch absolved.
The answer:
"Of course."

Overhead each second hand tills an acre
of glass,
preparing for my empire of need.

The Quill

Love/Hate

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[miles above the endless brown earth]

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Thank you to all who contributed their love/hate and everything in between. The deadline for the cumulative publication is **Thursday, March 30th, 2006. Noon.** All poems, prose, and artwork are welcome.

The Quill

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