





*Where They Know*

*BluesTango*

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for Lola

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*Before*



*Eight Loud Hounds*

A young woman with eight dogs  
sat in the grass and chewed gum,  
observed her feet or stared ahead  
to where the road had turned  
beneath the full grown summer  
(her hair fell long and yellow  
to the green that grew to meet it)  
sat and chewed and whistled softly  
to the eight loud hounds who ran  
in circles around my car, then  
stopped to gnaw the wheels of  
my intention to move along.

*Out of Nature*

A lion is walking toward  
an antelope. Both know.  
In recognition of the gravity  
of what's happening, even  
the wind stops its whispering.

But how did it know this time that  
one of them desires an equal  
to her nervous regard, to the unsuspected  
speed cupped in her light hooves,  
or that the other, moving quickly now,  
has seen one perfect enough to flee  
the exact strength of him?

There are clouds of panic, anyway,  
torn from the stubborn dust of all  
previous Africas. But as the roaring artery  
feels the hot fulfillment of that mouth,  
its blood rushes out to it  
as if it were a kiss.

*It was a night full of kisses and no one to kiss.*

Most of the fireworks had gone off above the trees;  
the rest burst behind a tangle of black branches,  
making *them* more the object of our ahs.

Then clouds and rain blew in, driving us all inside.

Later, when it cleared, there was a moon, as anyone  
could see, but it was the wrong one or two of us  
who felt something of its power, even going down,  
our smiles too fixed, our unknown sides facing away  
toward those same stars the given light had hidden.

*Woman by a Pool*

Evening bends about  
a woman by a pool,  
folds upon her lying there,  
cave of flesh in early  
summer air.

Evening, breathing as  
she breathes, stirring, as  
her hand stirs the water  
into blue and gold  
and green.

The day has left its  
sediment of hours,  
musk of heat, a book  
abandoned.

She's heard the tunes of ice  
in tropic drinks and watched  
the flickering by of  
daylight things.

The lizard grass has  
slipped beneath  
her feet.

## *Camp*

Here we are in yet another place,  
one more half way home, this time called Camp.  
It's in a good spot, a locale of beauty,  
and the rent is paid, even if so late  
the owner's feeling genuinely pissed,  
so tells us: No, you may not use the boat  
and no new oven in the stove for you.

So we say alright, it's she who has to stay  
in town and sweat and pay the taxes  
while we, for the sin of worldly poverty,  
have all these blossoms to ourselves in league  
with bees toward summer fruitfulness, a big  
Moon Bay, the famous Turtle Rock and  
blue-eyed grasses at our door. O, and yes,

we can unplug the phone, for "business" sake,  
trash the tube away in storage, and while  
the tides make constant music with the rocks,  
we'll strip and love out loud on every saggy bed,  
then rise and write on paper with the dream  
and call it art and life and love and good.

*Inside the rain*

inside the roof  
inside the walls  
inside our skin  
inside our heads  
inside our thoughts  
inside the heat  
our hearts provide  
inside the air our lungs  
make personal  
inside my hand  
reaching to touch you  
inside my desire  
to be inside you  
to have you  
inside me  
inside you  
inside this rain  
that keeps us  
here inside



*Being in pleasure,*

there's only you and I  
some morning hour,  
pushing, pressing, piercing:  
airborne darts on line  
to improvised targets,  
earthpoints we aim for,  
trying not to try too hard.

Then coffee with the Kama Sutra:  
The Clinging Vine,  
Climbing The Tree,  
Sesame Seeds In Rice...

Kiss the forehead, eyes, ears,  
both cheeks, the lips...  
Mouth Congress since we are  
two beasts as well.

Your summer dress is knotted  
to one side at the hip,  
one full breast bare.  
You have the full woman share  
of wombpearls and woman semen  
that rains and rains.  
And the long passion.

Sometimes we can only hit the target.  
There isn't any choice.



*Where They Know*



*Lazing at the edge of a volcano,*

my mind becomes the friend I thought I lost,  
becomes an evening veery saying No,  
I have no silver sounds except for you.  
And at the ending of a summer day  
creation rests from labor on itself,  
sends veeries from its throat and starts to feel  
the microscopic universe expand  
in ease, though rocks are burning liquidly,  
close beneath a tide that's coming in and  
bringing what another bird will dive feet first  
to catch and tear apart and not call glory,  
but not unbeautiful, my mind to bless.

*Poem*

Another day crawling out of the fog,  
the just past full moon last night, high supplicant  
to the foghorn through the trees, to the air  
between two houses linked again by mist  
and heron calls and our love embellished eyes  
in this real dream called midsummer, when stars  
are always lit and sacrament is the taste  
of sweat on our lover's body.

## *La Lengua*

I'm living out your legend on my tongue  
(this is the holy land we're wandering in)  
with you tasting like the words that come to me,  
this tongue tracking down your softest wheres,  
these words tickling my throat. But in your flesh  
I know what worship is, tongue directly  
to the salt skin and fathoms of yourself  
(not under water, in a new salt air),  
word complexioned and as a long earth quake  
in which the universe of you is laughing me  
to go down and down to make up all the words  
that will never equal you, wave and matter  
as the story in the language of our dream  
together: goddesses and gods of sweat,  
of breasts and hands and lips that only speak  
when there's nothing left to say but: Linger,  
in the dark place where your thighs are met by  
what of me is light enough to find you.





*Great Blue Heron*

Of these so cold heronwaters  
Elusive counterspirit  
Selfsame forager  
Archaic silhouette  
Elegant ungainly lifestalker  
Menacing greywings  
To your own kind intruding  
Shy featherwings  
At my physical approach  
Croaking longthroat  
Unlikely greatwings over  
Daylight waves  
Nobodied image I know  
Can only be you  
When I hear you late at night  
Dawn remade  
Wading in the alive shallows  
Whispery breastplumed  
Carestepping  
Heronshadowed  
Before that deeper water  
I can see

*Sun and Ice*

In the soft, cold quiet  
of a day like today,  
my heart becomes a leaf...  
whichever way it blows  
or doesn't blow, is near.

Outside, the cold trees warm  
with sun in an icy grace  
of clearness, my blood,  
a sun, my eyes, like the air,  
everywhere at once  
but still as still in where  
they stop to look.

The piled-up ice across  
the cove is radiant.  
There hasn't been a sound  
all day but what I've heard  
speaking from a new book.

The wind I'm in is you, though,  
this heart, my leaf of hours  
with blood that waits and  
doesn't wait and waits...  
your eyes a book for me  
to read up close some time  
the sun and ice you are.

*In You,*

I can see what stuff shadows are made of  
and how clay can become a kind of light,  
how I'm like a fish who can't not swim  
into a world where the seagrass is swirling  
when you lift up your arms on a hot day...  
feel in you the raw green of a plant  
being changed to heat in an oven of blood,  
what lies not awake, not asleep inside  
the shell of another day promising  
all of itself to no pearl expectations...  
smell in your animal, the flower of  
my peacock tongue, the instant its tastes  
are lavish enough by creed to taste you,  
the dictionary of my senses unspelled  
as kisses, and the rote freedom gathered  
in the feathers of a bird who spills the wind  
when her eyes behold, who can claim by law  
what no one else would ever see: scales  
of brief rainbows and the world's creation.

*Where They Know*

Your fingers, where they know where they're going,  
my eyes on where they're going, my tongue on  
the smooth crux of the story you allow me  
sight to see, vulnerable to your own freedom,  
oiled up out of yourself a silk lifetime,  
teaching me who you are, everyone you are,  
where the goddesses are freest with the gods  
who never plan but give away desire,  
like your oils, like your musks marry me  
ringless as close as this, so far away,  
something writing me, feeling good in my hand.

*After Midnight*



*On a Postcard*

Having never not left,  
what is there left to say  
but: Hello again, dear.  
The raven's flown and lit  
in his favorite trees:  
inside, an old white pine,  
and out, this short lived palm  
down where it's just too hot  
not to linger in shade  
and spice his cooling drink  
and round his midnight hours  
with darker sounds the moon  
will understand, so when,  
by day, though hidden in  
another kind of light  
she'll know his sun-black eyes  
and love his sun-black blood  
as her own ruby tides.

to Lola

*Black Coffee at Sabor*

*"I'm in heaven, but is heaven in me?"*

Behind rainbow shades: what suns! peer out from  
shadows onto sunstruck folks from everywhere  
strolling by, "Return to Jamaica" loud  
like rum honey into us from next door,  
blue umbrellas under blue cotton skies.

O find me a place anywhere down here,  
let me climb the slow days with this black pen,  
invite all the loves not here to taste this  
pleasure with me in a long heaven of sand  
this morning's Coronado gleamed against:  
its fast life, words of awe from all of us,  
its end, our pleasure-feast ashore and away,  
our new desire, its ancient life inside us  
our feet will tell the story of tonight  
in steps' electric measure, while skin to skin  
sounds the air to God, not far from Cozumel.



*After Midnight*

Wind and haze and heat and thunder  
from the waves that never stop but  
sometimes soften under clouds to  
milk their ease in softness for a while,  
though cruised inside by rays and fish  
the colors of a rainbow gift  
no judgment minded god would give,  
in love with her own pleasure.

And the days go on in wonder:  
for eyes, the sights themselves they see,  
for ears, the sounds they freely hear,  
with touch, the sun soft lips of loving you,  
Miss After Midnight on the beach last night.

*Late Afternoon at the Blue Parrot*

We're lolling, after all, and Pedro Juan  
is right on time to ring the happy hour.  
Puzzle stupor from the night before  
reins in the impulse for a plunge, a swim,  
a stroll beyond where others always go.

The bluest sea comes crashing at our feet.  
Profound diversions amble by, baked to  
tan enchantment (tied by the fewest strings)  
along the cooling corridor of sand.  
What was it that we really came here for?

Last night the stars were standing on their heads.  
Liquid motion of a life: a sea still warm  
from the burning sun, black fathomed in  
to fill up footprints with a hiss, the air,  
mad messenger of music, made of silk.

Lost in the moontalk of a naked hour,  
we watch another day go softly by.  
Ice is melting slower by a hair and birds  
with scissor tails, black feather wings, soar  
above the longing waters closing in.

*Her Alternate Reply*

But everything is what I want to be,  
and so what if I turn to dust and blow  
away with you today and let whole trust  
leave fear and all the hallowed shoulds back in  
that disappearing land of - No, señor!

Because my yeses brew like sunlight in  
my darkest place, where you and I belong, señor,  
and finding that I'm teeming after all  
in this, invite you wholly into me,  
O god I am the dust-born goddess for.

And O the holy music we will hear  
together as we crumble and we burn  
and taste this universe we are each time  
our yeses and our yeses have their way.

*First Poem in a New Place*

*(The Yellow Bird)*

And nothing. Windows gaping, clouds passing through.  
Somewhere an engine is shredding damp air.

A yellow bird stops to gawk, then flies away  
while I, strange denizen, floating tourist  
lingering tongueless go on praying  
to Ample God, then watch as that bird  
with the hot black eye flies back again  
to sway at lunch in a gentle frenzy  
while another skitters songlike out of sight:  
licks of sunlight pecking at a few blood drops,  
upside down the moment in mild mid air.

*Mind the all day sun. Douse the dry ones left, first thing.  
Go swim beside what's promised to be swimming  
in the wide lagoon. Forget not the love  
that's winnowed you from all who've rushed to die.  
Blind, the fruit gives wing. Bright, the seed is buried.*

*Green Bowl*

My green bowl glistens with the oil  
that melted down by fire two lives  
of onion root and garlic bits  
to kick awake a modest dish  
and we'll go on living for a while.

I'd spent the whole day all alone,  
pressed upright in a sunlit gale,  
my heart unwoven by two threads  
suspending me I spun between  
(blood creature of the thinnest air)  
and heard as someone made of stone  
I thought, that love was very near  
but not for me.

So I borrowed  
from an absent cloud or two a tear  
and with an awful pull fell free  
to hurry back and dream and to  
consider with a knife, its edge  
against which life I needed more...  
but cut, thank god (and lit the oil)  
the onion and the garlic bulb,  
then threw in all the coldest rest.

*In The Park, Merida*

Drums and sirens and the hooing of doves,  
a tour bus emptied, a snapping page of news,  
and dozens of our interloper tongues  
are torpid murmurs in the drenching shade.

Nearby, schoolgirls laugh and walk away,  
not noticing the country boy in rags,  
half dozing on a bench. A shoeshine man  
lays out his waxes on an old blue tarp.

A homeless holy man arrives, not naked,  
not down here, except his feet, as black as  
the melting streets. The boy is fast asleep.

The ancient trees are whitewashed up their trunks.  
It's said to keep the giants free of ants.

A gringa lopes on by, half a gypsy,  
half the girl we had to leave next door.

The shoeshine man sits down to face his chair.  
We both look up to watch the burning sky.  
The gringa strolls on back the way she came.  
There's a slight, electric scent of rain.

*Before The Next Scene*





*Fantasy On Absence*

is another night with never you,  
entering my dream to lie beneath  
or ride above me, your face a moon,  
your hair all tangled in the ceiling stars.

Fantasy on absence is the aftermath,  
the strange geometry of what is you  
and never you, soft mission of your body  
inside every dreaming cell of me who only  
awes himself with never you in smiling  
relativity.

My speed of light,  
you square me with your energies and my  
fantasy on absence is the never  
ever you so ever close inside me.

*And Still No You, Morena*

Not that I'm in waiting anymore.  
That little house where morning glories  
wrapped around the broken gate, is gone.

They're all so blurry sharp, those days,  
when heat would settle into dust and then  
we'd walk out just to hear cicadas  
where the trees grew tall, and nothing else,  
to smell the smoky residue of fields  
that had been burned to make them green.

The cistern dripped our afternoons away  
and soft we spoke against each other's lips  
and slow we took our time with all the rest  
until the evening stars had gathered at  
the window where a cat was smiling down.

## *New Year's Day*

Into the present tense of Aught Aught Nine  
(after strapping playful pistols to my thighs)  
I woke with you (and you) again, pronounced  
(unspoken, in my head): The day has come  
for making perfect sense (and squirrel pie),  
pronounced (unspoken, like the rest) that I  
will ask you one more time if love is this  
contentious lack of war we live (then draw  
my pistols as you sort through photographs).  
But watch, instead, your eyes and then your smile  
light up (resolutions are a bust) and say:  
It's New Year's Day, my love. Let's go back to bed.

*Tinker Mack*

One quick cast, flicker of a silver lure,  
was all it took and it was all too fast  
for even any stalking pleasure.  
But the view was right: a brutal fog,  
a barely tipping dock and deep salt tide.  
Off somewhere, I heard a small child cry.

My barbed new target, fresh from cellophane,  
hissed and with a plonk began to sink.  
I'd snapped the bale and turned the spool but twice  
when the slender rod began to quiver  
(like my heart) and I knew I had one hooked.

I plucked him up (too beautiful to keep!)  
abruptly on my lightweight line, tiger-  
mottled green and dagger sleek, his flank  
a molten silver, astonished (I saw it  
in his onyx leer) to be suddenly  
so gasping in such a choking air.

I held his trembling life in my left hand  
and with the other eased the hook on out,  
then knelt to put him gently back, alive.  
The fog was cold, the water, as I knew, was ice.

I cast again and didn't have to wait,  
cut the three allotted to my taste, quick  
each time across the spine and quit the place

(fog now inside my head) to drive back home  
where an hour exactly later I could sit  
with book and chilled down glass of wine to  
a long anticipated, solitary feast  
of tinker mackerel broiled up crisp with  
pepper, oil, shake of salt, squeeze of lime.

*A Tarot*

I see your Swordplay is a slight of hand  
in which you disappear to come again  
the self proclaiming savior of old Knaves  
and Knights, someone who gives his Hearts away.

I see you see through no one else's eyes,  
watch you enter rooms, go onto floors where  
music spells the steps and know that you don't mind  
an always starting out again the Fool

whose cliffs you tango near, still holding back  
your Ace (the Hanged Man up your sleeve) and out,  
your Cups in toasts to brinks you have to dare,  
still blessed in all the arts of He and She.

*Before The Next Scene*

It may not matter that the moon was up,  
but I was cold and bored and waiting  
while the warmer extras sat together  
in their game of what, given exile  
on an island plunked in nowhere and two  
choices only, they would choose to bring...  
listened at the edges of their laughter  
as the ring of voices circled round the fire  
until it stopped with one young woman,  
strange to me who, looking through the darkness  
in my shadowy direction (I saw eyes  
and not a smile) said: Cigarettes. And him.





*A Dragon Who Wakes*



Painting a picture on paper in my lap,  
making a mountain and the pathways up,  
birds in the air, clouds at any level,  
all the leaves in favor: green, blue, reddish  
token buds, tracks and scat that just appear,  
woods and rocks with eyes that haunt me freely,  
trails of old shadowlands lighted by fires,  
no problem even if the clouds have broken  
into a ten minute deluge forever...  
a hut, a palace, the quick flag of a deer,  
crying-out hares, squirrels for a rag of tail,  
black pools at the bottom of a held back stream  
where fish numberless as stars are clamoring  
to be reeled in in this fever or more and more...  
rockfest galaxies not spurning my dream:  
of a doorway to a white something that's  
slumbering away, which was once told  
as the story of a dragon who wakes on  
being touched, and then the world is a place  
to be seen from the back of the bird  
it becomes for you to climb on and fly  
anywhere at all it wants to take you.

For Lyonelle



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