

poetry
the
construction
of the
scale
poetry
poetry
poetry
poetry

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Scars
Publications And Design

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the things warren says

I know about this guy,
he sucked his eyeball out
with a shop-vac

he went to the hospital
brought the shop-vac
with him

he was okay, but they
couldn't put his eye
back in:

it was all mangled, and
besides, it was covered
in potato chips

the men at the construction site

a woman told me
that scientists did an experiment
where a woman
first walked past a construction site
with her head down

no one bothered her,
no one noticed her
everyone at the site left her alone

then, later in the day,
she walked past again
in the same outfit, with the same stride
but this time she walked with
her head up,
more confidently

and that's when she got
the calls, the whistles
from the men at the construction site

and you tell me it's not deliberate
and you tell me it's not an effort
to keep women in their place

the measuring scale

Here's an addition for your degrading terminology of women list. In the construction field they (men) have devised another form of measurement. When something is being lowered or fitted into place they will often refer to an inch or so as: up or down about a cunt hair. They have gone so far as to determine that blonde pubic hair is the smallest increment and at the other end of the measuring scale is black pubic hair.

Pam, via the internet

why don't you dissect me,
take every single part of me
and equate it with power tools,
sports and violence?
bang me, screw me, nail me,
hammer me, bag me, pump
me. shoot it in me. maybe you
can even score.

if we're talking about
measuring scales, what about
the scale that defines the way
you treat us:
on one end is the minor stuff,
calling us "baby" and "sugar,"
whistling as we walk by, but
then move along the scale, get to
the blonde jokes, yes, they're so
funny, then how about a pinch
in the rear at the office,
well, that's harmless enough
and while you're at it, porn
movies and magazines, what harm
do they do, and hey, women
have always worked at home,
so you should have all the jobs
and get the better pay anyway
and since we're just your pro-
perty, fuck us whenever you
want, i mean, hey, you're doing
it already in every other aspect
of our repressed, oppressed lives
so rape us, smack us around
knock us down a flight of stairs
that's what we're here for

god, i don't even know how to
measure these things any more

was immune

I went to the outdoor courtyard today
the first time in i don't know how many years
i used to sit there, in the mornings
drinking coffee, writing, reading

and he would come up and sit there with me
and draw

it's the first time i've been there
since he turned on me
i knew him
and i knew he had the potential
potential for being a monster
i had heard the stories before

stolen hundreds of thousands of dollars
in merchandise
been in a gang
drove someone's mercedes over a cliff

but I thought I was immune
to his violence
I thought I could change him
I thought he cleaned up his act
I thought I could be safe
alone with him
a thief
an addict
a molester

I knew him, but I thought I was immune
and now
I see all the places
and they make me think of him
and they make me cry

Watching My Father Die

my father had cancer
the doctors told us
he'd be dead in six months, but

after six years of pampering
and caring for him
we wondered how long this was going

to last. Not that we wanted
him to leave us, of course,
but did the doctor know what he was

talking about? but then
his condition started getting
worse, in the last two weeks especially, and

I just saw him in so much
pain I didn't know what to
do. After seeing him in so much pain, after

these two weeks, one night I
even prayed for his death to
come. Just to save him. Just to make his

pain go away. And the next
day, he was dead. After all
that time, the pain was over. Just like that.

where to go

It was almost sunset, and there
was no one on the beach. She
went there just to see the sunset,
just to try to calm herself down.
She had to get away, she thought.
She couldn't take it anymore.
His affair. Her job. The kid's
problems. Her weight. The
vacuuming and dusting. So
she went to the beach.

The waves gently lapped along
the sandy shore, turning golden
in color as the sun's rays
darkened into a deeper and
deeper red, into purple, into
blue. A light breeze moved
her hair like fingers running
to the back of her head. An
occasional sea gull flew along
the shore. There was no one in
sight. She sat there, momentarily in peace.

The breeze started to feel stronger
and stronger, and she had to
close her eyes from the burn
of the wind and the sand.

The sand ripped into her arms
like tiny needles, piercing her
skin. The waves grew higher
and higher until they sounded
like they were about to land on
top of her. She finally opened
her eyes. Her burning eyes saw
that the waves were still only
lapping on the shore. The sand
had not moved. There was no breeze.
She stood up. She couldn't
take it anymore. She took off
her shoes and sprinted away

to be different

Everyone was mulling around, making small talk, laughing, having fun, doing all the things that people are supposed to do at a well-executed party. It was his birthday, and there was a ring of people around him. He was glowing with delight. She looked at him from across the room and realized that he might have loved her, but he knew nothing about her. She looked down at her dress. It was a strapless red satin dress, with sequins bordering the top and bottom. She suddenly wanted to be wearing her flannel and long underwear, sitting by herself with a book, or a newspaper, or her thoughts. She just wanted things to be different.

Water on the Street

George Eastman was dumping water from his outdoor hot tub one day and the water was running down the center of the street. Now, from a distance, it looked like George Eastman may have been watering his lawn; but people were only allowed to water their lawns on certain days of the week. So when I saw the water and then I saw George Eastman, I said, "Hey, you know -" pointing to the water and George Eastman interrupted and said, "I know what you're thinking, but I'm not watering my lawn. I'm dumping out the water from my hot tub, and I'm dumping it into the street because I don't want the chemicals to hurt my lawn." Well, I didn't even mention the sewer grate behind his house he could have dumped the water into. I just said, "Well, if it will hurt your grass, what will it do to the asphalt on my street?" And George Eastman started hemming and hawing as I drove away.

why i'll never get married

at work we've been looking
for a new employee
we've sifted through resumes
we've interviewed a few

and some were good
some were very good
and we took some time to decide
and then we called our #1 choice

and they said they wanted
more money than we offered
so we said our goodbyes
and we called our second choice

and they said they couldn't work
at such a small place
so someone at work said
we should interview some more

and that's when i knew
at the rate we were going
we'd never find anyone
and no one would want us

surprise

He woke up in the cold room,
just as he had done so many
days before. The room looked
like a hospital room, but that
is what you'd expect in a
retirement home such as this
one. He got up, swinging his
legs to the ground where his
slippers were poised, waiting
for him. His roommate was
still alive. So was everyone
else. The nurses were bring
trays of food to the patients
who couldn't leave their beds.
They did this every morning,
at 6:45. He walked down the
hall to get a copy of the paper.
The news looked the same.
He went back to his room and
sat down in his bed. Everything
was the same. And he was surprised.

sunrise

The last time I actually remembered seeing
the sun rise was at my junior prom
I was in a car, getting a ride home
All I could think was that the sun was
in my eyes, my dress was uncomfortable,
and that I wanted to go to sleep

But this was different
We just moved into our first apartment
together the night before
He made me dinner after pulling
dishware and candles out of boxes
that were still packed

Dennis called my name
woke me up
"Janet-- Janet, get up!!! You have to see this"

I think it was the most beautiful
sunrise the ever existed
I leaned up against the window
while he stood behind me with
his arms wrapped around me
It felt like he would never let me go.

"I didn't know this apartment came with a view"

you and me and your girlfriend

we went out for drinks together
you and me and your girlfriend
to a restaurant in Malibu
with a balcony that hung over the water

had a perfectly lovely time
you and me and your girlfriend
talking about life, catching up
and you suggested that we go out on the balcony

and I thought that would be charming
for you and me and your girlfriend
but we hadn't paid our bill yet
so your girlfriend told us to go on without her

we stood outside, leaned on the rail
you and me
listened to the water crash on the rocks
below us and we talked

but now it was not about catching up
you and me
it was about ideas, dreams, plans
and before I knew it we were out there

for nearly an hour, and I said,
"what about your girlfriend?"
she was waiting for us all that time
and you said, "oh, yeah" and didn't move an inch

apathy

The crowds were screaming
One side of the stadium
in orange and blue
The other side in red and white
Thousands upon thousands
standing, cheering, doing the wave,
screaming for their favorite team

Pom poms were waving
So were flags, banners,
Not one person was silent

Except for one
He sat between the roaring crowds
his grey shirt spilled with beer
from the overzealous people
next to him

He didn't care
He just sat there
wondering why these people
enjoyed this so much

sadness

She looked down at the little kittens
in the box. Her neighbor was trying
to give them away. Why did she have to
knock at the door now? Why did she
have to come along now? Her husband
might get upset if she talks to her
neighbor too long. Something might
give him away. Her neighbor keeps
pushing the box under her nose,
to try to make her look at them.

"If you look at them just once,"
her neighbor was saying,
"you won't be able to resist them."

She finally opened her red eyes and
looked down at the box. There were
four grey kittens and one white one.
She looked to the white kitten.

It wasn't just white, but it was stark
white, as if it had never been touched
by the outer world. Suddenly she
imagined that the kitten grew, and
jumped out of the box, into the air,
landing on her face and tearing
at her flesh. She imagined the bright
white fur turning a dirty deep red
as the silence was broken by her screams.

She closed her eyes, then opened them.
The red in her eyes contrasted
with the paleness of her skin.
A bead of sweat ran down her face.
"No, thank you. I can't
have them around. I'm sorry."

reason to stand

The dying weeping willow
looked like a thin, frail old man

trying to stand in the wind
when he cannot find a reason
to stand

getaway

His wife told him that he had to go on vacation, that he was trying to do too much work and it was taking a toll on him, that he was letting wall street put too much stress on him, that he was neglecting his family and that he probably just needed a break. Besides, he had time coming to him from work and he deserved it. So the two of them went off on a little vacation, to a little island where there is nothing to do, there are no televisions, there are no telephones, there is no civilization. "The perfect getaway from the hustle and bustle of every day life," the brochure said. And it was

They sat on the beach, just a few feet from the outdoor bar they got their margaritas from. It was quiet. His wife glowed in the light of the setting sun. He thought of wall street, and the work he had to do. He thought of what he had to put off doing just to go on this vacation. What about the Erickson account? Will he other clients notice he's gone? Will the company be able to get along without him? Probably not, and he had to sit here, without telephones or even fax machines. He sat there, turning his head, looking for signs of life as he knew it

He barely spoke to his wife the entire time they were on vacation. He couldn't think of anything to say. All he could think about was work, and the problems that would probably arise because of his absence. They finally left the resort. He

over my skin with such ease

woke up the next morning in his own bed (which was too hard), and began to wonder if the past week was all a dream. He quickly got dressed, poured a cup of coffee into his car mug, tucked his briefcase under his arm, and took off for work

He got to work early. He found stacks of paper on his desk, and a pile of messages on little pink slips of paper. His phone was already ringing off the hook

His secretary walked in ten minutes later. "Sorry about all of the work, sir," she said

"That's what I get for going on vacation," he replied

"Aren't you glad to be back?" she said sarcastically

"Yes, I am," he said with a sigh

The satin sheets were stained with blood. Her face brushed up against the pillow. The satin cut into her face as she tried to relax, to stifle the tears. He walked out of the room. "I always loved spring," she said as she leaned over toward the flower bed. There was no smell. "I have to tell you something," he said. She didn't listen to him. She touched the daffodil to bring it closer to her. The stem sliced her palm. The deep red blood thickened as it trickled down her wrist. She looked up. He was gone. The tears burned into her skin. The acid left behind a trail of scars whenever it traced her jaw line. The memories flooded my mind. Every day, every hour, every minute, every second, every moment. The alcohol didn't help anymore. I turned toward the kitchen, went to the far right drawer, shuffled through the forks, soup spoons, butter knives... I found a knife with a sharp enough edge, not to kill, but only to hurt. I put the knife to my wrist. I wanted to take the memories out of me, any way I could. I took the tip of the blade and ran it along the inside of my wrist. As the blood began to trickle from the cut, I put the knife down and ran my fingers along the cut. The blood, like silk, glided over my skin with such ease.

new vacuum cleaner

Elizabeth was only five
she thought she was doing the right thing

She accidentally sucked up the goldfish
when she knocked over the aquarium
as she was vacuuming the floor

She was going to surprise mom and dad
with a clean carpet, but now it's covered
with aquarium rocks, shattered glass and
fish water

But she had to try to save the fish before
she could clean up the mess, so she poured
water into the vacuum cleaner to try to give
the poor fish something to breathe

Now mom and dad have to get a new carpet,
a new aquarium and a new vacuum cleaner

hard of hearing

After Barbara finished the joke, everyone laughed
even her brothers Dave and Brian, who never seemed
to give her credit for anything she said

But then she turned to her father, who sat there
cold and motionless
His arms were crossed; his head was pushed down
into his shoulders

His furrowed brow framed his eyes,
which seemed to stare at her in contempt

"Maybe he didn't hear you, Barb,"
Dave finally mumbled
"You know he's hard of hearing."

leaving

She walked over to the thermostat again.
"It's hot in here," she said to him again,
but the temperature still read a cool 68 degrees.
He started complaining to her about something,
like he did before, like he'd do again.
She walked into the kitchen and started
to splash some cold water on her face.

"Could you get a can of sardines while
you're in there?", he said to her.
Without saying a word, she walked to the
front door, picked her denim jacket off
the brass coat rack, grabbed the keys
hanging from the hook, and walked out the door.

She walked a mile and a half in the cold
before getting to the empty field.
Late November brought the first snow,
and bits of ice clung to the ground
in the early December night. She walked
out into the grass and leaves, and
listened to them crack as she moved.
The water she splashed onto her face
before was now frozen. Her ears,
her nose -- the skin on her hands and
cheeks -- were turning red, then purple.
The tops of her legs hurt from the cold.

She walked to the center of the field.
She sat down in the dirt. She smiled.
She laughed. She watched the moisture
from her breath freeze as soon as it left her
lips. She hurt from the cold. And she laughed.

meant to be

Every day for two years
she thought of him

Every day for two years
she woke up thinking
he was next to her

Every day
when she would open her eyes
she would find nothing

One day he knocked on her door
"I want you to meet my fiancee
This is Marie"

"It's nice to meet you, Marie
I wish you two the best"