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scars publications

the way
poems

i'm

going

poems
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poems

The Way You Tease Me

What I think I like the most about you
is the way you always leave me wanting more.
When you kiss me, and we start to pull back
I want to cock my head and kiss you again
but I never know if you'll let me.

What I think I like the most about you
is the way you roll your sultry deep voice over me
like a wave of heat on a summer afternoon.
You use a pause to tease me with your words
until sweat dances down my hairline and tickles me neck.

What I think I like the most about you
is the way you slide your arms around my waist
and make me just want to collapse in your grasp
and run my hands up and down your back
until I hear you moan and sigh.

What I think I like the most about you
is the way that absence makes the heart grow fonder
and when we touch you say we should take it slow,
take our time, enjoy every moment
and you know, you couldn't be more right.

What I think I like the most about you
are the things that make me think I have to fight for you
are the things that make me second guess myself
because nothing's ever easy, not you, not me,
not relationships, not sex, not love.

What I think I like the most about you
is the wondering, is the waiting, is the teasing.
That's what I like. This high-charged guessing game.
The flirting. The first touch. The first everything.
Thinking about the possibilities. Yeah. That's what I like.

i'm really going this time

i pack my bags
say i'm really going this time

you throw my bags
scream at me to leave

before you get more violent
and you mean it this time

i'm sitting in my car
outside the hotel

see you at the window
holding the drapes back

why do i have to think
that means you care?

why do i came back,
asking you if you realize

what you've done to me,
if you realize what

you're about to lose.
i'll bet you think

you'll call me once
and everything will be

forgotten. other times,
yes, i've forgiven you.

i've come back. but i
can't take being thrown

to the ground, strangled.
when i realize what i

lost that night, i'm
scared. but i have to

remember that you
lost more. you lost me.

i'm really going this time,
and you won't see me again.

carry this with you,
always. this pain, like

the pain you've given me.
you won't see me. carry this.

i am the woman who loves pain

i am the woman who loves pain

i look for you
and i usually find you

one of you

i know you'll all do the same things
act the same way
i've gotten used to it

they tell me i should find someone
better
that i am settling
that this is not love

but i've never felt love
and although this is pain
although i am hurting with you
it is better than hurting alone

i swear it is

this halloween

this halloween i got a costume together
i wore a black page-boy wig,
a vinyl dress and matching vinyl boots

it was strange for me
i'm not such an outgoing person

and every time i was left alone at a bar
someone would hit on me
usually someone ugly
but i didn't tell them to leave me alone:

i gave them a fake name, a fake number

and looking back, what made the difference
was not wearing the revealing clothes
but wearing a wig, changing my identity

and it's not that i'd do it again
but i must admit
i really like being someone else
just for a little while

This you don't hate.

From the picture window
the snow drizzling down
fell effortlessly, silently:
I wondered if outside it

was as quiet as it looked.
The snow blanketed the
grass, past the pier his father
made last summer, out

over the lake. Everything
glowed in an untouched
whiteness. No footprints
yet. Just falling snow.

From the couch I looked
at the larger-than-life
snowflakes fall, one after
another, all gently gliding

down to the ground. I could
not look away. And you said:
This is why I like winters.
See, you hate winter in the

city, but this, this you
watch for hours and don't
get tired of. This makes you
smile. This you don't hate.

here it goes again

maybe this is what i deserve
this pain
but i can't let you go

even if there is someone else
on the side
doing the same things to me
you do
i can't let you go

i need that connection to you
i need that pain
i can't be alone

even though i'm alone when i'm with you

i guess i feel
like i'm nothing when i'm with you
but then again
i'm nothing without you

so here it goes
here it goes again

at least i have this

how far will we push each other? i wonder
as we sit in the living room, waging this
emotional battle, knowing that in the end
it will still be with you having your sex
with me, leaving me when you're through
with me. that is what i'm here for. that is
my function. but at least i have this, at least
i can make you fight me a little more for
it. i know you'll win in the end, but at least
for these few moments, these few fleeting
moments, i have this control over you.
and then the pain of being with you comes
back, and you win. but let me have this.
just this. i know i'll get no more. please.

too far

When he met me
he told me
I looked like
Kim Basinger
long blonde locks
but as time
wore on I knew
I wasn't her
and I could never
be her and I was
never good enough
thin enough
pretty enough
I got a perm
straightened my
teeth

bought a wonder
bra but it wasn't
doing the trick
I bought slimfast
used the stair
stepper ate rice
cakes and wheat
germ but I wasn't
thin enough I
only dropped
twenty pounds
so I went to the
spa got my skin
peeled soaked
myself in mud
wrapped myself
in cellophane
bought the amino
acid facial creams
but I knew they
didn't really
work so I went to
the doctor got my
nose slimmed
my tummy stapled
my thighs sucked

thought about
getting a rib or two
removed
like Cher

but I figured
they've got to
be there for
something
and hey, that's
just going
too far

top of the mountain

so we were in the car together, Lorrie driving, Sandy in the back seat, the humidity from the Southwest Florida night seeping in through the cracks in the car windows. And it was quiet for a moment, and the lull in the conversation prompted Lorrie to ask, "so if you had an Indian name, what would it be?" and I was completely lost by the introduction of this question, I mean, where did it come from and what kind of Indian name was she talking about? Sequoia? And then Sandy says, "you mean like 'Fucking Dogs?', and Lorrie laughs and says yes, a name like Running Bear or Soaring Eagle. So sandy didn't think Fucking Dogs should be her name, so she came up with "Teacher of Children," and I thought for a moment, tried to encapsulate my life one catchy little phrase, and finally I came up with "One who Rests at Top of Mountain." Lorrie then explained to us that the names were actually given to Indian boys as a rite to manhood by a mentor of theirs, often a grandfather-figure, and the name was a reminder to them of what they should become. So I changed mine to "Patient One," but you know, looking back at that night, driving through the musty sticky night, I still think that it is better to say that I shall rest at the top of the mountain.

this is what it means

my son was shot
now he lives in his wheelchair
I hear him creek as he rolls down the hall

he's a brave boy
it takes him such great strength to live
he always smiles

he can't feel from the waist down
but he works so hard
he is so proud

once I came home
and he was so excited
you see, he took a rope

and a laundry basket
filled them up with snacks;
now he could

drag his snacks to his room
this was an accomplishment
he was so proud of himself

I held back my tears
he shouldn't have to go through this
this is not how he should live

people don't understand
when he has a bowel movement
he has to

reach inside of him
and pull it out
he can't feel

this is what it means
for him to be in a wheelchair
to not feel

domestic violence in america

nashville, tennessee

according to accounts, her husband
allegedly locked her and their
four-year-old son in their house

for about forty hours. They were
essentially hostages. The husband
then allegedly beat the woman

while the son watched. This is the
stick he allegedly used to keep her
in line, it looks like a metal broom

or mop handle, it's hollow, and you
see, here is a bend in it from the
hitting. The bend looks like a twist

of a garden hose. And this bloody
knit glove, it was tied on here, at
the end of the stick, so that when he

allegedly hit her it didn't scar her.
Isn't that funny? You can tell that
the son was there for it all, too, he

doesn't talk much at all, and he never
leaves his mother's side. She limps down
the hallway now, and he follows.

trying

trying to revitalize
this old, tired marriage

once I wore a black teddy
thong back
beaded front

walked up to him while
he was watching
a basketball game
on the couch

sat on his lap
straddled him

and he looked at me
and reached his arm around
and tried to
grab his drink

chess game again

we all watched the case on the news together, the case where a man on a subway train opened fire on passengers in the car. nine people dead, i think. they caught the man, they had their trial, and by right he could have a lawyer appointed to him. but no, he wanted to act as his own attorney. so every day he would come into the courtroom in his suit, looking professional, and he would question each of the witnesses, the people that survived his shooting spree and now had to look him in the eye and answer his questions. "so what happened then?" he would ask, and a woman would answer, "i saw you push the woman to the ground, put your knee to her back and shoot her in the back of the head." "can you point out the man that did this?" he would ask, and a man would respond, "it was you." some of the witnesses broke down under the emotional strain. and finally he had no further questions and the judge dismissed the jury to arrive at a verdict. they found him guilty, and when the judge asked the defendant if he had any last words for the jury, he kept stressing his innocence, and never apologized. the judge told him he was disgusted. he saw no remorse in the killer's eyes. and of all the violence we see in the media, all the court trials that are fed to us through our television sets, our boxes of american dreams, i don't think any of us were prepared for this. how did those people feel, when faced with the man that has brought them so much pain, how did they feel when they had to quietly sit there and answer his questions, when he didn't even say he was sorry? most of them sat there trying to keep their composure when faced with a man who lost all control. this twisted tale. they were a pawn in his chess game again.

domestic violence in america

nashville, tennessee

i have had my cheek bone
and nose reconstructed twice

we're divorced now
but he still keeps calling me

he keeps denying it in court

accounts for the need of gun control

January, 1995

One day a man decided to kill people.
A shooting spree. So he went into a
gun shop, picked up a pair of assault

rifles, a number of rounds, each of
one hundred bullets. And he bought
these things, he didn't need a

permit or a license. Just walked in
and out. And he went to an office
building to take out his revenge

on the world. My wife was there,
took five bullets in the back. I wonder
if she suffered before she died. We went

on a ski trip together last Christmas.
She looked so beautiful with the
snow in her hair. This man didn't need

a license, and yet I needed a permit to
retrieve my wife's ashes from the
crematorium. He didn't just do this to

her, you know. Or to the other victims.
He's tortured me, and our baby girl. Our
girl is darling. She's blond, like her

mommy. We have to live with
this trauma forever. This should not
be how we have to live.

As my girl's second birthday approached
this year, I asked her what she
wanted. She said she wanted

to see mommy. Guess what
she is going to want for her
third

leaving for work

you're walking down the street, it's morning, and a man tries to mug you with a knife. it's a nice street, you're thinking, there's no litter here. their garbage day is the same as your sister's in the suburbs. how strange. you pause, don't know how to react to this mugger-guy, and another guy walks up behind you, another regular joe, he's not with the mugger-guy, trying to jump you, he's just walking down the street, probably on his way to work, like you, so then the mugger-guy tries to mug him too. so the other guy pulls a gun, this regular joe, and then a lady from a house on the street calls 911. and you're thinking to yourself, why does this regular joe have a gun? and who should you be more scared of now? is any of this real? it almost seems like tv. then the police come in two minutes, you're safe then, and the mugger-guy is still there and the regular joe with the gun is keeping him there by holding the gun to him, and so then you're talking to one of the officers. and then the other officer on the scene sees the mugger-guy stab the regular joe, the guy with the gun, and then tries to wrestle for the gun. the mugger-guy then shoots the guy with the gun while in the struggle, then the cop, the other cop, shoots and kills the mugger. and you're just standing there, on the street, less than ten feet away from all of this. all of this just happened on the street, right in front of you. you didn't even get to say a word. who is dead? who is alive? what just happened? are you scared? this is america, you think, and you don't know whether to laugh or cry. then you hear a car engine start, and you look and just a few cars away a person is leaving for work.

me or him

someone pulled a gun today
opened fire on a crowd
i suppose it's nothing new

we've all thought of doing it
before

what stops us

what makes one man
decide life is so worthless
decide that he is so angry

that the consequences
don't matter anymore

what makes him different from us
all he does
is do
what we've never thought we could

who is more crazy
the one who acts on their violence
or the one who holds it in

I've thought of shooting people before

of course, I keep that
locked away
inside of me

I don't act on my
impulses
of course not

who is more crazy
the one who acts on their violence
or the one who holds it in

who is more crazy
me or him

still no answers

the parents refused to believe
that their son would kill himself.
it's not like our son; he was not

a quitter. the police believed the
blood on his shirt was from an
act of violence he committed

just before he went into his own
garage and fell asleep. he wasn't
willing to face the consequences

of his violent actions; maybe he
killed someone, maybe someone
would come forward and put him

in jail. no, no, his parents said,
there must be foul play here. and
they managed to have the case re

opened when they discovered only
trace amounts of carbon monoxide
in his blood stream. he was dead,

or dying, before he got to the
garage. the blood was probably
from a struggle he had in trying

to survive. this was murder,
made to look like suicide, but who
did this, is that their son's blood

on his shirt, did he suffer, did
her even die while he was in his
own home? still no answers.

no consequences

the average child,
watching the average
amount of television
in their lifetime

witnesses eight thousand
murders
by the time they leave
elementary school

by the time they are
eighteen years old,
they witness
two hundred thousand
acts of violence

and they laugh
when they hear
their leading man say
"consider this
a divorce"
then pull the trigger

or
"do you feel
lucky, punk"

suddenly there's no
consequence to violence

no pain, no remorse

we're the mtv generation
we feel no highs or lows

we've learned life by watching it
not living it

"have you killed people?"
"yeah, but they were
all bad"

how funny, what wit

they witness
two hundred thousand

acts of violence

what are we teaching them?

suddenly there's no
consequence

this is my burden

I managed to find a seat on the el
train, for once, I was going to work
early enough

so that it wasn't very crowded. And
the ride was the same as the el train
always is:

some people reading a paper, a woman
putting on her make-up, most
just staring

out the window at the aging, rattling
tracks, the smattering of gang
graffiti on the

nearby buildings. Ordinary day in
Chicago, slightly overcast. I wear
my sunglasses

just to avoid eye contact with other
train members. We all know this
code: we know

we have to somehow keep our
sense of personal space, our
sense of selves.

I hear a bit of a scuffle behind me,
more the moving of people than
an argument;

nothing to ponder over. Then
a gunshot rings out. I turn around
and catch

a glimpse of two men struggling.
Instantly I duck down, as most
others do.

I crawl down to the floor in front
of my seat, trying to protect
myself, having

no idea who has the gun or which
direction the gun is pointing. I
don't even know

if this seat in front of me could
protect me from a bullet. There are
screams everywhere;

the gun occasionally going off.
I try to look to see if anyone
was shot, but

am afraid of being in the line
of fire. Another few men jump
in the fight,

in an effort to stop the gunman.
Why is this happening? Was it
an argument,

or just someone on a shooting
spree? The el comes to a screeching
halt at a stop,

and now comes the question: do we
make a run for it, and risk death,
or will the

gunman try to escape out the doors?
The train ride to here seemed an
eternity,

and now none of us even knows
if we should try to get off the train.
The doors

don't open. I hear a few gun-
shots; two men scream. The doors
finally open.

A barrage of policemen cover the
doorways. I could glance up and
see them.

Many more screams. They don't
seem to end. The policemen
rush the

gunman, shoot him before he could
shoot anybody else. It was over.
The next two

hours were spent on the train and
platform answering questions. I
had nothing

to offer them; I barely saw what
happened. They informed me that
it was not an

argument but a man trying to stop
a man about to go on a shooting
spree. Then

the man that survived the struggle
walked up to me, and when no one
was listening

told me that the gunman walked
down the aisle, stopped four chairs
short of mine,

and aimed for my head. That was
when he jumped up to stop him.
That man

was out to kill me. But I've never
met him before, I said, and the man
said he didn't

need to know my reply, just wanted
to let me know why all this
happened.

This man's intentions were to kill
me. But why? Did he think I was
someone else?

And now I think of this every day,
the answers still not coming to me.
And I still

have this burden to carry with me,
that all these people died, all of these
people witnessed

this event, and in a way I couldn't
explain or justify, it was all because
of me.

And this is my burden. All this pain.
All this guilt. All these unanswered
questions.