

Meaning in Meter

A photograph of a tropical beach scene. In the foreground, there is a sandy beach with some low-lying vegetation. A wooden structure, possibly a boat or a small building, is on the shore. The water is a vibrant turquoise color, and the sky is a clear blue. The background shows a distant shoreline with some trees and buildings.

Laurel Dawne Mattingly

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Small

There was a
little girl
who wanted to
remain
small and inside
sheltered, from all
the shitty pain.

She crawled
inside her mother,
refused to come
back out.
“Make her face
the world”,
she heard
her father shout.

She’s standing
all alone now,
nothing left to hold.
It’s an awfully
empty world...
so very scary,
cold.

Poppy

Daddy's little girl
killed herself today.
Considering
how much she hurt,
it was a tiny price
to pay.

She bundled up
her large black curls
with father's favorite tie,
the one he said was paisley...
she'd thought they were just swirls.

Flipping
through the books
Poppy boarded by his bed,
she happily imagined
the pages spattered red.

A spritz
of dad's cologne
made everything just right.
She was wearing
all his jewelry...
it would be a lovely sight.

She lifted
up the pillow
where daddy kept his gun,
placed it to her temple,
and ended all the fun.

I AM

I'm a slimy olive
floating in your glass
I'm a broken wine bottle
lurking in the grass
I'm the little girl
at whom you made
a pass

I'm an ugly insect
resting on your floor
I'm the intellectual
you always seem to bore
I'm your dear, dead mother
whom you deem
a whore

I am this
and so much more
I am what you can't ignore
I am what
you are.

Nite-Life

Nasty waxy painted lips
desperately smiling
twitching for tips

An eclipse of the self
occurs every night,
here in this place
made of flashing black light

The barman pours sex
straight from the can

Hands placed on parts
that ought not be bare

Hair stands stick-stiff
in the smoke thickened air

Then the smiles turn grim
and the liquor runs sour
It's time to begin
...unhappy hour.

Inventory

I have some ashes
in a glass,
two packs of
restaurant matches
and last lights waxy-residue
still stuck to my ass.

What a fortune
I've amassed.

Pigeon Fingers

My pigeon fingers
sound to me
like a fidget slinging
symphony.

Nails scraping
Knuckles breaking
I think of it
as music-making.

Sweaty palms
and limpid wrists
attend to all
the notes I miss.

Then my elbows
join the band
they are dancing
with my hands.

Shout

I'm a martyr
for my mind
it's mental
immolation.

Fire's licking
at my thoughts
with utmost
concentration.

The searing heat
has cooked the
meat of my
inner-being.

Voice now burnt
eyes unseeing
blindly, mutely
screaming.

Care

Why do I care what
strange faces
say to me
as I wander
backward roads

Why do I care if
for all of my tears
I've never
shed a smile

Why do I care that
I'm small and
alone...
everything else
is so large

Why do I care when
there is no god
let the others
believe

Why do I care how
I wish I weren't here
and yet I keep
on being

Nervous Me

Little nubbin
gnawed on fingers
dirtily curled into
sweat nasty fists.
Wrists now arriving
dressed all in
blinding me
white.
Such a sight
as I sicken,
knowing I've given
that shivering grin
once again...
and my skin's
slickly stinking,
scratching and
screaming
out loud.

Shine

Tiny bits
of shiny sickness
sticking to my thoughts.
I'm caught
I'm clawing
the fever's unthawing
the cold curled
deeply inside.
There is no
escape...
it's raping
and robbing me
blind.
I've never minded
the kindness
addictions eschew.

Fruit and Envy

There was a woman
in the window
of the flat
straight
across from me.

She was smiling
eating melon
by the slice...
her life
seemed
much nicer than mine.

I turned,
went to the kitchen,
and grabbed myself
a peach.

As I ate
I forgot
that ugly envy
I had felt.

Chameleon

Tan, unassuming
the grooming's
about to begin.

Pink rushes
towards me,
the cord's
at the base
of it's neck.

Collections of purple
inspection of
damages done.

Electric hot light,
white
shrinks, startled
at what's taken place.

Goat Men

Down
down the dirt road
came two sharp faced fools.
Loud offerings, profferings of assistance
issued from cruelly shaped mouths.
Morons emitting
a spitting black bleat,
goats dressed as humans
out looking for meat.
Run
warn the village
the goat men are near.
Hear their sounds
pounding down
down
the dirt road.

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