

THE SILENCE  
BRUSHES  
MY CHEEK  
LIKE GLASS

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4

# DEDICATION

to the muses of life and myth

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# UNNOTICED

rushing

like water

but to the stars

beyond

leaving unnoticed

those that ask

fade

as voices

bitter with

he black and white

# THE PAST IS OUR ECLIPSE

It crept in, tender as a missed greeting,  
slowing to pace when we turned,  
making a play  
for our affections.  
So easily taken in  
we can't be trusted  
with the objects  
that pronounce our future.

The past is our eclipse,  
predicted by the experts  
with maps and photos  
and proof of ancient denials.  
The past uses what it needs  
and when we try  
to speak,  
to defend ourselves,  
it takes our voice.

# IN THE BELLY OF THE END

meditations

The razors hang from rusted wire limbs  
dancing in a ballet  
of glinting blades.

ruminations

The forest is dark.  
The forest is seething,  
an engine grinds in the belly of the end.

reflections

How many memories  
can the river  
bury in the silt?

lamentations

Too many miracles  
that never come to pass.  
Too many leaves left on the trees.

# THE QUIET

The quiet floated by  
like giant balloons  
on Thanksgiving Day,  
bobbing and weaving  
in the air,  
recognizable,  
but distorted.  
I wanted it  
to surround us  
so we could talk  
just you and me,  
revealing some truth  
that explained  
the look in your eyes.  
It evaded me  
no matter how many  
chances I took,  
while you  
never moved.

Chaos danced  
around you  
in a ballroom dress  
and you took its hand  
for a spin  
leaving behind a trail  
of blue-eyed stares  
and half smiles  
that I could track  
to find you again.

I started to follow  
but caught some peace  
and had  
a conversation  
with myself.  
And I stopped  
chasing after you  
like a dog  
that finally realizes  
the futility  
of its twirling tail.

Two worlds collided  
and the chaos won  
because it had you  
and I had  
the quiet  
to remind me  
of the distance.

# My Tongue Moved Like a Snake

Thieves came.

My tongue moved like a snake  
as I mouthed  
my open wounds  
into air I had already breathed  
from the morning on.  
My mouth formed  
words

and the thieves came,  
night fevers  
razing the mercy in their eyes.  
They destroyed  
and I lay still,  
they violated  
and I continued my silence.

I couldn't see their faces  
behind their hoods,  
they couldn't hear my words  
as I wouldn't speak aloud,  
but we watched.

Movements like a ballet,  
they coordinated their crimes,  
tokens turned to icons  
until they believed themselves  
to be sacrists  
kneeling  
at my bedside.

They heard without my voice.  
Thieves came  
and my tongue struck them  
like a viper.

Thieves came  
through the unlocked door.



# I TOOK THE MYSTERY

When he spoke  
the light became  
a dream  
that overtook us;  
the air, perfume  
that insisted  
on a response.

I took the mystery  
and required too much of it,  
then put it down  
and ignored it.

He talked of living,  
he spoke of need  
and yearning,  
aphrodisiacs to a rapt audience  
who never left home.

When he spoke,  
the light dreamt  
of becoming  
and smelled of  
oily perfume.

# DISTRACTIONS OF WOE

Trance-like movements  
bring distractions of woe,

grinding the meat  
with a turn of the crank.

Shouts of beauty  
still loading in our ears

try to drag us  
from our stupor.

Night holds a meeting  
with the firing neurons

not spoken for  
among the reluctant crowd.

Speeches are made  
and shouted down,

women swoon under heated talk,  
men pound fists into their hands.

No monsters  
emerge from the lair,

no answers  
play the peacock.

Distractions hold in the air,  
a breath to be taken slowly.

# THE LOVELIES

Can you dream  
while the lovely lovelies  
shout profanity  
outside your door?  
Can you sleep through  
the reading  
of the tome they wrote  
in abstract prose,  
a collection of footnotes  
and misplaced prepositions?  
Can you dream  
while the world talks  
at the foot of your bed,  
making plans to  
re-arrange the furniture?  
Open your eyes  
before the church bells ring,  
wake up  
before the dances  
are stolen from your feet.  
You can dream  
while the lovelies  
break down your door  
but put the sword  
to their throat  
when they  
cross the threshold.

# THEORIES OF REVOLUTION

Passed  
    between us  
the laurels of folly and fortune

Differences  
    arise  
from the center of the island

Dissidents  
    purchase  
the only viable currency

and they tore the mission down  
before we could say goodbye.  
Affluent memories  
cuckolded to  
theories of revolution

1  
martyr yourself  
2  
bring friends along  
3  
throw a party to be seen  
4  
recant previous beliefs  
5  
feel the love

Differences  
    become  
love to the desperate

Passed  
    between us  
the laurels of conscience and heartfelt gifts

# THE SILENCE BRUSHES MY CHEEK LIKE GLASS

They can't see me, now.

The silence brushes my cheek like glass,  
leaving behind cool innuendo.

I don't react,

confusion becomes their testament.

Hear the prayers whispered with a voice  
sliding from my mouth

in silken essence,

so soft

they can't imprint.

They're dying, but remain insistent.

My hands show no marks,

place no wagers on their return.

I won't take credit,

only my share of the pain

and wishes

for an encomium.

The waiting turns my heart to velvet.

The waiting burns

in blue arc light from the temple windows.

It's over.

The stained glass loomed over us

in the shadows,

protectorates formed

in the candied glass.

# SHOW

If it were that easy  
we would all risk it,  
taking chances  
on a high wire  
made of textured yarn,  
our mothers trailing along  
behind, knitting our bridge  
into a warm sweater.  
The audience  
would howl  
with indifference,  
booing until  
the houselights came up  
and your father gave  
everyone a refund  
and a sincere apology.  
Friends would  
speak to the press  
about the pressure you were under  
and how worried  
they were about  
your self-medicating.  
The word 'trainwreck'  
would be bandied about  
while you were issuing denials  
from the back  
of your limo.  
If it were that easy,  
we would all get a show  
and bask  
in the artificial light,  
clapping for ourselves  
while everyone else  
was busy.  
If it were that easy,  
no one would be afraid.

# THE DOCUMENTARY

Turn it off.

Flip that switch  
and it's an easy reverie,  
a Texas two step  
on an empty dance floor,  
blank spaces  
where your puzzler used to be.

If you could turn it off,

you wouldn't think of him  
so many times  
when it wasn't convenient.  
You wouldn't wonder  
what love meant to him  
or when he had  
the last of the cigarettes  
that were killing him.

Shut it down.

Then she wouldn't appear,  
smiling for the camera  
but leaving no impression  
on the film.  
The whole documentary  
wouldn't run  
at the Theatre du Memoire,  
morning, afternoon  
and evening show times.

Turn if off.

But then I think,  
I paid for my ticket,  
I should stay  
until the end.

# TREMORS

The door closes  
but the lock  
doesn't click.

The star explodes  
into a ball of light  
and we blink.

The wine has  
turned to vinegar  
in your glass.

Stories of glowing tributes  
bore the gathered crowd  
who want realism.

Clouds hold lightning,  
starving animals  
searching for meat.

I open the door  
covered in blood,  
and blinded by the flash.

People stare  
but don't try to stop me.  
They don't really care.

It can and will end,  
maybe in a cloud  
or conversing with the boatman.

Raise a glass and  
toast the happy couple  
using words you can't pronounce.



# IN THE HALO

I wore the halo  
until it singed my hair  
and it was removed.

The texture of mortar  
soaked in rain  
kneaded my back muscles

as I waited  
under the eaves  
for my message.

I wore the halo  
when I was young  
and infinite,

when the bells rang out  
and I gathered the peels  
for myself.

Lured one way,  
coaxed another,  
a third road cut down the middle

into a nest  
of the sullied and forceful,  
bored in temperament,

left for the future;  
following means one thing,  
followers another.

I wore the halo  
under a hood  
and the hood

under the stars  
and the stars  
under the nebulae

that hid my unease.  
When it burned,  
my skin blistered

and new stars  
were born  
in the halo.

# DAYBREAK

patterns in the glass  
rivulets  
beads  
turning points  
patterns in the glass  
seen by eyes  
that are lost  
patterns in the glass  
redemption  
salvation  
decisions  
patterns in the glass  
light streaming  
diffracting  
changing  
patterns in the glass  
seen  
and missed

# THE SKY SINS AGAINST US

The moon cast down light  
to dance in,  
light to make sure  
of our intentions  
on the road to Hana.

The moon rose high above  
to be our beacon,  
our raison d'être,  
to check our glances  
for more than we planned  
to reveal.

The sky sins against us  
with no open transom  
and footprints to follow.  
The suffocating expanse  
rises in shadow,  
rises for the death  
it drags behind,  
for the harvest of women and children  
it expects to feast upon.

It rises over the moon,  
our moon,  
who casts down light  
to dance in.

# ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

The train whistles  
a haunted greeting  
from a mile away  
while we wait  
on the dock  
for its arrival.

We answer the greeting  
in our own ways,  
with impatience,  
gratitude, longing or  
resignation at its  
inevitability.

The woman in blue  
will get aboard  
because it's what  
she must do  
while the man  
in the funeral suit  
needs to get on  
before the suit  
becomes his skin.  
The family at the front  
can't wait to start  
their adventure  
but the man  
next to them  
with the wild eyes  
hates them for their joy.

The tracks clatter and shake  
as the behemoth  
rolls on,  
controlled by ordinary men  
but capable of wrath.

The train whistles  
a haunted greeting as it approaches.  
The pack answers  
with their collective eyes  
on its belly.

## UNNOTICED REDUX

Do you see the foam  
layering around  
the balance of my desert?  
It's time for  
all of us to leave,  
bounding down the frequent stairs,  
slipping on the oils  
left behind  
by the rest of the dead.  
The result  
will take us beyond,  
traveling at speed,  
chasing the silence  
that left unnoticed.



# THE SILENCE BRUSHES MY CHEEK LIKE GLASS

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