

Cloudbreaks

When I was young,
My mother called them God's eyes.
As a child,
I honestly believed those rays
Harkened divine blessing,
A sacred smile
On the dutiful world below,
Only recognized by the faithful.

But now, as it is,
I see only cloudbreaks.

I understand the phenomenon
Of gleaming photons cascading
Between parting densities of dust,
Illuminating our fragile planet
After journeying through millions
Of years and degrees.

Such complexities
Are bound to transfix;
No natural beauty
Is without its share of stories
Of science and myth.

If only we could appreciate
Without seeking to understand.

Hallowed Ground

Leaves cackle-crunch beneath my boots,
sheafs of paper harvested to fist and furrow,

parted, pushed aside, they make ground cover
(food) for fallow fields; let them rest, let the hallowed

moment pass, they beg, even as their colors pile
and swirl, beckoning each advance, hungry

to dance. We shuffle back within the deck as
the heady muster buoys, tidal, beseeching each step

to pause, each seed of a story to simmer, each breath
to mean more than the last—or the next. These

are not original thoughts, no more than the pointed
tips of filial fibers painted in shades of fire

that whisper—wind swept and breathless—rather
than burn, are unique in conception, their spell

without precedent, though they are, like you,
and me, yes, each in its own pedigree, *encantado*

encantar, so, too, my experience of them as they
kindle cool with breezy figural heat. Cheeky

sooth-sayers, they lick against the sole, an eddy
as distinctly impressive in their stolen slice

of firmament as any (every) orbit of your arms,
any (every) smile that waxes authentic on beloved lips,

any (every) laugh touch embrace word song tripping
circuits to stew in heathen delight along fallen paths,

their splendid pigments portends, thin weaves thickening,
quickenings, as they steep in merry toil and trouble

to promise again, again.

Won't Lay Down

My hair grew all the way down to my waist in
high school.
If I left it alone to air-dry after a shower,
it would curl into the most wonderful brown tendrils.
I was so proud of my glorious curls.

"Doesn't she own a comb?"

From one cafeteria table over, loud enough
for me to hear.
My face/my body/my hair
had never been bland enough or white enough for you.
But I don't even remember your name,
nor why my hair was ever any of your business.

My hair is the genetic stuff of Hishmeh,
who took a husband in Saffad in 1775 and whose
children's children still go by her name.
My hair is the genetic stuff of Frida,
who rented a room in 1933 and lived alone / autonomous
as a school teacher in Hebron.
My hair is the genetic stuff of Susan,
who moved with her sons to Jordan in 1948 after
Ramleh was ethnically cleansed.
These are the names I remember
when I look in the mirror at my
hair that won't lay down.

I do not have children

I have not raised a person to be a person
and watched them find all the pieces of life that make them grin

But I have seen two people become more themselves
find themselves

walk back in time a bit
and get an old jacket
put it on and find some left over movie ticket in the pockets
some pieces of a life you took a sabbatical from
now falling right back onto your shoulders,
realizing how much you missed this jacket

My mom goes to knitting class
and calls her friends

She has friends

My dad walks marathons
He started a garden
Ask him about his tomatoes

They eat vegetarian meals
Having hard ciders with their fresh salads

Weekend plans and hiking trips

They watch tv shows together and make tea
And put vegetarian chili in their travel mugs and go to Iceland

See, I do not have children

But if it is anything like watching these two people I love
blossom into themselves?
Well then goddam, it must feel like magic

Fat Cat

The fat cat sat on a rug,
the fat cat saw a big bug.

He pounced, crashed, and fell on his head,
then he wanted to go to bed.

Then he wanted to make something with clay,
and decided that he had a very bad day.

Poems

Poems big and poems small,

Poems fat, short, lean, and tall.

Poems are different and the same

But all of them have a different name.

What is this poems title

Mary, Jack, Lee, John, or Lou?

Whatever this poems name is

This poem was made for you!

When the Sun was Shining!

When the sun was shining
the flowers were blooming!

When the bees were buzzing
the birds were flying!

When the kids were sleeping
the owls were hooting!

Grettel- My American Dream

Original Poem (Spanish/English)

Poem translated from Spanish to English

La vida es difícil para los emigrantes. Shots fired.
Wolves chasing us. **An immigrant 's life is hard.**
We're cold. We're wet. **Que difícil la vida de los**
inmigrantes. We're tired, but we have hope. **How**
hard is an immigrant 's life.

¿Valdrá la pena este "American Dream?" My
American Dream was born in the stories my dad
always told me as a kid. *En los cuentos de una*
educación mejor, comida sobre la mesa, y
oportunidades que da una esperanza. But we are
here. The kids are too scared to speak. And while
every meter, *cada kilómetro, es uno menos que dejas*
atrás, I think: Will it be worth it?

They build walls to separate us, but they don't
realize the most this wall separates is our humanity.

Fui a la escuela en Cuba, and I go to school here.
Tenía amigos con los que jugaba en Cuba, and I
have friends that I play with here. *Tuve problemas*
en Cuba, and I have problems here. *Amaba a la*
gente en Cuba, and I love people here.

¿No ves que somos iguales? Do you not see that
we are the same? Luchando cada día por construir
una vida mejor para nosotros, nuestras familias,
nuestro futuro. Somos lo mismo. Y aunque mi
corazón habla español y mi boca hace lo mejor que
puede to balance my new english, **nuestra**
humanidad nos conecta. Our humanity connects
us.

Life is difficult for immigrants. Shots
fired. Wolves Chasing us. An
immigrant's life is hard. We're cold.
We're wet. How hard is an immigrant's
life. We're tired, but we have hope.
How hard is an immigrant's life.

Will this "American Dream" be worth
it? My American Dream was born in
the stories my dad always told me as a
kid. In the stories of a better education,
food on the table, and opportunities that
give hope. But we are here. The kids
are too scared to speak. And while
every meter, every kilometer is one less
that you leave behind, I think: Will it be
worth it?

They build walls to separate us, but
they don't realize the most this wall
separates is our humanity.

I went to school in Cuba, and I go to
school here. I had friends who I played
with in Cuba, and I have friends that I
play with here. I had problems in Cuba,
and I have problems here. I loved the
people in Cuba, and I love people here.

Do you not see that we are the same?
Fighting every day to build a better life
for ourselves, our families, our future.
We are the same. And although my
heart speaks Spanish and my mouth
does the best it can to balance my new
English, our humanity connects us.

Photosynthesis

Green and reaching,
Warm to bursting,
Shoots and gasps,
Gasps and grows.
If I could choose,
I'd eat sun,
Let it melt away my stubborn bones.
I don't want your milk and wine,
I would drink rain to quench my thirst.
Let me stand,
I would raise branches to the heavens,
Send roots to where my heart aches.
I would breathe wind and whisper shadows,
I would be a tree.

since I have wanted to live,
I have not wanted to go to sleep.
I have been afraid that if I happen
to stumble across the gone place in my dreams,
I will not be able to find my way back out

since I have wanted to live,
the color yellow, which I have forgotten
has started peeking out from the cracks
in the linoleum ceiling of the sky,
flooding the garage,
so stubborn it blinds me

since I have wanted to live,
tears flow as steady as how
the ohio river valley floods
as the flowers start to come up in the springtime,
every rain a beacon of gratitude
for making it through this winter

since I have wanted to live,
the street where I once did not want to live
has stopped calling out to me in the dark
it sits dormant, its yellow
coming out from where it was hiding
waiting for me to stroll down it again
hand in hand with who I once was

since I have wanted to live,
I can no longer feel
the ghosts that walk alongside me,
trailing me, a dress train of memories
muting the music

since I have wanted to live,
there is a song in my mind
and it sings
live,
live,
live,

No, I am not black.

I am not the dirt that you walk on,
hoping not to get your shoes too dirty
when you treat me as beneath you.

And no, I am not brown.

I am not the trees you cut down
to use up for your own good.
You take so much and leave so little
from what was given to you in the first place.

Of course, I am not light-skinned.

Because if you scrub me hard
to remove the dark dye from my skin,
you'll only get flesh.
Red, raw flesh.

Yes, I am my flesh.

I am what holds myself together,
I am the blood that flows through my veins,
pumping blood into my heart,
that keeps beating through the hard and good times.
I am my bones, my spine
that keeps my head up when dealing with things that try to put me down.
I am my lungs.
Taking in everything you put out,
and giving it back better than before.

Yes, my skin is dark like the water that flows at the bottom of the ocean.

My skin tells the story of my ancestors,
and what they gave to me.

My skin is dark like the sky you sleep under.

But no, I am not black.

Because I am not my skin.

I am the will to keep going,
the push to wake up in the morning

Yes, I am my flesh.

I am deeper than my skin.

space between the bars

i am from the indentation in a worn-out dartboard
after the arrow has moved on to better things
leapfrogging over emerald mountains
tin ripping into my skin

i am from the white oak tree
that our melodies shaped
and the brook we serenaded
with the entanglement of our heart strings

i am from chairs in shades of brilliant
inanimate objects counting
1, 2, 3, 4
drawing hearts on whiteboards

i am from cocoa powder
filling the tunnels to my soul
peanut butter, oats, and a spoonful of solace

i am from a pile of shaved eyebrow hairs
that blanket over the blades
the bare bones that rest above my eyes
the comfort that comes with nothingness

i am from the world-changing THUNK
when I close the lid on a box
of memories from people
that weren't always strangers

i am from the empty space between the bars
that stops us from intertwining
keeping our rhythms from interlocking
dividing our kindred souls from connecting
a piece of me remains with you

i am from the couch i sit on
waiting for you to return it

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They Dance On My Pillow

In the quiet of the night, as dreams softly creep,
My tears of sleep gently fall, like secrets they keep.
They speak of emotions, too deep to explain,
A symphony of feelings, a bittersweet refrain.

Each tear tells a story, a tale of the heart,
Of love and loss, of hope torn apart.
They shimmer like diamonds, in moon's gentle glow,
A silent expression of the things I may never show.

They dance on my pillow, like stars in the sky,
Reflecting the journey of every sigh.
But fear not, dear friend, for tears are not in vain,
They cleanse the soul, and heal the pain.

So let your tears flow, like a river so deep,
Embrace their beauty, and the secrets they keep.
For in the poetry of tears, a truth shall arise,
A testament to strength, and the love that never dies.

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