

For Bilal, 3-13

some poems by veronique van pelt

The first three are things I have been working on for the past several weeks. I would love your comments or critiques on them and any others.

injury as concavity .

we tend to think of injury as concavity .
i turn the space inside itself.

follow it snarling down the street
grey bristled back
bending by corners,
leering in the eyes of passers by -
do you recognize the hurt in me?
tear the ground as it drags me
farther into the blue sky
- into what i could not bear -
i do, i dare
and i smile at the end of the day

because the calamity is gone.
The eyes adjust to normal light.
I have grown, I have grown,
and I can jump those mountains.

(I wanna sail back and forth
sail back and forth across
across the crack in the worlds
the crack in the worlds as if
on ice skates -

Life is just a system of brutalities
slowly pushing you out of yourself.

In my dreams I am capable

In my dreams I am capable and wholly divine like everyone else.

In my waking life I am afraid

hapless

in my shape of mind, growing all the time,
awkward at all angles.

Someone once told me, I let you down, I let you down, but Someone always will.

Trust is a joke of convenience, a metaphor for faith and shorthand for hope. It is a confection of survivalism, a self fulfilling prophesy of dejection, and, as a working function of the daily life, I do not believe in its efficacy.

- only goes to show what I know of stability.

I live in an earthquake; the earth is singing mourning songs.

(14)the quiet times

the solitude is coming bigger than the grief we left in Nashville
in dallas kosovo and kabul
the hacking sobbing laughter of one:

I need no cringing observations no halting and high handed appraisal of
you all wired in
wired shut dripping bombs by apathy, each word
soaked in a false labor, no.
I will take my fierce introspection,
my glowering retreat to my own womb

(I AM LOVE i told them, and they could not understand, –
as i shook the plastic bangles inscribed with scripture of my past
F_DOB_ADMITTED_I_AM_LOVE)

the solitude is coming
and i will sleep naked on the floor and under
a bear skin rug
and tie my sins and saturations in my hair.

dye. fixative. stain.

i will paint my golden thighs and think of one
or death
I will think of love sewn into someone else's curls.

i will think of promises i want to make,
and admissions that will dye in the shadow of a solitude.

(25) **October in the opposite house**

What should I do to snag Your attention? to make you uncomfortable, -
to upset :You: from {your person}?

- a teacup perched nicely on saucer on knee -

you will not disappear: you'll only see
the stain on the outside.

How can I talk with my tongue pressed against the roof
of my mouth > my hands are introverted, drawn against their tendons
My Nails are jagged and bittothequick and they are
cutting the flesh -
I am grasping (n)othing.

- I shall talk about the jungle inside of Me.
warm, dark, reluctant and nurturing and - yet -
ulti- mate- IY:
devoid of growing things.
this is a sheath of butcher's prime.

i turn and we turn again to the navel in the lotus petal,
weary and bent on ourselves, [we've hidden g_d
in our sunday panties.]

- I shall speak of the tall ghostly noon, October.
everything tasting sweet and dry and something like sun.
Mother Nature cra-CKs
your skin tight against Your
cheekbones . - I am my own mother out of respect for

the one that bathed me
when I floated on the rushes . -

{the self is a shadowbox, humming low, out of hearing under hertz
of your cell phone, microwave, CPU and ambition.
It was wired by a magician in a high starched collar and
rue in his boutonniere. "his sexton throws strange illuminations
in an anonymous light" (screw that, 20). }

-
the concept is too simple to grasp - somewhere between
a cobweb and unravelling heirloom.
You are Incredulous.

See there, though.
it has cut you and healed - ...

fennel, my columbine, and violets.

the trceries and Vagaries of the leaves in my hair ,

I plucked them

thinking they were red.

In the end,

I will arrange them around a silver duck, a painted robin
and ribbon; they will go as fine

as my grandmother's skin on her cheekbones; like
me they will cease to lend

themselves to kisses -

sealed in a box with the wind off the mountains,
which is really dust, warmth, resignation.

So sleep unsleeping tonight, as shall I.

tonight we will crane our necks immobile and try

to look up to our chests.

claying, senseless, mewling _

somnambulist intending.

October waits lonely in the opposite house

(42) **the Ascension of Lykke**

The Wiltern, August 3, 2009:

The waif and the chorus girl appear before us,
taking her time, [it's all her time.]
Shirley Temple plays Frankenstein,
and then the eyes adjust: the goddess stands before us

obviously. more entertained with herself than
us, even more than we are with her -
 Tinkerbell dances on Tina Turner's legs.
and somehow she is bigger than us all.

[Why must you treat me as an other
even as I hold your hand?
Why must I treat you as an other
even as you hold my hand?]

I am watching a medicine woman in a cold time,
when the circle is fire and we all huddle close -
this cave is giant and holds hundreds. she gives.
She is only so strong as her insanity, or, Possession
 (Has anyone noticed? there are prophets among the pop stars these days?)

And then she glows.
 and goes just the right angle.
 she says

she gonna make us glow, too.

(46)Our Life's work

we've spent Allll day
building Box City -

but we don't have boxes,
So we just call it Rockcity.

Now, the Grand Finale,
the Absent Gods of Rockcity,
walk sad and ginormous
through thatwhichtheyhavecreated,

and explain (reverently)
to the Terrified Population of
Ourfaircity:

We have built you,
but we cannot
abide you, so
we must take back
what we have made
and try again.

so we kick at the foundations
Our Life's Work, watch it fall like
an old man and a broken cane,
and when we are done,

you can't even tell we were here.
we stand awestruck by our Powers
of Destruction -

but it's a deep autumn twilight
and there's a promise of cookies
and deep autumn sleep, and we can
start the world over tomorrow.

(57)the lady regrets (v2)

i have talked about regret before
, demuring, defiant by turns.
Edith had her way, but she died so small
and so young
taking up one quarter of a queen bed crying for her mother -

like a room there's a quiet feeling,
woman, after with a fire and a large soft chair, inside a
snow with the tv she cums, and it's frosted gray, like
many cashmere gray turned down, but more like
cloudy day. there is no cold, scarves in the wind on a
where no one will truly be able to except for the place
which would destroy her, to be touched touch her,
 there.
 i suppose it has something to do with that.

when you're done
fessing up, hands folded penitently in front and head high in the
principal's office of the soul, - which i guess you can call the conscious;
If you can't be happy with how it - the revision, which is the most un-kind
 thing to call it, apache torture hindsight -
contributed to where you are now, rightthisverysecond, then you'll turn in
a manuscript, or even a rough, to saint peter, and ask for an extension. ...

[i am collecting your blessings like glass flowers, with stems so long
and perfect it makes me wanna cry, - i'm crooking them in my arm like a
beauty queen and waving, carefully, across a hillside from the low,
and i don't think you can see me unless i fly.
- i'm so afraid to hold onto them too tight, i think they'll shatter, and
then i won't have anything except in
what's bleeding.]

(67)Once in a garden

Once in a garden I saw you
standing like an emperor.

Your sash hung down
 (such a fine man),
always in student pose,
and eating the apricot
straight from the tree,

and then me, in excess,
hands hidden and steps demure.
Only demons travel in straight lines,
so only in dance may we ever be sure
of the other's intentions and purity;

 I believe, though,
 to recognize grace
 requires one perfect misstep
 for reference.

(68) **o pioneer**

In all their lonely moments
silent noons and dreadful midnights,
they have stopped to reassess you
and what you had forgot -
was it better left forgotten?

It is a dream I have
(from time to time,
of you,
walking square-shouldered into dusk
in a long leather coat
and a host of regrets you have long since befriended.

But they must blink and look away, of course;
you are too bright to see.
In all their lonely moments
(especially the loneliest of all)
they wish they had done as you
and lived a while
in the borderlands.