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This Way Girl Comes Bearing Gifts

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THIS WAY GIRL COMES BEARING GIFTS

A Masters Thesis

Presented to

The Graduate College of

Missouri State University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts, English

By

Alexandra Webster

August 2017

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THIS WAY GIRL COMES BEARING GIFTS

English

Missouri State University, August 2017

Master of Arts

Alex Webster

ABSTRACT

The following collection deals with autobiographical work. My purpose for this thesis was to present poems in which spoke to a girlish attitude under various circumstances such as age, location, and expectation. While this thread of girlhood lends itself as a conceptual framework, the poems themselves vary in style. They move between elements of imagism, narrative, lyricism, meditation, and some code-switching. I found that by letting the poems happen upon recognition and shape themselves out of memorable content rather than by trying to adhere to a strict concentration on one particular style or form allowed me ample materials for building this thesis. The title of this collection, *This Way Girl Comes Bearing Gifts*, is about the way I have been able to bear the weight of memory—as gifts. It is intended to show a way in which lived and living girlishness, whether something wrong or wronged, can still be full-bodied and spirited. My connection to the title at age twenty-six is one where I feel years of prolonged girlhood have influenced the course of my actions and led me to poetry.

KEYWORDS: poetry, free verse, meditation, image, narrative, lyrical, sexuality, location, Spanish, code-switching, girlish, girlhood

This abstract is approved as to form and content

Marcus Cafagña
Chairperson, Advisory Committee
Missouri State University

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Alexandra Webster

A Masters Thesis
Submitted to the Graduate College
Of Missouri State University
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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Approved:

Marcus Cafagña, MFA

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In the interest of academic freedom and the principle of free speech, approval of this thesis indicates the format is acceptable and meets the academic criteria for the discipline as determined by the faculty that constitute the thesis committee. The content and views expressed in this thesis are those of the student-scholar and are not endorsed by Missouri State University, its Graduate College, or its employees.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my professors who helped shape my understanding of poetry while at Missouri State—Sara Burge, Marcus Cafagña, and Dr. Jane Hoogestraat. To my family and to all the friends I have or had.

I dedicate this thesis to all my dead pets.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

In the Beginning.....	1
Early Influence.....	2
I. Girl and Place	9
<i>Rosas Quemadas</i>	9
Who can say.....	10
Song	11
Tomorrow	12
Málaga Study I.....	13
Málaga Study II.....	14
Anthropology	15
8 Argentinian girls and me.....	16
Tangier bar // somewhere in // Tangier.....	17
II. Girl and Years	18
Array, Array.....	18
Harlingen, Texas, 1997.....	19
Osage County, Oklahoma, 2003	20
Sum of 2003.....	21
Summer Vacation, 2001.....	23
Summer Vacation, 2004.....	24
III. Girl and Friends	25
Summer in the 2000s, Missouri	25
Regal Wrong Doers.....	26
Spit me up	27
On a bus commiserating.....	28
IV. Girl and Mediations	29
An Early Gesture.....	29
in the Tall Grasses.....	30
All that Surrounds me	31
To Whom It May Concern.....	32
Here we are like souls.....	33
Gravitas, Gravitas	34
In the backseat.....	35
V. Girl and End.....	36
Works Cited	37

IN THE BEGINNING

I am trying to find value in the world. I am trying to form an aesthetic within this collection of poems. I am hoping my ego is checked enough that something bigger can be spoken. All of these poems are insufficient to me. There is an enormity I will never be able to grasp no matter how long I write. Nonetheless they still represent a contemporary portrait of myself as there is an idealized and applied communication being transferred. I haven't decided which group of poetry to format myself into and I think it is something I will try to avoid for the most part. Although, after looking over the pieces I've included, I see Deep Image as playing a role. Concrete images resonate with me on many levels. They not only are providing an aesthetic, but they create sensory symbols and heave forth emotion and meaning sometimes within a breath. And from time to time I will identify with the reader taking, as Robert Bly would refer to as, "psychic leaps." The kind of leaps which are more associated with the emotional unconscious who abides by its own intelligence and therefore sets the reader up for the leap—but it is up to their interpretation to see the other side as a plausible enough landing. I am not under the impression this is a way to cop out of writing a difficult poem. At times, this can become more tedious than the narrative for me, but at this point in my poetry track, taking sides seems unreasonable. It would limit my outlook on the way poetry can happen across the spectrum. When I am conjuring ideas and writing poems, I am not usually consciously thinking of who I would like to sound like or what movement, theory, practice, etc. I'd want to exemplify. Perhaps this is due to my lack of knowledge or experience. However, their influence seems to still happen whether consciously or unconsciously. By being

aware of the variety poetry can lend itself to, the poem can extend more naturally. I have an immense amount to learn—but I like to think my unconscious prompts certain models so not to be so overbearing and thus dry up the emotive pull—so as not to edit out the surprise of the poem. As Robert Frost would say, “no surprise for the writer, no surprise for the reader.”

I went back to analyze each poem in attempts to uncover more outstanding influence from other poets, who might have decided a turn for me in which I was unaware. Narrative, Beat, travel, and confessional are ones in which I found to be influential in this collection as well. I also realized in this process that I have relied on male attention as a way to gratify purpose. I have entertained the male gaze playfully since I bought into my sexuality as being something of a gift. Within the last few years, I do not see this variety of romantic play as riveting or inviting as it once appeared. I believed in my girlish roving as making intellectual—even status moves—it was a game, and I considered myself a player. While the platform of “lost innocence” might seem what I am after, I will disagree. I do not wish to reclaim virginity, nor do I want to appear as regretful, but rather—coming to terms.

Early Influence

The poems included were written and/or revised within half a year. I am always unsure of their quality. Although throughout writing in the 2017 semester I have made a small realization in that I happen to be fond of dashes—a similar appreciation to perhaps, Emily Dickinson. While I do not profess myself to be her understudy, her astute clarity on subjects as broad as time, death, love, nature is of considerable awe. The first time I

remember having an image of Dickinson was somewhere in middle school. I left class with her staring intently out a cold window with a pinch of red on her cheeks. After reading more of her poetry, Dickinson seemed a bit rowdier than the recluse she often appeared to be, so I dig her outlook—I think the vehement yet chilling and celebratory calm demeanor that comes across in the way she writes some of her verse is admirable. Anytime a poet allows so many emotions to have the space to exist within a small amount of words, is masterful. While I do not write so condensed in all the poems included in this thesis (I am still having fun experimenting) I still consider Dickinson an early influence. One technique of hers—apart from dashing—is how she lets symbols possess power so as to drive meaning forward with limited language. A particular favorite poem of mine of hers is number 556.

The Brain within its Groove
Runs evenly—and true—
But let a Splinter swerve—
'Twere easier for You—

To put a Current back—
When Floods have slit the Hills—
And scooped a Turnpike for Themselves—
And trodden out the Mills—

The reason this poem resonates to me is for its dense and complex ideology. How it is more difficult to return to the groove which “runs evenly—and true” after there have been the “Floods” which have “slit the Hills.” To return to the old groove almost seems an impossibility when other possibilities for lines of thought have presented themselves. Often times I wonder why I cannot be the person I once was, why I cannot approach the world as I once did, and I have realized it is because after there has been a flood, there is

no easy way back, and perhaps no way back. This reconciliation of terror for no returning I still see as a gift of the human spectacle to carry on.

Another early poet to grab my attention is Sylvia Plath. I did not grow up around family who enjoyed literature, and we moved numerous times growing up. By the time I was again the new student—this time in junior high, I found the personal “I” of Plath as refined and bold—something I could sink my sharpening teeth into. Hers at the time was a poetic intelligence I felt at home with, but also strangely terrified me of as to why I should be so enthralled. At this point as an adolescent, intentional death seemed frightening—forbidden. Although having rebellious moods in my blood, the daily relationship between Plath’s beauty and terror, budded within me as a romantic and psychological curiosity. Which then led to a degree of tragic idolatry of Plath and then perhaps, an overall fascination with poets who took their lives. If I could embody this mentality I thought—I could be like Sylvia, or at least, understand her more. It was a concept I took too far at too young an age that isolation and self-consciousness began to breed in me as familiars. The idea of poetry being shrouded by a teenager’s idea of “darkness” persisted until I left to live in Argentina as an exchange student for my junior year of school. There I met Megan and she was philosophical. She introduced me to ways of conceiving life I had not pondered previous to our discussions together. During this time, I listened to Argentinian folk and rock music and read more novels than poetry. So instead of writing poems about feeling numb, in anguish, etc., I switched to writing about travel or trying my hand at poetry in Castellano, in what I saw at the time as a way to channel elevated romantic language. In this vein, I see romance as a persistent motivator for writing—Pablo Neruda, Federico Lorca, Gabriela Mistral, Rimbaud, Baudelaire, and

Rilke all come to mind. To me then and now these poets all felt a fury and an unfettered charge to be a poet. The idealized image of them—their dreams, their hearts, their frenzy in some cases— had a heavy impact on how I envision the world—as something seething with greatness and sadness and heartfelt terror. Stylistically, I do not see many similarities between this collection and the aforementioned poets, but I wanted to include their presence because as a young writer, they are a meaningful force—especially when I have the tendency to feel meaningless.

There is an undoubtable Beat association in this collection without the political implications. I had read *On the Road* and “Howl” right before leaving to Argentina in 2007. They were suggestions from a hip older guy who I really thought was the bees knees. So I felt romantically inspired by them. When I had a *MySpace* I remember as part of my personal description a line from “Howl” which I took to heart: “O victory forget your underwear we’re free.” Just as I wanted to understand Plath by attempting to incorporate her dense moods, I wanted to understand Kerouac, Cassady, Ginsberg, Burroughs—through their strange, seemingly outrageous adventurous attitudes. In part—I sought to get “cool” by doing “cool” so as to write—“cool.” This ideology of experimenting with life and one’s perspective settled in for years and into my twenties I went! The Beats made me want to see the USA and whatever other varying landscapes out there that could further convince me—I’m really alive. As I learned more about the Beats, they developed more into people rather than myths, but the early attraction to their meditative yet unhinged lifestyles has still influenced me today. Poems where I see the Beats effect are, “Summer in the early 2000s, Unspecific Love, Missouri,” “Regal Wrong Doers,” and “On a bus commiserating.” I talk about my comrades so-to-speak in the first

two of these while using imagistic language to wind an idea, and repetition to either tighten or loosen until I fall back onto the self or selves. The way the poem develops for me in this style is fun to chase, the context reveals itself without me having to stretch or worry about meaning while in the mindset. These poems appear on the page fast, with revision saved until the full poem is laid out. Then I will go back to tweak and polish if needed. Sometimes I feel pressured to do more polishing than I'd like due to the mentality that the poem will be taken more seriously if not so rough around the edges. Overall, I feel more at ease when constructing a poem this way—and to write about my friendships or romantic encounters is exhilarating as the ending seems to always be—a surprise.

I am not under the stern impression that every poem needs heavy revision or revisiting. While I tend to revise, some poems in this thesis were written rather spontaneously such as, “In the backseat,” “On a bus commiserating” or “Malaga Study I and II.” I also recently included a series into the collection which were written quickly and painfully all in one setting. The moment for all of these was a rush to embody the sudden appearance of a memory muse so as to give linguistic girth to her temporary visit. So when I reread these spontaneous poems, the tone seems more put together than other poems I attempt to rewrite at a later time. This could be because I am a rather moody millennial whose ennui is lurking around every corner to explain why I can't keep a solid tone for more than a month, but nonetheless, I am trying to work with the brain and heart I have.

Sharon Old's Pulitzer Prize winning collection *Stag's Leap* encouraged me to keep writing about what was on my mind—sexuality. I felt ashamed at times not feeling

able to write about other subject matter. Especially as this thesis is supposed to exemplify a culmination of an education. I thought, where are the forms and politics? Shouldn't I be focusing on something else? I've come to terms these poems will come later, but in reading Olds' collection again showed me an entire book can have a dense theme while still maintaining an edge and not come off as too self-indulgent. She did not deny sadness, but continuously reinvigorated it as opposed to trying to kill it off to save herself the trouble. As the beginning of the semester found me single again and apartment hunting and tired, weighty indifference became a recurring aspect of my reality. Since my current state was/is hard to access, I meditated on my past and found material. In part the rediscovery of the girlish attitude which prompted, solidified, and stripped me of my sexual identities. So this is the route I took. While I did not endure a divorce from a long marriage nor do I write in long winding blocks of emotional thought as Olds tends to write, I see us sharing a fascination with the body and self-awareness. At this moment in time she is an emotional guru whose bold poetics brings me to feel a little less indifferent, a little less apathetic, and a little more hopeful.

A motif I have tended to write about recently is place (Argentina, Spain, Mexico, Tangier, Oklahoma, Texas, Florida and Missouri). Based on these experiences, a number of the following poems utilize code-switching and revolve around emerging sexuality, adventure, nostalgia for place or person, and lost or found romance. It was inevitable I seek these places out for myself first before writing about other places. These particular places are where I have lived moments of my life. It is important to note that by living in these different locations, my age at the time was always a factor. It was necessary on my part to find myself during those times and sympathize, react, write, and try to understand.

I do not know what will come of myself writing poems. This seems like a leap in a vague, but less terrifying direction. While this collection may appear as scattered, it is in some ways because it is the first time I am attempting to reign-in my terror; that which is sweet, uncanny, hard, and smothered. This is the first go to bring it forth as a gift to myself and perhaps others. I will try to restrain myself from thinking too poorly of my attempt. All will rot after all, but may the rot smell as sweetly as the first romantic gesture. Who knows? Thank you for reading.

I. GIRL AND PLACE

Rosas Quemadas

Watch this—
I do a back dive ten years ago,
And the *chicos* blush, clap, and say, *bravo!*

I'm a *niña* afterall,
So watch again— I cartwheel around
La piscina and end on a courtesy, *gracias*
A ti y a ti y a ti y a ti tambien.

I pull my hair into a bun *mientras el sol* is still strong,
Slip on my sundress stained with grape juice and cum,

And see now *todo que fue* fashion and girlish gold
Is now bad and ash and starved and hard.

Who can say

when her mother thinks of Mexico she doesn't see a bright red flower
of which she cannot specify the genus, but swears
it must smell sweet and seductive
as the dark-haired foreigner who asks for a hand
under warm translucent moons. And so they will foster a feverish love
for a thousand years, have many daughters
who grow like limbs and leave in all cardinal directions.
I find one daughter on the swings when I am twelve and she is beautiful.
I become her best friend. She lives on the other side of town
with her mother and she looks like her— I steal the photograph
and bury it in the woods behind their house, but when
the hands chime noon and I pass her room—who can say
bright red flowers aren't spilling
the length of her thumb,
and the girl
who she was
doesn't still remain
in bed—slipping off,

again and again.

Song

They do not know—
about *La Tierra* like I do.

They do not know—
Vicente, Vicente, Vicente.

They do not know—
he smells of the *Erythrina*.

They do not know—
he is *un hijo de La Tierra*,

and we make love like virgins.

Tomorrow

I will go to class on time
and smoke a cigarette after.
I will walk home listening to music that neither makes me happy nor sad.
I will think about Spain
and try to see the green port of *Costa del Sol* where I met Diego.
I will walk to the liquor store
and buy a bottle
and as I hand the cashier my id,
I will see Diego jerking his pants down,
and while I smoke a cigarette on the way home,
I will think of eating muddy clams out of the sea
and when I get home
I will take the cork out of the bottle
and while I light another cigarette,
I will see him out on the rocks, naked and slipping,
and as I pour another glass his face will turn to me
and he will say, *el bien nunca se ha ido—what's good is never gone.*

Málaga Study I

dirty hair combed out atop
the port's foam
w a v e s lady luck in fountains Spanish women
weeping the mossiest parts of the *cathedrals*
wants and a skirt covered in vomit seeing Lope
in winter barefoot on dirty streets winter t o p
apartment
Puri and Susana
crouch and quiver
in the shower
until they knock
to stop using
all the w a t e r

Málaga Study II

Spain is stretching her legs when I pass
her and she s h a p e s me
in her shape but we cannot—Spain and I
be fourteen years o l d again—resilient
as a sail might feel
coming up
to the shimmering
s u r f a c e

Anthropology

I did not patch roofs in Guatemala with palm leaves or coalesce
with any moon goddesses. I did not lose my virginity to the man
with the most goats or leave the ladle too long in a fish soup
meant for eight, and while I sat under this tree to be romantic,
I still do not hear lily pads jumping to the beat of hammering
rain, or envision a tear about to plod into a bed of painted roses—but instead
to my professor—rubbing his hands on me after class—to the fascination
swarming out his chest—like an ancient plague—hovering
just above my body—and as the dry wheat is to pounding

thunder—I shook

and shook.

8 Argentinian girls and me

go to *Ascochinga* in dresses.
And even though we know
we will swim—they don't bring
bathing suits.

The boys are coming later in the afternoon,
but we wake up early—to take the *Fonobus* by 9.

8 Argentinian girls and me are buying tickets
to *Ascochinga* when the local news sees us.
How old are we? Our names?

The cameramen from *Canal 13*
wink at us, then we board the 9 o'clock
Fonobus to *Ascochinga*.

8 Argentinian girls are talking loudly about being on TV.
They are touching their hair, pulling bra straps, asking me how
to say curse words in English. They plunge their teeth into cold
plums—on the 9 o'clock to *Ascochinga* they begin to worry
about the weather, wiping the juice on the hems
of dresses, so I don't look away
when 8 Argentinian thighs bounce
as we go over holes
in the road.

Tangier bar // somewhere in // Tangier

is purple // then red // inside // Tangier bar // inviting // milky yellow rain // out from //
the underground // train flashing // pinks // more yellows // bar // looks inviting // young //
milky girl walking // man sitting // now standing // arms swing //wide // open // invitation
// now purple // then red // on the inside // smiles // the dress // little // coming out // milky
rain // into sweaty // hands // a milky beer // green straw // aquarium // fake clams //
opening // or // closing // bubbles sucking // milky beer // men sinking // into velvet //
drinks // euros spilling // floor velvet // overpaying // men in circles // men in booths //
dark red // humming // long and short // men smoking // in circles // one rises // moves
with dark drink // singing // little breasts in little milky // white dress // grabs the bottle //
hands moving toward hands // now puts the dark drink down // takes in the milk // around
and around // and all goes dark // until all goes dark and all goes dark goes dark

II. GIRL AND YEARS

Array, Array

Touch me, I'm girl—
a shoebox full of souvenirs.

Padre Island 1999,
tennis shoes

filled with sand—
erect statues.

Glimmer, glimmer white sidewalk—

you'll never be pure again.

Seashell souvenirs,

stuffed into—
jean pockets.

Harlingen, TX, 1997

Auntie's slender legs lean into the oxbow lakes of El Valle.
Legs now leaned against a pile of books in Texas. Legs limp
when lightning strikes. Legs carried over
fields of daffodils or bluebonnets. Legs buried as clouds
pass by or huddle together and when Auntie reappears or disappears—her legs
are riding the currents of time—lateen sails
amassing speed—on the oxbow lakes of El Valle.

In Osage County, Oklahoma, 2003

There is a creek.
My uncle lives
next to the creek.
He looks for arrow
heads and old coins.
When I was fourteen
we went to see
a woman's ghost.
She was in
the fireplace
and now she
is on a wall
in my uncle's
house.

Sum of 2003

I.

There is a fire
in the trash can
of the girl's
bathroom

it's almost 7th period
my pants are down

I locked the door an hour ago

II.

Boys are
running fast
in the fall

my feet kick
rocks into
sewer drains

dark sweaters
file in and
I am screaming
at the sun

III.

Girls next to
lockers chewing
gum like

look the other way
slut

shoving my hands
into pockets like

we know you
stuff

little lips
smacking

IV.

There is a fire

in the trash can
of the girl's
bathroom

it's almost 7th period
my pants are down

I locked the door an hour ago

Summer Vacation, 2001

There is a snake under my parent's house.
No one knows how long the snake has been living under the house.
The plumbers found the snake when they came to fix the flooding.
The plumbers were unable to fix the pipes.
They were afraid of the snake.
My mom is unsure if the snake is poisonous.
I spent one afternoon trying to find the snake.
If it is a black snake it will eat rats.
It is unlikely it is a constrictor because my parents live in Oklahoma.
It is either a black snake or a brown snake.
Neither one of these snakes are poisonous.
I was not able to find the snake.
It is unlikely the snake will leave.
It is unlikely I will look for the snake again.

Summer Vacation, 2004

In the hard earth are hooves. They are narrow and temperate.
The hooves belong to a mule. They are Molly mule's hooves.
They are narrow and temperate. The hooves, they move to move
the dirt. They do not bend like the tall grass under the weight of the sky.
They move patiently and do not feel the weight of my anchor.

III. GIRL AND FRIENDS

Summer in the 2000s, Missouri

I was sleeping or awakening, cerulean calls clamoring their way
up the concrete legs of bridges across the USA.
I have been driving
on stretches of highway, towards the coast, where I hoped
to be engulfed, fully. And I may have passed by
a growing forest, light blue and pine, where I saw fog hang
for the first time. Skin pressed to skin, misery and bliss, days lent to fever me
into any passing Whim, earth and shadow, I commend them
with a smile and a pressed-folded hand, it's sweating
because it's summer, but it's across my breast and pulsing because,
I have a heart—and sometimes it beats and sometimes it sings
and so, I think—we all may be dreaming.

I'm dreaming as I look up from my ankles and my knees to the trees,
where young Missourians come out of the thickets,
billowing masses of overalls and black jeans, their mop buckets sloshing
of inland swamp and high boots, fishing wire and combs, well-dressed Missourians
smoking spliffs on the Bluffs and when I go to sleep, I dream of my friends.
I see them on porches, dazedly reaching
inside the cooler and I think, I love them the most
for letting me die, as we all near summer,
we are all nearing summer, deaf ears and swimming, we are drunk
and Summer is near and also dying. Summer is as the Moon lies atop
every neighborhood pool in summer
and Summer is dying
like Cynthia's wild petunias, or dead like possums on county roads,
blood and stench and road flies, Missouri, follows me in summer
and in summer I cum over and over. So that in death
I am transformed, in dreams, I am transformed
and my friends don't care
about the coffin I lied in for years,
because it's Summer again
and we all know we're dreaming
and we all know we're dying.

Regal Wrong Doers

combat the days by straps on sandals so the *cuervo* won't shake
we gotta find out the public pools to take a dip
gonna tell our moms we love her gonna bleed
through our best pairs
just got outta class feel like we gotta drag
a heart somewhere and huddle close
we're no where near where we wanna be but here when *ambulancias* rush in Springfield
our messiahs who we trudge across railroad tracks to drink *Modelos* with we unsanctified
read *Gulliver's Travels* and fondle each other under overpasses
how many can we smoke before he calls
looking at Aaron Sachs blue glow prick in the night this is Queen City and we wanna be
regal wrong doers in the mystique way
hair in slip knots Carrie in view Venetian blonde her heart aches too
and we butterfly in public pools not tan not *cuervos de nada* but honest to god girls
in these breathes coming up talking about vehicles
and dusty hay in Mexico in our dreams putting on hosiery gotta drag these aching hearts
smear them on mom's windshields
change spilling out of pockets girls we gotta
sharpen these Ticonderogas before it's too late, gotta wish these bones
don't shake as him the artist tastes our tits and when it's over
I'll close my eyes and she'll close her eyes to watch it all over again

Spit me up

today looks like tomorrow looks like yesterday and I am low after
drinking. I sit by the window
as the leering neighbor collects blue objects like a Bowerbird
and I tell my cat I am in a pit of boys
who want to turn my eggs into embryos
to whom I say I'm autistic and the only way to help me
is to get me one of Temple Grandin's hug machines so I won't be such a dead girl.

Mercutio wails on the TV "a plague on both your houses!" so when I see you tonight
old friend, I'll let you again—get hard, get hard.

On a bus commiserating

out a smudged window where a mall sits glimmering in the sunlight
as mommies with big breasts board in big stained
white tees with big lipped babies
and the newspaper man is not on these buses anymore
these are for the 21st grunge

unholy drunken grit
living by the skin of yellow teeth and the teenagers
in the back are green and gooey and slick like the geese shit
ten miles away at the lake where industry shovels coal fumes into plumes

and there is only one way to love on this fucking bus and it's mind

your own business

IV. GIRL AND MEDITATIONS

An Early Gesture

as our feet usher

our hearts—flicker, flicker, flickering
to the park

where lame trees bend

harshly over—swings, widening
on chains

with hardening creaks

like touching
cold iron,

in the sun.

in the Tall Grasses

where girls pick dandelions
and bow with crowns

~

backs bearing
grass and flower

~

blades in fields
girls pick blades
braid hair in fields

~

girls in circles spin
green yellow red
green red and green

~

in fields girls and crowns
are bending down
and growing up

~

bending down and growing
up bending down and
growing up girls are
bending down and growing up

All that Surrounds me:

Circumvent, they cry!
But, I am too shy.

Look how well Susie overcomes!
But, I am not Susie.

Nor am I Alice or Rachel or Betty.

This is all very obvious.
So why tell you?

It is simple, I need a friend.
And I am hopeful you might be one.

To know me as all that surrounds me.
And not by my name.

To Whom It May Concern:

I am certain I am not
In charge of the sky.
If you tell me the truth
I will tell you a story.
It won't be long.
I am not long-winded.
I have two thumbs
and both of them have bled today.
This is not a metaphor.
That is my story.
If you tell me the truth
I will tell you a truth.
There is truth to the nest you nest in.
The truth is that you nest there.
I do not nest in your nest, and this is also true.
I am not in charge of the sky, and this is also true.

Here we are like souls

in the few summers we say
were more—slow cold
lakes—we uncurl
and so shed

our husks

Gravitas, Grativas
Thinking of Emily Dickinson

I. Afternoon
Oh, how I've remained!
a heathen, not a person.
It cannot be, the likes of me, — I can hardly stand
applause, let alone dismissal.
I could float like a red balloon, — let go by lover's
who believe, *what is truly loved, must be
released*. But to be so full of air is reckless
and I'm sure I'd pop.

II. Morning
Fury of day I greet with bleak
emergence, gray window panes, —no play.
I drag my tail across the floor, fix
my bun and polish my nails.
Wastrel of world, wastrel of youth, I open
my mouth wide to pray, — *please,*
let me be more couth.

III. Night
There is a face I must let go, — a smile to diminish.
Walk with me to the sea, we will be forgiven in the tide,
in the sweet froth clinging to my pale thighs. Salt
to my ego, taste me I am yet, — to succumb, earthly
and nearly numb, taste me before they come to crucify me
so young. — Oh! how it hurts to change.

In the backseat

ransacked by love
his hands like a club
while something brash
clamors its way
up like brutish haste
to look safe but
no—and then these
clouds—parting
open— to say, female, female— I've wandered around—female?
slants of his tongue, slants through the clouds, say, female? me—female? this leather is
hot
and sunburn on me, female, I say—why, female?
something hails towards, chunks of rain or romance clatter hard on me
female, his heart still pressed on mine
hard, female, respond
female, respond—
hands like clubs he hails on me female, like slants
on my red face
female, surrender
female, don't— surrender, surrender
something, but not
female

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