

REFLECTIONS
IN A TEA CUP
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Reflections in a Tea Cup

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BY THE AUTHOR

Grandma Lula

on lonely days
i drink from your teacup
feeling the crack on the handle.
i lift it to my mouth,
taste the bittersweet past,
remember your eyes,
the way you smiled.
warm sun on your face
ripening like blackberries
on a forgotten vine.

porch swing laughter
living room radio
kitchen aromas
voices alive
laughter and cries
children and their children and their children
setting suns
over Missouri hills.

embrace me,
sweet loneliness.
cry those memories,
taste the salt of life.

you were here
so i could go on.

Rusty Tears

men of late years
tried, oh how they have tried,
to make me happy
dressed in their everyday permanent press
holding on to old-fashioned morals.

i often think of my Uncle Lewis
with his Santa Claus beard
and peaceful smile
telling me tales
of beautiful princesses running to find
their knights in shining armor.
i wonder why they were always rusty when she found them?
perhaps too many tears?

when my Uncle Lewis died
he had a smile on his face
and the rusty cross with a Jesus figure
clutched tightly in his palm.
i thought he was an atheist.
he left me a note, not a will,
begging me to join him
i think i will.....

Tea Cups

such times
as these
when gray clouds
descend on lonely moods

i sip the cup of sadness
lingering over memories
the taste bittersweet

i sip the cup of self-hatred
grief-stained
marked by a chip
on the deplorable handle of depression

i sip the cup of loneliness
weakened by too many tears

i sip the cup of death
waiting for the warm liquid of life

i sip the cup of hope
and the steam of passion waits

Easter Sunday 1956

three kids walk
on a muddy road.
the Green Rock Baptist Church
rings out with thunderous music:
He has risen
He has risen

little brother in his
mix match suit and little hat
takes my hand and smiles.
older brother
hits him and says sit down.

the preacher screams:
God forgives those who sin
Trust God
He will protect you
You will be saved in the Kingdom of Heaven
Let us pray

please God let me die and come to you
where I will be safe.

praise God
older brother
mumbles under his breath.
what a goddamn lie.

from the pulpit
the preacher looks right at me
and yells:
Only those who sin
Deserve the hell
In which they live in

i pray hard
i look at the cross.
Jesus loves me
yes I know

the Bible tells me so.
three kids walk
on a muddy road
to a little house
of violence
over baked ham
and black-eyed peas.
my lip bleeds
my face black and blue
for ruining my new Easter shoes.

the preacher screams:
Only those who sin
Deserve the hell
In which they live in

Raped Childhood

she walked past you.
did you see her,
the frightened girl
with unlit eyes?
did you notice no smile?
did you notice her ungroomed body?
did you notice how she looked over her shoulder
waiting,
wounded,
an animal left to die
a kill not quite finished?
did you notice her aloneness?
did you notice her clothes
unfitting
like her life?
did you notice she wanted to scream out for help?
did you notice the little girl in a grown-up body?
did you notice all she really wanted
was love and protection?
did you notice what you gave her:
blank stares and
frozen smiles.

you didn't notice

Hiding in the Cornfield

in the cornfield, scarecrow
sees and hears everything,
watching me as i hide
listening to the yelling
across the rows of corn
beaten stalks
breaking and crushing.
i want to fall in a hole
escaping the madness.
i lay down
mouth in dirt
soil soothing my soul.
i listen,
waiting
not breathing
eyes on the scarecrow
thinking somehow it will rescue me.

Invisible Girl

i wanted to be called princess
like in Father Knows Best.
i wanted to be Annette on the Mickey Mouse Club.
i wanted to be Shelly Fabre on the Donna Reed Show
singing Johnnie Angel.
i wanted to be
anyone other than myself:
ugly, crooked teeth
second hand clothes
a violated body and mind.
how could anyone love
a dirty girl,
not the popular girl
with the dyed to match sweater and skirt
and the perfect smile,
not the teacher's pet
with all the right answers,
not the cheerleader
at the football games.

invisible girls
just keep wishing.

Tim 1966

sipping my tea
seeing my reflection
innocent
seeing your vision
strong
smiling
embracing
seeing you off
your shadow tall
your military clothes
perfect army green
seeing your helicopter
circling the sun
fire
burning
screaming
tears fall into my teacup
mixing our souls
i trade in patriotism
for love beads and protest songs
as if that will bring you back

Lost Innocence

it's easy now
to look back,
our young love
broken
like the bulb
in your lamp.
you sing Dylan,
your words touch me
like sleepy kisses in the night,
our love worn out
like the protest songs
you write.
marching on Denver streets
screaming one, two, three, four
we don't want this fucking war.
making love to the
sounds of silence.
your homemade bed breaks like
our trust.
you trip off
to find yourself,
I'm left behind
like a forgotten song.

I look through your keyhole
outside your dreams.
you were my first love
and you didn't notice.

Pour Me a Dream

around 11:30 p.m.
he scribbles
i love you
on a cocktail napkin
after three martinis
and two sad songs.
i believe him.
we didn't speak
in the taxi
preparing for love
with intoxicated eyes.
at 4 a.m.
he slipped away
waking my cat
the hour empty
haunting.
i pour another dream
lonely
waiting
hoping
for the darkness to disappear.

Soul Rebirth

i'm an invisible cutter.
my cuts run deep
with bloodless scars.
pain cracks open the numbness
allowing old trauma
to flow in the river of panic.
fear drowns me in dark nightmares.

i awake
breathing in light
healing bright light
spirit light
a recovered soul.
no more

no more
cutting into my heart.

Angel Eli

my old man
sits at the bottom of a ravine
smiling to himself
as he daydreams
and pretends to fish

his lantern
lit for eternity
glows strong

he follows me like a cat
gently but suspiciously

he is my protector
he is my wisdom
he is my strength

lead me old man
but not too fast
as we search this universe
for my old woman

Starry Night

the star falls
quietly
into the solitude
of dawn
pain rages through body
anxiety invades mind
i plead to god
angels and
mother mary
trying to steal sleep from my partner
synchronize my breathing with his
allowing the soft sounds of surrender
as i move closer to his heartbeat
and wait for the escape into dreams

moon hides behind the hills

as sun breaks
for a new day

Quiet Angels

when i am lost in old nightmares
my angels find the splinter
wedged in my heart
weaving healing light in the wound
they step into my soul
dancing on sacred bones
whispering
Great Mother
hear our prayers

God shows Her face
i let go
breathe
She is radiant
breathe
She is Light
breathe
She is Love
breathe
She is me

Secrets in a New Mexico Desert

blood red sunset
against the mountain,
circling vultures
singing death songs.
i heard a secret today.
i look away
from the unrevealing sand.
i wander through the desert
looking for
love
security
a mother
a father
innocence
God
Don Juan
the lonely coyote.

i find
only the silence of the wind.

Sisters on Flagstaff Mountain

there is a presence
of our sisters before us
in this sacred place.

their tears
flowing streams of power
their grace
their dance
move through these woods.

their strength
echoes through these trees
that we might be less afraid.

we create paths
for our daughters
that they too can
dance among the trees
and smile into the sun
and hear the songs of our sisters
in the voices of birds.

there is a presence
of our sisters before us
reminding us
the flower of the woman
still grows
through the middle of the rock.

Sunday Morning in Seattle

it's one of those heavy dark gray
low hanging clouds
getting ready to rain days

disheveled, intoxicated, weary, staggering
mumbling as she passes

"If you're looking for God
look in the trash can on Sixth and Pine

not in the church at the top of the hill.
Stop searching.”

looking for God in healers, churches, ministers,
rabbis, books, music, shamans
no God sighted

the emptiness in her heart
longs for light and answers
an epiphany to hear the words of an angel

on the bone chilling side of the water
she walks away from empty faces
searching for connecting souls
waiting for the breath of god

roaming the alleyways
loneliness beckons
on yet another sunless day in Seattle

A Fellini Dream

i'm moving to Marfa, Texas
where I will wander through the streets
searching for answers

i will walk by stray cat alley
smelling the fresh brew
of the only coffee shop
where you order strong or not strong

i will open a movie theater
where you bring your own popcorn and beer
i will show films that touch the heart
happy movies for sad people
sad movies for happy people
the rocky horror picture show for freaky people
movies for the lonely
and for those who can't cry

i will gather the energy of others that fulfill our existence
i will have a marquee
that reads
“Come Be a Part of the Magic of Time”

Joe and Pearl

only heard stories of
jitterbug dancing
jellybeans
late night radio in a one-room flat
over a grocery store
in Hannibal.

anger and screams
replaced the soft sounds of music.
when i came along,
drunken fights
pathetic eyes
violent rages
no sweet dreams,
only nightmares.

on rare occasions
laughter
with no booze,
singing with
no fights.

joe:
a lonely man,
motherless,
searching,
his pain belonged to all of us.

pearl:
a lonely woman,
fatherless,
searching,
her pain belonged to all of us.

joe:
without love,
aching,
empty,
out of control.

pearl:
without love.
pregnant,
guilty,
out of control.

finding each other,
creating two of us:

one self-inflicted dead,
the other, self-indulged alive.

why did i seek these two?
this pain
perhaps blinded
by the innocence
of a restless soul
searching.

Bleeding Trees

On the road from Kalaloch
To Lake Quinault
The forest has been raped

The mechanical dinosaurs rip apart bleeding trees
Biting into the open wound
Ignoring screams of silent agony

Large Iron mouths
Fling the naked logs
Into piles of lifeless dreams

There are no birds flying in this open gravesite

There are no songs today
Only piles of skeletons
Destined for someone's table

Missouri Summers

picking blackberries on a lonely Hannibal road,
sun shining on cornfields as church bells
ring out the demons from last night's drinking.
Grandpa Will and my uncles gather on the front porch
watching as the kids sling tree branch fishing poles
over hopeful shoulders,
bucket of worms swinging in hand.
Patsy Cline cries out Crazy
as my aunts sing along with aching knowing hearts.
Aunt Rosie's kind eyes
watching as i wash my hair from the rain barrel.
Donna and i gather eggs with frightening giggles
as we motion for the truck drivers to honk their horns

scaring chickens and ducks as they flutter in the yard.
laughter from Amos and Andy ringing in the small house.
my two grandmas cooking hush puppies and fried chicken.
we take turns cranking the ice cream, eating apple pie.
watermelon drips from our mouths while spitting seeds.
fireflies light up the night.
i snuggle down safe as my grandmas talk in low whispers.
grand ole opry softly playing in the background.
i wake to the smell of coffee, grits and pancakes.

I am missing you today
so i play country music to remember that it wasn't all bad.
Missouri family of country smiles and loving hearts.