

AS DREAMS GIVE WAY TO DAY



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I like to sleep with my windows open at night
but that has usually meant
listening
all night long
to traffic
cars
swooshing past a small intersection,
the T of a road becoming
an elementary school parking lot
across from my bedroom window.

There is a crosswalk there
a few yards from my pillows.
In the mornings it is a
chattering, occasionally sobbing,
honking and whistling
cacophony

of little ones
being dropped off,
walked in,
or earning their own walks in.

There used to be a woman
a crosswalk guard
whose goofy, adorable laugh
woke me up most every
7:something-or-other
Monday through Friday
Dependably.

Some mornings I'd wish to shut her up;
in my disrupted fatigue
I would throw pillows in my dreams.
and yet
we always waved at each other
and I could never hold a grudge against that smile.
I miss her;
nowadays the new crosswalk guards
tend to avoid eye contact.

Some nights
I've slept with my windows
shut.
closed out
the sounds of midnight cars races

roaring and thundering past me;
shut out
all the hustle and bustle
of mornings that
should be spent
stretched out and purring
in a dreamscape
made of far-off sounds.

But I prefer to sleep with my windows
open
letting in whatever is outside.

My favorites
have always been nights
spent away from traffic,
nights
of whispering wind-songs
soaring gracefully
through the treetops.

My favorites
are mornings filled with
birdsong melodies,
as dreams give way gracefully to day.

Be They Rock Flesh or Waterfall

Last night I dreamed I was
inside of my breath.

I drank deeply
from the ins
and the outs
of her rhythm

The the trees
on my mother's hide
shook!

She shed her bark,
revealing her layers of
inner suchness
just waiting
for recognition

for me
or for we
to start seeing
and shedding
our own assumptions
about the *lifelessness*
of our surroundings,
be they rock, flesh, or waterfall,

atomic nucleus or
dying star.

Tonight my ears stopped being
my ears.

They became melded
with sound,
and the sound that
SURROUNDED
sounded
like the wind and city
singing

And up there
flying and billowing,
mixing with winds
wiping tears off of
tree leaves and
patiently sculpting the
mother's curves, this
dancing sea and
what was once me
became ONE,
inhaled
by a countless many,
exhaled tainted
with traces of spaghetti,

wrapping and
cresting,
STORMING and
resting, both
to-Earth pressing and
sky caressing,
the WIND that came by told me,
Look, woman, and FLY!
and I bowed to
my laughter
for shaking the
my place
in this dancing,
encompassing
space.

Alive in this moment,
a bodiless smile,
a gentle
and constant
embrace.

Echo

I am the echo of a mother's song

who used to cradle nightingales.
their tales of flight
would plant and blossom
comfort from my lips
and I used my finger-tips
to stroke the broken bits of many
who had fallen from their nests
and gotten lullabies for pennies.

I am echo

perfect

echo

sorry

echo

bleeding

echo

gone

Echo

of an

echo

in an

echoed

baby's

broken

song.

There are words caught in a dreaming catcher

strung in my esophagus

I wonder how much worse it gets
than stitching silence shut.

When I dream at night
I wake bent over
choking on my lyrics.

There are traps inside
this voice of mine
frustrating ancient spirits.

And I try to echo
echo

try ta
echo what

I know
I know

My body's fading
fast away
from echoes that
I used to own.

'cause there's blood comin' up
from a sickly soul
sticking to my tongue
so it cannot roll
and the rhythms and righteousness
I regularly spit
become a swallowed ball of apathy

building inside this pit

I want nightingales

to remind me that

I always taught them

how to fly.

I wish that I

could take a chapter

from the book

I used to write.

at night I cradled

broken fables.

turned them into poetry.

I set them free

with words that maybe

echo in them still.

I am echo

empty

echo

tryna

echo back

a fading song

echo

tryna

echo what

I know

/ know

is not quite gone

Howling in My Dreams

You there,

woman

Are you awake some nights

shivering

as I am?

Are you wondering why?

why it is

why we must

suffer

and shiver?

Some nights it is Grace

that unlaces my

sadness,

releases my struggle

and bathes me

in laughter.

Sometimes

mistaken,

some others

awakened

I quake with

the thunder
of Earth's
going under

Sometimes

in dreams

all the midwives

stand up

we soothe

our dear mother

with whispers

and sighs

Sometimes my eyes

have marveled at her undersides

Others

I've barely recovered from

watching her

shudder

as we

in this stumbling place

put her body through things

that I'd rather erase.

In my heart's a broken record,

all of you have heard it

I must breathe and pulse

for every moment in this

borrowed body

If I fail my mother planet

I am just a cancer cell,
but life's too short to
dwell upon it—
She's still breathing!
I can hear her!

Plus, I'm having dreams,

I told you!

All of us

were standing UP!

We helped her crawl,

and helped her circle

held her hips

while lower still

the future dropped

inside her belly,

fed her water,

stoked her will,

and told her

she was perfect.

So listen, midwives

I can hear you

howling in

my dreams

so if you lie awake

and shiver

we are not alone

Flex

I think I can flex my pencil,
I'm ready for this poem
like a woman who's ready to see her child's face—
it's graced my interior for long enough nights
and its flight just may shake me to smilin'.
I've been
Cupping my hands 'round the pool of my prayers,
trying to make the reflection take shape,
but it's rippled with winds on *both* sides of this globe
and I can't seem to give it a name.
Never claimed a tradition for fear of their cages, yet
still I'm so drawn to the wisdom of ages.
My peers have since birth
been so blessed and so cursed
by the freedom of choosing what's sacred.
We've sometimes found wisdom and sometimes found traps,
and sometimes found nothing but ignorant naps—
A whole generation positioned to see
all the names and distinctions so relatively:
at times it's so clear that the prophets of old
have been quite repetitious in what they have told—
Just love one another
and listen to elders
but don't be too timid

to leap where they've faltered,
Just know in your core that wherever you run
The tides that flow through us affect *everyone*.
and if you've a neighbor who's hungry or scared
don't let that damn ego prevent you from caring
cause sharing is what
those wise souls do,
and we timid short sighted block out every light
when we cover the windows
for fear of the night.
And those who have learned to examine these faiths
have seen at their center a similar face,
yet still in this grace we've been met with the shadow
of splintering faith
and disease in the shallows—
This ocean of wisdom is out on buffet
but can we digest the preservatives?...
And with the depletion of soil of traditions
can we hope to be nourished
while not too conservative?
And even if one finds a well-balanced recipe
can they feel right, eating
without community?
I long for unity,
sanctity,
movement;
a life of devotion,
but also amusement.

There's this deep question mark buried within me
and much to be said
for ceremony.

Symbols and rituals cannot replace
the things that are nameless and tameless and free,
yet they are the tools that remind us to say:
"Hey, there's so much out there more important than me!"—

If we can know this and work to be free
of thinking our actions hold no gravity,
then maybe the course of our species may shift
and we can remember that life is a gift,
and fertilize soil
and plant sturdy roots
whose sap sings a chorus of knowing...
and all of our growing may aim for the light
of wisdom which guides where we're going...
and soft in the ears of the children to come
we can whisper the stories—
and tunes we can hum—
and sing them to sleep
with the tales of a people
who saw in each other
their *own* lost face
and took on their fate
to believe in each other
instead of deciding
to detonate...

I long to plant seeds
in the clear-cut ground
where work of ancestors erodes under feet—
I long to make beats
so my people can dance
and remember that rhythm is
where
we
meet.
I think I'm ready to flex this life
like a woman who's ready to see that face—
I'm cupping my hands 'round the pool of my prayers
and prostrating down before Grace.

Spiti, India, 2009

Astrologer

Make a wish

she says.

The stars are aligned and smiling at you

they will grant your wishes

whether or not you are aware of it -

Careful!

for wishes are embedded

*in each moment's hushed reflection;
Wishes
are there under your breath
under the surface of your waters'
clear reflections,
being shaped from your mind's eye
as it adores or distains,
smiles or curses at
its circumstances.*

*Make a wish for your life,
she says,
for it will be delivered now,
be careful not to lace it
with your mindless nagging doubt.*

*Make a wish and wrap it all in
ribbons of intention
whisper in its ear
of how you'd like its ripples
to be always kind –*

*Think!
and make a wish
so you will know it
when you see it;
See it and then know
that it will come.*

A Wish

that every starfish hand
 phalanges stretching wide
feel satisfied
 content with all that is and
 purified of pride
may we hear all silent prayers at once
 with nothing in the way
 and let us pray
on our knees now
 let it in
 and out again
we have learned to live
 with haste stuck to our shoes...
we have learned that
 some will win this game
and some will surely
 loose.
Let's mourn
 for the way we've bruised each other
 out of fear
let rivers of my empathy
 fall freely now as tears
Let it out and only then

let it in and out again
In these days of our becoming
we regurgitate our sins
we are searching for a premonition
deep inside our being;
trembling with starlit bliss
at what our dreams are seeing
If I become a blazing star
for anyone to see
will you illuminate this night
beside me?
If I am boldly wide awake
while all that was is crumbling
will you elucidate your wisdom
kindly?
A wish that every starfish hand
finds all it needs to hold
so we can wave and sing,
our stories told