

POEMS

Rachel Galperin

O HEART, LOSE NOT THY NATURE

My tongue speaks only truisms now

In the way it wants to wail at me

I have lost my soil and it cannot be retained

Or found again, no matter how much I search

How much I scatter the pieces of my heart

About I will not find these flakes

They were meant to be lost I have realized

Some things are not meant to be returned

It is the returning that does its best to hold us still

To scream at us and tell us which way it wants to be had

When the truth spoils and the mirror cracks I can still see myself

It's just that my image is fractured, like a wound

I cannot see the whole any longer, only the

Missing parts that are slowly returning

At their own will

And my will?

What of my will? Has it returned to me?

Has my dog stopped sniffing each long

Blade of grass we pass while in the park?

Her heart joys at the new ground we cross

New to her, familiar to me and somewhere

In between her unknowing and my knowing
Our nighttime images turn to day
And our daytime images turn to night
It is only in those unknown, secret hours
In which we spy upon ourselves that the joys of
Life can be restored.

Yet, if you ask I cannot recall the steps to this place
This pyre that sits beautifully along nature's river
Along the soul's glance
Pick it back up where it needs to be picked up
Not where you *want* to pick it up
These complexities are difficult to explain, yet my puppy dog
Knows them better perhaps than I do and when she
Presses up against my skin I become all knowing
I cease to judge or be judge to want or to be wanted
I cease all flavor. I melt into the imbalance of nature
Which constantly without warning or foresight
Knows how to unwind itself, uncurl, like
A snake uncoiling at the bottom of an empty well.

I AM TRUSTING

of the trust exercise

When I fall the pavement cracks

I am not always trusting of the
trust exercise

I fall and the pavement cracks

anyway, I give it a tight hold
a squeeze, a relinquishing of data

and the numbers line up but

I've never been that good at
arithmetic. I may have the answers

but my comrades help me solve
the puzzle. I give in to the hard

Blow. Acorns. Trees falling. Twigs snapping.

Deer running across a neighbor's yard making me fear it
might get hit

I command you to wait for me

I command you to stand tall and still

I command you to bake me cookies

Did you kill that deer just for me?

Is that its hide? Will you make me
a blanket with it or a stew? Or both?

Kristen Arnett writes about dead animals
like it's nothing and it makes me
feel that my dead relationship will be ok.

I like the taste of so many things
Of fallen things
Of open spaces
Of wide open legs
Of everything that flows like water and absorbs heat
Of things that are wet
Of soft cookies with chocolate chip centers
Of hard mouths with soft tongues
Of radical enjoyment
Of occasional employment
Of broad shoulders and strong holds

I'm in love with the subjective
lives that continue on in spite
of things that go wrong, in spite
of self-inflicted abuse unintentional
as it may be.
I claim a steak, I eat my heart -
again and again
Then repeat it
The juices give me voyage and nourish
a tenderness that grows
In spite of my recklessness
I live and so do you

COOKED FLESH

The beautiful illusion of my departure sits above me. How could I depart from here or count the ways of how to counter balance the judgement of a suitcase. I'll be like a centipede. A cricket. Did you know there's something called Cricket Powder. There is and you're supposed to bake with it or put it in your soup or other creations. Can you imagine eating a cricket?? I can't. But what I once thought I'd never do, I did.

I did refuse the salt of my family. The turmoil I once craved, the need for comfort, approval seems to be gone. A beautiful illusion? It was not the need of anyone's approval but everyone's approval also plagued me. I've heard people say once you reach (fill in benign age here) you stop caring what others think and I believed this for a long while too until I reached a point where the illusion broke. I stopped caring that my mother pretends I am invisible when I walk into a room - the hurt is still there but it's changed. I care about me, my hum drum artist life does not just go by. I do not merely spin as my parents oyster caught by hand in the sea. Nor do I believe in apathy or caring less about your own presence in the world in comparison to others or suddenly at age 50 becoming "your own person". My grandmother who is 85 still cares deeply so does my mother and so does my brother. Not I.

Being untied from the string I should feel proud but I don't. I feel free for now I am a woman who can walk with her shoes on backwards who can embrace snowfall in July who can wear fur in August.

If you want the recipe for detachment it's easy. Put yourself on a skillet. I like avocado oil but you are welcome to use whatever you fancy. Then sauté. My best friend seems to

think that friendships like we have are rare but it's not that they are rare it's that they are only experienced when ready and willing and wanting.

A crust of sky appeared over my bed in front of my ceiling. Spatial recognition. I looked up above it and realized the slice was mine. I check on it frequently like one would an ex

she's still pining over; winter and all its white fall & all its brown sets in a moment of frost sort of like buttering toast

would I could I get someone to butter me I've got some delusions to settle around this year's production I'll give you lots of kisses this year said to me - a lie, it's been a reclusive year for us all. I've heard everything up until now

Owl's cry, dog's sweet whisper, turtle's absence. We're all on the scenic route. Perhaps we should have been here all along. The space in between my collar bones has not gotten stuck and in the park the sun on me my hands are no longer cold.

WILD AND WICKED

During these seemingly
wasted eons I become
more and more myself
taking a bowel
& for what purpose
seems lost
yet I am reminded that
my grief is not the only grief of this time
my wanting touch is not the only ask for survival
the arrival of more and more
hope gives me a little sedition to fight against solicitude
what a jolt I felt in
the dawning hours of
my wickedness
of what I reported as wicked
my mother demonized all together
beneath the streams
lie buried the young
I used to be one of them
but completion does not end
with old age
creation is not for the young
I have heat & I have rain
My dog wanted to see
her girlfriend
today, she dragged
me to her door

sniffed all around the entrance
trying to see if she was home
hoping for an adherence
it was the second time
we stopped by today and
I consoled my dog like
I would a human who longed to touch
and couldn't, like I have myself

Rachel Galperin is poet, writer and casting producer living near New York City. She has worked on a variety of series including National Geographic's Brain Games, The Real Housewives of the Potomac, HGTV's Dear Genevieve, The Cooking Channel's My Grandmother's Ravioli and many more. In 2018 she worked as an Editorial Account Manager for Flower Publishing. She has written essays and features for The Ground Magazine, The Bolde, Folks and others. Her poetry and fiction can be found in Cliterature Journal, Elderly Magazine and is probably forthcoming elsewhere. Email: rach.galperin@gmail.com