

The Stillness Of Euthanasia

Your quivering evenings still haunt me
like backwards figures painted
against the sky. Suffering, you
would hold me through half-deserted streets,
the muttering gossip, stilled
under lampposts and street lamps.
This was what I looked forward to.
God, I was so lonely. I am this still.

Our restless nights in cheap hotels,
tasting of sawdust, hearing the crackling
of oyster-shells and lifting the sheets
of our ivory bed to check for the hidden
monsters who crept in the hallways.
If they were there, how you would throw me
in front of you to protect your thoughtless life.
I was always the lesser of us.

The thick fog that caresses the glass window
reminds me of another lost night,
another muzzle that lingered around my throat.
What is a drain without water? A man without a lover.
Let us fall back into the coolness
of summer afternoons, remarking about sex
and the fullness of Italy.
I would slip on your heightened terrace,
fall asleep with you, or make a dramatic leap
if only to see another October night
or the curling of your auburn hair
combed by the passing wind.

There will be a time
to prepare a face, a disguise of camouflage
to meet the many other faces like mine;
men who will worship you
simply because there is without a simple reason.
There will be a time to murder,
and time for a hundred revisions,
because I have known the absence of inspiration.
The very absence of you. My nights are dark and dull.

I have known this neutrality already. I have
known mornings, afternoons, and evenings
without you still and the stillness of you

is far worse than our reality. I have measured
my world with thinning hair and bald spots,
and have seen the dying fall of music beneath
the presumption that I would never play again.
These fingers ache and bend
like my grandmother's when she would lift me up.
We were all stronger yesterday.

I have known the absence of you. Those eyes
that you fix on desperate men, desperate
for temporary companionship. Call it sexual,
call it painful, call it vengeful. Those arms
that embraced black and white perfume
and expensive dinners with side dishes
and waitresses that were forced to wear
men's clothing. Tucked in during August and sweating.

Because of you, I have known dusk
underneath the smoke of narrow streets
and have watched the rising of fog from the sewer
pipes that trickle from the chests of lonely men (like
myself) who lean out of bullet train windows
on trips to a wealthy and classless California.

I should have worn a pair of sharp, but damaged
claws so you would fail at dragging
me across the floor of your seductive ocean.

In those afternoons, our evenings would sleep
and I would trace your naked back, imagining letters
with my protective fingertips. Although I have
starved myself, sacrificing my every need for one of yours,
wept in the middle of the night, brought to my knees
in prayer, and have grown altogether bald
because my hair would not remain in my obsession,
I remain wounded, scared for my future, and collectively broken
like the shattered monsters who you let eat me alive.

I have seen my own greatness wither,
and I have spelled our names ten thousand times because
each dance sways entirely different. I was afraid
you would love (have sex) without me and would forget
the easily moving photographs of being afraid.

It would have all been worth it had you
the strength to bear my hideousness until the very end

of me. After the insults and broken nights of mistrust,
it would have been worth the sunsets and middle of the night
drives to the edges of nowhere, and the fiction novels,
and the bluish underwear in the middle of our room.
It would have been worth the secrets and lies,
the falseness and disguise.

I am not a prince or a king and suddenly
my hair is even thinner this afternoon. I am
a short scene in a forgettable film or the yellow
tape that surrounds the real public gathering.
I am the fool who will grow old, has grown
old, and will fall in the water and have my picture
taken by young boys on red bicycles who find
me amusing. I will comb my lifeless hairs over
and will walk along the beach until satisfied
with the images of our last kiss. I will retreat
to my cabin, missing you more than previously.
They are all I have and this makes me cry.
I will not hear the crashing of our ocean.

You will be somewhere else, laughing
with an able-bodied young gentleman
twice the man I am with three times the strength
I never had. Hemingway would be proud of him
and they would rub shoulders over games of
Russian Roulette in Vietnam. What a hero!

I have seen the smirks of young girls
today, and although their beauty is incomparable
to your own, the dull needle in my arm sends
me traveling above the whiteness of ocean waves.
For I am gone, and the combing of my hair
really never was that important, nor were my
heavy slacks or my matching shoes. Never mattered
were the ways in which I walked or who
I decided to tell the truth to. I dined in expensive
cities and will always carry your folded photograph
in my back pocket. You were there with me.

I have seen the deranged looks of modern
youth, crying for the age of what is routine
and will go on regretting the moments
that made the broken us who we are today.
Swimming over the sea, I can still imagine you
as a child until I drown and a new me is made all over again.