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Writing through becoming, becoming through writing: The evolution of poems through 2022 and early 2023

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Writing through becoming, becoming through writing:

The evolution of poems through 2022 and early 2023

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Western Washington University's Honors College

All poems are working products. Later 'finalized' versions of similar poems may appear in future publications

Hive

Early spring 2022

These days are bizarre and
I navigate a maze of outstretched arms with closed eyes
I orient by strange laughter and water hitting water
and the hands of people who knew me before I was curated
I am so obviously full of flies
unlike you
who can string your violin and
talk about your feelings at the same time

Middle spring 2022

I make do
Building little Hollywood in war country,
~~Hiding art in a desperate facade and~~
Love slipping sleight of hand into back pockets and
Train horn harmonizing
Glory grows green under blacklight but this,
My pencil-scratch songs

I make do
Building little Hollywood in war country,
Harmonizing with the bus breaks, and
Love slipping sleight of hand into back pockets
Glory frowns lines begging
Botox but these,
My pencil-scratch songs,
Age like honey

Working product, late winter 2023

1.

These days are bizarre and I navigate
a maze of outstretched arms with closed eyes.
I orient by strange laughter and water hitting water
and the hands of people who knew me before I curated
me, so obviously full of bees,
unlike you,
who can play your violin and sing at the same time.

2.

I make do
building little Hollywood in war country,
harmonizing with the bus breaks, and love,
slipping sleight of hand into back pockets.
Glory frowns lines begging Botox but these,
my pencil-scratch songs,
age like honey.

Impact Statement

Middle spring 2022

The last time I was crying out for help in my head, I met []. He didn't sniff me out. I stumbled into his world. Foot in a gopher hole... A lesson. Be careful what you wish for. No one can save you... I can't tell if I'm being too hard on myself or not hard enough.

Early summer 2022

I learn the hard way

Fairy tale bloody moral of magic beans and mixed blessings

Discerning sidewalks like a mother, new

Awareness of the playground metal, new eyes

On old mythology and

Words collateral damage

Found picking through the gentle wreck

In a way I'm glad I was

Apart already when you found me but

The smell of friendly fire drew you in

Lesson although necessary I'll be damned if I'm grateful

(Outrage although sexy feels contrived)

Trust in man's hands lost to handle

I am older now, as I ought to be

Working product, late winter 2023

I learn the hard way:

bloody fairy tale moral. Magic beans and mixed blessings.

Discerning sidewalks like a mother, new
awareness of the playground metal, new eyes
on old mythology and holy words
collateral damage found
picking through the gentle wreck.

In a way: I'm glad I was
apart already when you found me,
but the smell of friendly fire drew you in.

Lesson if necessary, I'll be damned before grateful.

(Outrage, if sexy, feels contrived.)

Trust in man's hands lost to handle. I am older
now. I ought to be.

Prey

Early spring 2022

People rush past me like a dirty river.

I carry a tangled necklace,

a pack of Marbs,

a wet brain above a dry throat,

and a slim knife strapped somewhere soft.

There are no children playing marbles in this square.

There are no old men sweating over chess or
coins in the fountain.

There is a clover flower pushing through a crack between bricks

I try to avoid

~

People rush past me like a dirty river.

I carry a tangled necklace,

a pack of smokes,

a wet brain above a dry throat,

and a slim knife strapped somewhere soft.

There are no children playing marbles in this square.

There are no old men sweating over chess or
coins in the fountain.

There is only eyeshine

and electric fences.

A clover flower pushes through a crack between bricks

I avoid the gaze of it

Working product, late winter 2023

People rush past me like a dirty river.
I carry a tangled necklace,
a pack of smokes,
a wet brain above a dry throat,
and a slim knife strapped somewhere soft.
There are no children playing marbles in this square.
There are no old men sweating over chess or
coins in the fountain.
There is only eyeshine
and electric fences.

A clover flower pushes through a crack between bricks.
I avoid the gaze of it

Loving

Middle spring 2022

I climb back into the body
The grass feels different this time,
This time around me
Like a shawl or a harness
The different grass, this time
I am the body

Working product, late spring 2022

I climb back into the body.
The grass feels different this time.
This time around me,
like a shawl or a harness,
the different grass. This time
I am the body, I am
a mask and a motorcycle mind,
and a heart that leaks blood onto my clothes,
and too many arms, far
too many arms for my own good
or the good of others,
their arms
a tangle
with mine.

Cap Hansen's Karaoke Sunday

Middle Spring 2022

I come armed with a seam ripper and
The dramas of a Steller's jay
Peeling paint back from the face of twenty-one Apriils,
Listening like a toddler while
White women talk shit at the farmer's market
Their smoking secrets
Push my glasses up my nose,
Skin strains against pink inside
Ballooning hot with suburban gossip

I fold myself in between
A parking garage and a restaurant's bare behind,
Shivering against the screaming bars a block removed

Until stairwell ghosts shatter my
Dumpster reverie

Late spring 2022

1.
I come armed with a seam ripper and
The dramas of a Steller's jay
Peeling paint back from the face of twenty-one April,
Listening like a toddler while
White women talk shit at the farmer's market
Their smoking secrets
Push my glasses up my nose,

Skin strains against pink inside
Ballooning hot with suburban gossip

2.

I take refuge in between
A parking garage and a restaurant's bare behind
Breathing body doubled over seagull shit and
Stacks of cardboard,
The teeth of spiteful spring threaten snow
I stand shaking in the arms of solo mercy
Until stairwell ghosts shatter my
Dumpster reverie/prayer, send me sprinting back
Into the shriek of a bar-lined road

~

1.

I come armed with a seam ripper and
The dramas of a Steller's jay
Peeling paint back from the face of twenty-one Aprils,
Listening like a toddler while
White women talk shit at the farmer's market
Their smoking secrets
Push my glasses up my nose,
Skin strains against pink inside
Ballooning hot with suburban gossip

2.

I take refuge in between
A parking garage and a restaurant's bare behind
Breathing body doubled over seagull shit and
Stacks of cardboard,
The teeth of spiteful spring threaten snow

I stand shaking in the arms of solo mercy
Until stairwell ghosts shatter my
Dumpster reverie, send me sprinting back
Into the shriek of a midnight road

3.

Sammy Davis Jr. is pointing at me from
A wall in a bar on a street once haunted
The phone number of my first love
Hangs forgotten round my neck and
Time winks it's wink from the counter
Eyes in my head and ice unmelting,
I inhale the confession of strangers
They spill out around me like
Ribbons from a maypole

~

3.

Sammy Davis Jr. is pointing at me from
A wall in a bar on a street once haunted
The phone number of my first love
Hangs forgotten round my neck and
Time winks it's wink from the counter
I breathe in strangers, they
Spill out around me like a toppled rice bag,
Like ribbons from a maypole

Working product, late winter 2023

1.

I come armed with a seam ripper
and the dramas of a Steller's jay.
Peeling paint back from the face of April,
listening like a toddler
while white women talk shit over tequila.
Their smoking secrets push the glasses up my nose,
skin strains against pink inside ballooning
hot with suburban gossip.

2.

I take refuge in between
a parking garage and a restaurant's bare behind.
Breathing body doubled over seagull shit and stacks of cardboard,
the teeth of spiteful spring threaten snow.
I stand shaking in the arms of solo mercy
until stairwell ghosts shatter my dumpster prayer,
send me sprinting back
into the shriek of a neon road.

3.

Sammy Davis Jr. is pointing at me
from a wall in a bar on a street once-haunted.
The phone number of my first love hangs
forgotten around my neck, and time
winks it's wink from the counter.
I drink in strangers. They spill out around me
like a toppled rice bag,
like ribbons from a maypole.

Letters

Working product, early winter 2022

It's your name wrapped across the envelope and many waters inside.

The rivers of my youth rolled like ribbons,
stamped with oversized postage, and
never mailed.

(By never I mean not yet.

By wrapped I mean curling around the lust of my handwriting,
letter after careful letter).

I buy you gifts too feared to gift you.

I write you sightless words.

I touch you touchless.

You scatter at the sound of my footsteps down the hall.

This dance for months now.

I would do it for a bit longer, I fear
longer than the water will run.

The Dog

Middle winter 2023

There are no bad dogs just
Long chains in wet yards and
When the metal rusts to breaking, who can blame him
For sinking once-proud teeth into flesh worth biting?
What happens to a bad dog put down?
Not cremated, not
Buried in dog-sized casket
Like the good dogs, with their good dog balls
What happens to the sorry body of the backyard dog?
Skin tented over tendon,
Mouth clamped around the hand of God
What happens to an empty yard
Full of languid dog?

~

There are no bad dogs just
Long chains in wet yards and
When the metal rusts to breaking, who can blame him
For sinking once-proud teeth into flesh worth biting?
What happens to a bad dog put down?
Not cremated, not
Buried in dog-sized casket
Like the good dogs, with their good dog balls
What happens to the sorry body of the backyard dog?
Skin tented over tendon,
Mouth clamped around the hand of God
What happens to an empty yard once
Full/once full of languor/once full of one forgot?

Working product, later winter 2023

There are no bad dogs
just long chains in wet yards,
and when the metal rusts to breaking,
who can blame him
for sinking once-proud teeth into flesh worth biting?
What happens to a bad dog put down?
not cremated, not
buried in dog-sized casket
like the good dogs, with their good dog balls
What happens to the sorry body of the backyard dog?
skin tented over tendon,
mouth clamped around the hand of God
What happens to an empty yard
once full?

Lover, come

Late summer 2022

Devil worship, puppet strings, heart strings
Cards and psychics and holiness and profiting churches, tithes
Reaching out in the dark and grabbing the wrong hands
Wanting support but not wanting to be taken advantage of
Fearing people and the universe and the dark

Early fall 2022

Devil dancing
In the meat of sticky summer
Like flies circling an open wound
The stink of lust sticking to my clothing
How I feel when I'm with you
Stranger, stranger,
Would you like to see inside me?
My breath unabiding,
My secrets untrue.

Working product, late winter 2023

Take my hand, lover come
devil dancing in the meat of sticky summer.

We, like flies, circling a wound.

Lover, come.

The speed of aging seasons,

the withering of many

leaves. It must end,

some day,

for the waltz of us.

Seek me, that I may

not so much seek, that

Satan tempt me not,

lover, that

I may not so much seek

than to burn.

Once buoyed by February, now

Middle winter 2023

Once buoyed by February, perseverating on a comma well-placed

Twice buoyant

Wanting body

Afford the recourse, divorce, horse

The morning of my birth month dies within days

False spring dipping under horizon

Hunting for crumbs,

Your communications run through me like grease

March seems like it might never come

What is it with young couples? Have they no heartbreak?

Left wanting for a softer blow

For the life of me

Familial guilt, winter's daughter

Unkind wind

Late winter 2023

Once buoyed by February, now

perseverating on

a comma well-placed.

Hunting for crumbs,

your communications

run through me like grease.

The morning of the month dies

within days, false spring

diving under horizon.

The wind howling

unkindness, March might
never come.

Me, born of winter.

Hours short of Pisces,
bearing water's burden.

Me, winter's daughter,
bearing guilt of mother
season's wrath.

Me, child of February, fighting
out of her.

This long, long labor.

Working product, early spring 2023

Once buoyed by February, now
pondering
a comma well-placed.
Hunting for crumbs,
your communications
run through me like grease.
The morning of the month dies
within days, false spring
diving under horizon.
The wind howling
unkindness, March might
never come.
Me, born of winter.
Hours short of Pisces,
bearing water's burden.
Me, winter's daughter,
bearing guilt of mother
season's wrath.
Me, child of February, fighting
out of her.
This long, long labor.

The cutting room floor (discarded threads)

Late spring 2022

An egg in a saucepan

Fried egg over ramen

Dark living room new

old movie white

blanket empty apartment

Fried egg over ramen

dark living room new

old movie and alone

heart in a teacup

blank walls save one mirror

chocolates

Tums

Fried egg over ramen

dark living room new old

movie and alone heart

in a teacup blank walls

save one mirror and a

loveseat

alone in a love seat

Late spring 2022

Caffeine hands and

Clotted blood

These days I am all
Caffeine hands and
Clotted blood,
Burning through bottles of Ibuprofen,
These days I'm all
Caffeine hands and clotted blood,