

streetcake

issue 62



@ fabrice b. poussin

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Response poem to Rupi Kaur's Milk and Honey

I wanted to
murder your metaphors
slash your similes
burn your *sweet* sketches
but
your blank verse
is cursed
with uneasy clichés
you seem to think
rhyming is a crime
you'd say
forget sensible caesuras
when you can have
line breaks
that fall like petals
admired
by sad generations

Excavations 44

The rooms where we

Waited

Your cello sounding against

A thickness of shadow

Of the lengthy

Uncoilings of

A pastness

The voices behind closed doors

The serpentine crawl of moments

Naming us

A narrowing of the spaces

A need for an ocean

An opening

Through which.

(Once upon a time in a real world, was a solid city built close to a cold dark blue sea (the ground was pierced: by an obese mountain). The city gave birth to a supermarket &, in this almost made-up story, in its alleys, you could usually see a black man in his late fifties wearing problematic hair & a scattered beard. Look => he is thin, tall— almost slender & surreal like a stalk ben~

ded by poor winds, like a straw

drifting endlessly
in a dubious
swimming-pool.

Every day of

every month of

every year, you could see him walking, wandering through the alleys: a well-known ghost lost in a living world, in exotic fruits, near unique offers; lost from the front display to the organic food. Some said he was being paid by companies to spy on customers (others badly joked that he might have lost his shopping list or that an angry wife was waiting for him for dinner.

But he really appears homeless, crazy.

Too quiet.

His eyes: cold coil on white snow: shady yet fixed upon strangers' faces: with a sense of fear & tragic: silent torture, eternal damnation: nightmare.

Once upon a time the supermarket closed for renovation, before being e-x-p-a-n-d-e-d with plenty of little shops; little houses of a wide/wild city. Then once upon a time the supermarket re-opened. All I was looking for was the ghost I made mine.

➔ There he was:

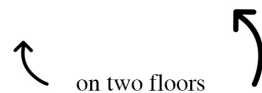
the same clothes. He did not look older nor crazier nor creepier.

➔ There he stood:

immortal, moving sculpture, anguished look.

➔ There he is.

Where was he all this time? My-ste/ory (except in my mind from time to time). The new supermarket really is a larinbyth of lost money, enormous temple of consumption, astounding mzae of holy shops organized in complex GeoMeTriCal paths suspended, on two floors



crossing each other through ➔ decorative rubble—in the middle of which was thrown a pile of s

t

a

i

r

s

.

There he was wandering,

there he is wandering;

with his clothes & hair & beard & coil & snow; the lonesome walk-on actor lost in customers' lives. A black ghost is haunting a 24/7 illuminated supermarket without any universal reason. His kingdom is bigger, wider, wilder (& worst); it grew without blood; proud wanderer, unconscious strategist, unruled desire.)

Surfacing from a sea of nowhere, I shook my head in the alleys & stopped writing with my mind: "Beers —here they are". I grabbed a six-pack & paid before leaving the haunted

supermarket, walking straight to my brand new apartment, way bigger than the former.
Heatwaves hitting the land in the summer; I put on some music, a beer in my clammy hand,
unaware of the notes echoing on the humid walls, & wandered in my liquid rooms; silently,
creepily, facing my own self, the mirror:

gazing into the void
of my own self.

Your Face

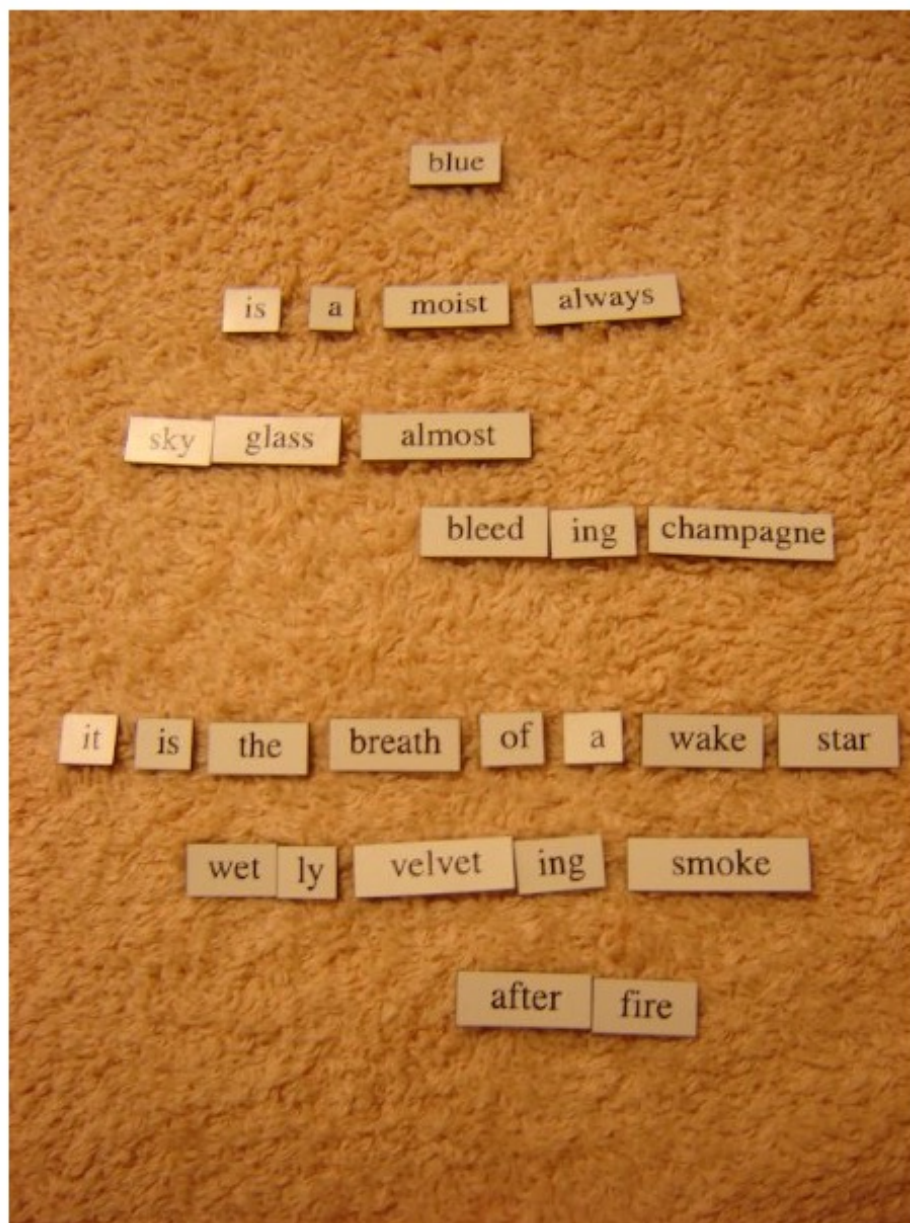
Show us again. Flash
it this way. Front and
center. Yes. That's it.
The way that no emotion
—or even consciousness
—flickers over your face
when you look at us:
That's just the kind
of expressionlessness and
obliviousness we want.
We could hold a face
like that in front
of nature's greatest
wonders, humanity's
worst atrocities, and it
wouldn't bat an eyelash
or move its lip. Yes,
indeed, with a few more
like yours, we could have
the nice, solid beginnings
of a zombie army. So,
step this way. We see
great things in your future.

dam·age

[ˈdɑːmɪdʒ]

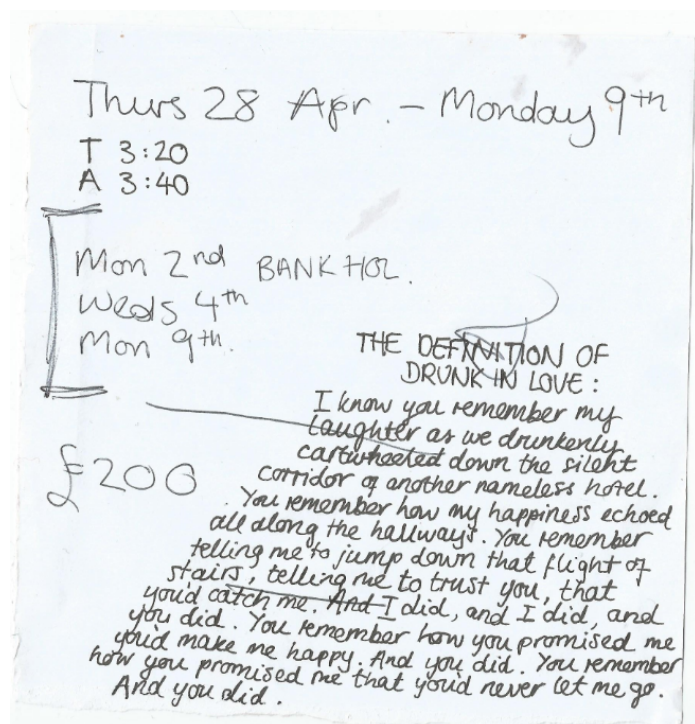
noun.

1. In another universe I am thirteen with soft hands and shins again. The summer heat does not feel razor-sharp or ready to wound me. In this other universe my hands are allowed to be mine.
2. But I am here, with splinters stuck under the skin.
3. Can you feel how I tremble? There is a stampede in my blood that destroys me. Over and over I pick my bones off the floor and sew them back into the shape of a body. Isn't that what life is like, running from the ghosts within you that tear you apart at your seams? How many times have I died in the night only to get out of bed the next morning?
4. In my dreams I name myself sycamore tree. I shed the torments of my youth-like romances. I grow wild with sunlight on my tongue and I survive for centuries. In reality I take a hot shower, pull on clean clothes and put patches over the seam ripped bandages
5. "I'm ready for inspection, sir."



DefinitionTHE DEFINITION OF
DRUNK IN LOVE:

I know you remember my
 laughter as we drunkenly
 cart-wheeled down the silent
 corridor of another nameless hotel.
 You remember how my happiness echoed
 all along the hallways. You remember
 telling me to jump down that flight of
 stairs, telling me to trust you, that
 you'd catch me. And I did, and I did, and
 you did. You remember how you promised me
 you'd make me happy. And you did. You remember
 how you promised me that you'd never let me go.
 And you did.



passing through



Disb / Elie / f

I don't believe in the stars. They
are far scatted ere d
and too unorganized e e e d
for my liking.

I pray that they are bundled. I pray that
they are folded perfectly
apart
like black piano sticks to explore
with my finger.

I pray they know a translateable language.
ge.

If
they shout,
I will jump fall and die.

If
they whisper,
I will crisp.

It's a lose-lose for us both: I lose my life.
They, their audience.

It's best if we continue administering the silent treatment
to each other—
but even that is a fatal B+.