

Becoming X

I could no longer grow in the ground
with any impact,

the brown shards of me spread out
along the bottom of the river,

all my signifiers indistinguishable without
all of our modern electronics;

because we all want lives as soft and comfy
as a pop song,

relationships like when we first meet:

so subversively surreal—it feels like crawling
down from the ledge at the very last second.

But I could not escape my own underground,
broadcasting myself so I'd trip through my brain
all day long,

my perfect soul spinning around and around
in the hurricane,

my gun going off all over the campus—
until I become somebody *really* important.

Letter from a Soldier

I look for you in the dark,
beyond the Massachusetts woods
where the wolves hide at the edge
of the field,

all night long as the rockets
rain down just a little bit harder;

I go through all the alleys as the
buildings come down and everything
turns to ash,

but I am just a little bit broken,
broke in all the right places—
a million little jewels that split apart

all across the ground.

This Much

I watched her walk out the blue door,

so at night I took her by the feet out into
the ten kinds of darkness,

her mouth whispering the way the Internet
whispers poetry,

forks and spoons packed up like we're
on the go again,

drunk in night sweats in the time machine
on our way to equilibrium,

please! I scream; *I can't do this anymore!*
she screams;

until finally we both let go, hay in both
of our hair, our minds/souls undone,

because twenty years in the future I hear
the pain I put in her voice right now,

so I bring her back home and place her in
bed with the cool covers over her breasts,

her mind never knowing the before and after
of everything I had to undo (just for her).

Cuba

We hid amid the swaying fields of sugar cane
when Castro overthrew that fool, Fulgencio,

you in your libidinous red dress that kept
all the men of Plaza Vieja very happy, every day
a procession after the bullfights and the executions;

I think I was dead every morning I was without you,
the statues of the city cold, but I understood them,

at night we drank and danced and then we retired to watch
all the old cars going fast under the trestles,

In the daytime, I worked right near San Cristobal,
trying to write like Hemingway on our old typewriter,

but you cured me for my lack of a reputation,
me, arriving home to find you naked and wet in bed,
leaving me hungry for your soul like a wallet longing
for crisp green bills;

but then change and revolution came!

and we were all happy and afraid as we hid in the fields,
dreaming of the former, hoping for tomorrow,
hiding for a day that turned into the last fifty years;

And now I am old and you have already gone,
nothing to quench my thirst like things used to do,

Jesus! I'm tired of waiting for Cuba to change!

Cuba is both a truth and a fiction, a great story of lust
and of craving,

A country that longs for tomorrow to be like yesterday,
and for yesterday to be like tomorrow. *Amen.*

Strobelite Seduction

I am always living in the lost
world of Richard Yates,

all of his posh and mundane sadness,

his gray chairs, his white steps,
his brick allies like where we once grew up,

my lips kissing his terrifying
trick of disappearing into thin air;

touch those damp lips of meta-fiction,

do a back flip instead of writing about
all the banal losers we all know who somehow
think that they are exceptional for doing
absolutely nothing;

yes, you are a white rat sitting in a white cage
just like the rest of us—

the big house, the red sports car,
the big swimming pool, the sixty-seven
sexy and different ways to make yourself
happy:

watch, judge, gauge, compare,
get irked by a better parking space,
play a role, why don't you?

but then one day you realize that you are

not even half-human anymore.

So I go along, living in a world of both
love and success, loss and bitter solitude,
one usually overbearing the other,

every day shifting back and forth in fits of
light and twilight,

living under the sweeping advertisements
of every day:

the whispering propaganda, the pop song
of politics that we use to kill the longest
moments.

There is no America anymore to make
any promises, there is no great Indian
God guiding our dreams,

there is no other distant time in the past
when things were better than they are now,

and there is no better future,
no windows to let the light in,

shhh! listen:

there is no movie that you
are starring in even right now,

but you can be sure that there will be
something to survive tomorrow,

a gray chair perhaps, maybe some
white tulips, a white cage, a posh
and mundane sadness—

a little piece of light that shines down
on the parlor floor for half an hour before
it goes back into nowhere.

The Dream House

Her soul was the color of God,
a thunderhead of apple red, and in wavelengths,
vestigial hips and thighs/the drunkenness
that comes thereafter;

the palpable lure of Everest, the way you
conquer it when it is easily conquering you,
translucent as night, a shrouded thing to wrap
and unwrap;

midnight in a blind dress, the sticky and
beautiful idea on the tips of tongues,
India and Pakistan, fingers in her bible,
a last visage of 1960's hope;

two contradictory quarks, but it all makes sense,
an autobiography of *tomorrow* written in *today*,

two empty hotels along the Hudson River,
two bridges drenched in sky—flailing, clawing,

a mirror of the sun for a thousand years.

Armageddon Days

In the phone booth on 47th Street,
the city steeped in bottle green/neon,
too weak to seek out what's appropriate,
these legs, waterfalls, in her living memory,
in the paper—another war to wet our beaks;

Jesus, pick the phone, need to talk ASAP;

I see it all on the looks on each passing face,
secretly, eyes dreaming poetry out of the light,
living the life they got—right or wrong, perfect/not;
I've never heard singing so dark in a place,
horns blaring, air rushing by, cars splashing water,

Jesus, you there? maybe you can come—*quick!*

There is something to say for not saying anything,
right or wrong; solitary/strong; peace or fighting;
I'll be who I am; I don't know about you;
the wind in my veins getting colder every minute,
a million faces to see when I only need one:

hello? is anyone there? hello? hello? hello?