

ANDY WEAVER

Two Poems

The Constant of the Universe

I

And under the stars tonight
I wonder if someone cares.
I'm lonely, that's the way I feel.

(Frank Black, "Man of Steel")

And so it's springtime
and every fool has his lips
pursed for the kiss,
the world has spattered
on love like a cheap cologne.
But let's chop through the false fronts,
peel off the plaster and open the walls
to the bare slats—the meat of the matter,
as they say. Loneliness is the only constant
in this universe

because your head is weighted to fall forward to the ground.
because Layton lied to us; death is never a name for beauty not in use.
because the dog keeps humping your leg and licking his balls and humping your leg and licking
his balls and...and, let's be honest, you're starting to look forward to it.
because if you say Heraclitus too quickly while contemplating sex he's bound to become your
favourite pre-Socratic.

because people die on the last day of every war.
because of telescopes and the long gaze into darkness.
because Picasso had his blue period.
because there are parts of your lover's body you'll wish you hadn't memorized: the shallow cup
at the back of her knee, the soft hills of her resting palms, the galaxy of bone and muscle
surrounding her ribs.
because you'll forget the slow changes in her day-to-day scent.
because memory is a glass filled with earth.
because if loneliness wasn't the constant, rubber consumption for condoms would destroy the
rainforest, pro-sports leagues would collapse, Madonna'd be elected President, and
everyone would need constant spine re-adjustments.
because Gould was humming just to himself.
because Bach, on the quiet afternoons, doubted.
because if life were an instrument, it would be a single cello.
because there's nothing metaphysical about tears.

II

*Every song has a you
A you that the singer sings to*

(Ani Difranco, "Dilate")

Ah, where are you, my
ocean, my sapphire, my lovely spring robin,
my flood, my hawk, my scarlet ribbon;
why aren't you here in the night, my seashell,
taking my hand and whispering
"Bloom"?

because I've been raised in a language with no words to give her.
because of the airplane trip, the clouds stretched out like quilts over rolling lovers—and the
empty seat beside me. I'm gone and her rhythms go on without me.
because I've flown 3000 miles only to ask the hotel clerk for a corkscrew, missing my dark
beauty who is not my dark beauty at all.
because the opening of flowers after an eclipse is nothing like her quick, dark, brown eyes.
because we've all lived through these country songs.
because I'd welcome birds into my house, hear their tired wings flapping against the windows
like heavy rose petals, and wait.
because if she and I were birds, we'd be great and terrible one-winged eagles.
because I've read my future in the long dark tunnel of the beer glass, and because I've forgotten
to write it down.
because of this wanting, and because we've forgotten the true meaning of the word: to lack, to
wane.

because Tarzan is the perfect metaphor for love: we're all stuck in a jungle and love is the only vine—we grab hold and are in motion, but its arc ends and we must reach out, fumbling, blindly, knowing there might be nothing to grab in your hand. That anyone ever lets go of the old vine is the miracle.

because there can be no metaphor for loneliness, the form forbids it; and no simile—loneliness isn't even like loneliness.

because I'm finally ready to buy that "Too Fucked For Zen" bumper sticker.

because love is a knife: love triangles, rectangles, pentagons or octagons—more people means more angles and more angles means more cutting edges.

because I am not a swinger of birches.

because you run and run, not away from or to something, but at, at exhaustion, throwing yourself at it like wind at a candle-flame.

III

*You're the sweetest thing, darlin'
I ever did see,
Really like your peaches
Want to shake your tree.*

(Steve Miller, "The Joker")

And maybe all this is silly,
this courting of the double edge of love
and loss. Maybe it's a changing of priorities
that's required; forget about falling in love,
concentrate on tripping head-first into lust,

because her body is the evolutionary tigress of love.
because the bed's starting to creak and my hands are getting calluses and good God what if my
roommate hears me moaning alone up there.
because there's kum/
quats all over the place.
because I'd lounge with her through the night like a cat in a window facing east.
because we've all heard the crowing of the cock.
because of the press of lips into the soft rippling flesh of the belly, the slow curve of hands
around thighs, the sudden blossom moist on the tongue, the taste of birth in your mouth.
Because after this, all your words are bruised by the new language of her body.
because the lonely have always spoken in tongues, dreaming of speaking with hands, with lips.
because I've seen a mole on her thigh and almost asked to touch that darkened ruby.
because all the Elvis in your hips is awful forced, pretty mama.
because it's been a long time since I've rubbed the magic lamp and let loose the genie, went
fishing with the flesh pole, set up the tripod and used my telescope to explore the milky
way, if you know what I mean.

because you all know what I mean.
because I have no right to read her love poems.
because I've forgotten the geography of a woman's shoulder, how hard and brittle in places, how
supple and stemlike in others.
because my desire alone isn't enough for both of us.
because if I showed her the stars at night, she might see them as nothing but light cracking
through a frail wall, and I'd have no words to comfort her.

IV

*These words are dedicated to those who died
because they had no love and felt alone in the world*

(Irena Klepfisz, "Bashert")

And there is no hand
to reach for mine, to take
this pen from me, stop it from reaching
the end.

And so loneliness, in the end,
is the dotted yellow line you follow, mindless,

because it's there, that desire to gut every painting of lovers, to poke your fingers through their
eyes, and, maybe, touch your tongue to their cheeks, taste that permanence just once.
because there are days when the birds turn their backs and sing their songs away from you.
because of the bad jokes: Beethoven's ears, Rembrandt's eyes, Thomas's parched Welsh tongue.
because I've lost hours at work from trying to picture the exact tilt of her head when she laughs.
because there was another a young woman once, with delicate, deep, deep scars on her wrists
and an emptied bottle of pills and I loved her very much.
because now I don't, and a friend has called that progress; because he's probably right, and a part
of me hates him for that—just hold your tongue and let me love.
because I've cut my wrists and don't even have the scars to show for it, the unstoppable betrayal
of healing.
because we have all entered rooms and wept.
because sometimes you've got to cry to keep from laughing.
because it's not abstract at all.
because love, at times, isn't either.
because of the marble in your mind you can't get aligned to centre that tells you you've lived in
this city two years and still don't call it home, that it's over, chewed up, time to move on.
because you've seen the clouds pulse into the sky like opened veins.
because you've been nothing but a visitor, an anomaly, a passing train to everyone you've met.
because we're not Degas' dancers, our bold strokes don't blend easily into grace.

because I'd like to fall asleep and wake up someone else, watch everything that I am blow away
in the wind like smouldering ash.

because only fire makes dead flowers bloom.

because fuck this prissiness. I am lonely, you are lonely, there is nothing pretty to say. Because
fuck the stars, fuck the metaphors, fuck me, fuck you, fuck the walls, fuck it all. We're all
just characters in a nursery rhyme waiting to fall down.

because this is over, and I throw away all these pointless, stupid words except one.

Why?

Dream

Where are the sleeps that escape such dreams?

(Wendell Berry)

I dreamt of a woman
who won't answer my letters. She is unbearably
old, her face is etched like ice
after a day of skating. I reach for her cheek
the way I reached my hands,
as a young boy,
to the stars—afraid
they'd catch fire.