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Love, Loss, Longing

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Love, Loss, Longing

Cover Page Footnote

N/A

Haiku

Cottonwood shimmers
Shaking down sweet memories
Rooted in pure gold

First Light

On my walk down from the mesa,
I saw saxifrage splitting rock
and I thought of you.

A cottontail jumped onto my path,
startling me to attention
(yes, some silly fears still remain).

Remember when we set out
one morning speaking hard words
as we made our way in the darkness?

A rabbit appeared that time, too,
standing in a circle of street light
as you took a piss near a tree.

It was October, our breath
co-mingled in a mist before us
as we re-traced our steps in silence.

Feathers, Crystals, Shells, Stones

I found you in the Rockies,
At the base of the mountain,
The same one my dapple grey
Carried me upon to its summit,
Where beauty stole my breath.

Warmed by the sun, soft and
Smooth, round and ruddy-brown,
I carried you deep in my pocket;
You were there when I heard
My first moose bugle at dawn.

There when I sat for forever,
An elk herd blocking the road
Like majestic statues breathing
Milky mist through rarified air,
Where nature trumps everything.

At home I unwrapped you from
The white tissue, bits of powdery
Earth visible in your tiny creases;
I placed you inside my travel bag,
A constant reminder: remember this.

Twenty-one years you were lost,
Casualty of curiosities of a child,
Or victim of overdue spring cleaning;
I prayed for a sign, should I go back
In summer to fulfill another dream?

Your resurfacing elevates you from
Back of junk drawer to sacred altar.
Where you will stay for the remainder
Of my days, in the good company of
Feathers, crystals, shells and stones.

Agape

In a darkened room
my crossed hands,
two hummingbirds,
vibrating joy across
strings of long ago,
when gold ran
through us like rivers.

Aware only of my
skin touching my
own skin, and yours,
pressing hard
against mine
from the back of
the darkened room.

Sustenance

In an empty banquet hall
you peer at me from above
those horn-rimmed readers,
in starched white shirt
looking professorial as ever.

Strangers join me at the table
where I wait for your words
to be delivered on delicate
porcelain, like some
exquisite appetizer.

I watch you enjoy your meal,
you notice me noticing,
smile back big and toothy,
not to the guests gathered,
but to me, reverently.

An old knowing spills over me
stirring memories of another time,
when I cooked your favorite fish
and you scraped the smallest flake
from your plate to honor me.

I still love a man who loves my food.

Sacred Space

Your middle finger and thumb
Encircle my small wrist,
Measuring for the thick
Silver bracelet I will wear
Only inside our imaginings.

Within your holy sanctuary
My painting hangs, constant
Reminder of my ephemeral
Yet solid presence amidst chaos:
Two cupped hands shielding
Your ember from the wind.

People of the Red Tail Hawk

My love,
I'll never forget
When I first saw you
Cast in bronze
On Museum Hill
In the foothills
Of Sangre de Cristo.

My dream,
Your broken wing,
Nursing you back to flight,
Our anguished parting.
I can still feel the
Whoosh of you as
Your body met black sky.

But you returned at first light,
Refusing to leave my side.

My father
Made a leather sleeve
And you perched there
As we rode the high desert.
Now your body spans my back
Wing tip to wing tip, your gaze
Warns all who walk behind.

I still carry you in my chest,
Your heart and my heart
Beating out a fearsome rhythm.

Betrayed by Morning

Our clothes we shed,
tiptoe barefoot both
outside in the cool

dark October night.

Moon so huge, full
shining on the dirt
path to the ancient
oak tree, the one
planted by the crow
when our far back
people lived here.

You gather twigs to
build a small fire and
we dance to crickets,
skin on skin, nothing
and no one to stop us
save the morning light.

Faux Choice

We endured another grey morning,
like hundreds of others we have shared;
today you tempered it with a sweet
suggestion to go to the greenhouse--
scope out flowers for the garden.
The gesture is an invitation to forget
how we have neglected one another,
overlooking weeds until they nearly
choke the life out of both of us.

Yet,

I see you as a child-man picking
your way through a blur of color,
enough to warm the still-too-cold earth.

I suggest a miniature indigo beauty
leaves dark emerald, shiny perfect.

You pretend not to hear, keep surveying,
mumble that my choice is too tiny.

I try again, this time a tall silvery stalk,
soft as foxglove.

You shake your head, definitely too tall.

I pivot and move in the opposite direction,
a warrior marching through fallow fields
dreaming of tender new shoots,
perfect for planting, perfect for me.

March 9, 2015

Forty years ago today, Daddy,
You watched your last sunrise.
How many have I witnessed
Without you? 14,600 to be exact.
Each one missing the warmth
Of your love, covering my life
With goodness and mercy.

You never met your two grands,
But I felt you squeezing my
Clammy hands in the delivery
Room with my firstborn.
Your three great-grands would
Have adored you, Papoo,
Just like the three blessed
With just a little of your time.

I turned sixty this year, Daddy,
And I've travelled this earth
Twice as long without you
As with...searching, searching.
Time bends, you are somber,
Standing tall, walking me down
The aisle, eyes straight ahead,
Hoping I would not see you
Fighting back the tears.