

Self Portrait with Invisible Hand

Imagine this: a farm,

the womb of the Earth, both the sickle and the carrying hand,
birthing, taking, grieving, again. Imagine this: the blood in the dirt,
the pain that binds to the soil until two things become one. Dying is a mother
now. Crops ran down to dust, rising into the air, an ancient god
sinks across the plains, wind and dust and dust. They called him Death.

and with it, the livestock, the thousand creatures grazing the Earth since
the Fifth and Sixth day after the beginning,

(from which there was nothing but Death.)

Imagine this: they're screaming, or howling because a storm is coming,
and they know this. They know this because it was spoken in the wind
and the dust and it was carried to them by an invisible hand

draped against the landscape like a painter before he removes himself
from the art, leaving it barren, lifeless, time-paused. Now he's painting
a self-portrait, where he is represented by an empty chair against an
empty wall. He's hoping someone will see this and pray, that he'll
come home, that someone will come home. He's painting a self-portrait,
where there are crates lined up just outside the frame, crate after crate
carrying a soul, barren, lifeless. Apples. Sugar. Oat. Oil. Crate after crate.
Bullets. Bullets. Bullets.

Imagine this: a man on television in a white shirt and tie is calling himself
Death, holding a sickle upside down so it looks like a hoe. He's promising
restructuring, a rebuilding, and when winter ice starts to thaw, he turns
it right side up again. He's calling himself Death like it has meaning but he
has never seen blood. He gives the sickle to another incarnation. Play
a deck of cards, and you'll likely pull the Coward.

There was a rich man who was dressed in purple
and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was
laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to
eat what fell from the rich man's table.

This is not a poem about hunger.

One man dies and one man lives.

The beggar was never written to survive.

Take this, and eat. Do this in remembrance of me.

This Is A Miami Poem

How do you write a love poem for a city that does not love you back? A city where red doesn't mean stop, red means go

back inside, remove nail polish with acetone because one wrong look can mean death.

A week before my birthday, a gay man on South Beach was beaten with a stick and called a and the tide still came in that night. The music still played and the tourists still stumbled through, drunk and barefoot in the neon rain, and the drag queens still did their rounds. And with the weight of every streetlight you've prayed was a moon to look to, you search schools in the north and remove your bracelets before walking on the sidewalk at night. Out of the corner of my eye, I watch the buildings and streets and people and lights, a ghost of myself in the darkened window, and I pray I could leave, but I know that I won't.

Mnasthai

I cannot remember my early years. this
is called infantile amnesia, from the Ancient
Greek *mnasthai*, to remember.

My first memory is of my mother's nipple.

My second is blood in the washroom, copper
in the steamed shower air, the body coming
together again. Tell me about these bodies,
and how they fell from the sky. When it was late, and the gods had gone to sleep, the sun
burning out in a fiery stupor, hiding behind
the acacia tree. We took the bodies and turned
them into light, and stories. We took them
and breathed life into the night, their bare
 chests rising and falling and rising again.

I remember the lamp burning out and
being coaxed into darkness like slipping into
a pool of water gently, so that the cold comes
onto you slowly, feet and then leg, hip,
stomach, breasts. This body, not my body.

This cold, still becoming. The body becoming

whole again. Tell me about the
time I slipped under the waves and drowned before washing up on the river bed, the body
breathing and dying once again. In another life, my first memory is still my mother's nipple.
The seed of rot nesting between my ribs, unfolding like the waterlily in spring. The days where I
felt the heat on my chest and knew
it to be the sun, and saw the reflection
of my body on the porcelain, jagged and
smooth all at once. This is when I knew the
sun was not the sun I thought it to be, the
seed growing into a fertile tree, fruits
nestling between the leaves, ripe and plump.

My bare chest rising and falling and rising again, and every time I saw my mother's nipple,
I heard *you do not remember this. You do*

not see this and my breaths soften.

Tell me about the time I fell from the sky,
when the sun was burning out, and the
acacia tree casted long shadows against
the earth. *The gods were sleeping and you,*

*bodies, fell from heaven onto earth.
you slipped into the river before drifting
away, and now you have returned.
Sit down. Rest. The fire has yet to burn out,
and we have food and water to share.*

Florida Song

God bless the Gatorland.

It smells sweet - the dripping nectar of a tangerine
sparkling against the peel. It is my own flesh, was,
the prophetic perfect of which our bodies are made.
The swamp knows no bounds. It is our stomach.
I found a shark tooth beneath an inch of dirt at
the bottom of a river. It is our teeth, then, too.
Our angels take flight over the cypress sky, leaving
feathers in the leaves below, turning into vultures,
sunsets turning to constellations above the earth.

God bless the Gatorland.

Like a God without a temple, the ocean is
our wrath. The storms that fester beyond the shore
with darkling clouds suspended by an invisible hand.
Listen to the hum of cicadas before a rain, and they
will answer your prayers with rain, or morning dew,
on window glass, the only proof that they existed.
Do the cicadas speak with prophetic tongues?

God bless the Gatorland.

The Greek goddess of summer was Theros.
When I search up the meaning of Theros, I find feral; beastly,
characterized by a serpent. The summer beats on.
It presses its thumb into the soft places of the body,
into the back of the neck, the hollow of the knee,
and the flesh against the heart. Though feral,
Theros held a sickle in her hand. She is our mother.

God bless the Gatorland.

A blessed angel came from the trees and spoke to me,
saying this was the tribe of the blessed, and gave upon me
an orange. *Take this and eat, for it is my Flesh, given
and shed for you*, and said, *No man shall see me and
live*, but I am no man. I am man-unbound, man-undone.
At my feet lays the peel, undone.

God bless the Gatorland.

The land works slowly, like an ouroboros digesting itself.
Nothing is held apart for long. The body dissolves
into the loam and estuary, the root and the limestone alike.
To live is to agree to be taken, eventually,
by the falcons circling overhead, by the furious
storm assembling beyond the event-horizon.

To be pulled apart and redistributed
in the most extravagant of ways.

God bless the Gatorland.

Choral Improvisation

1

The cold skin. The reflection of love.
The slow turning in my stomach, the pew
digging into my hip. Tell me a story I don't already
know and I will tell you
 the whole truth, that
the bed looks so much smaller from above.

2

The man at the pulpit is preaching,
telling us that we are going to hell inherently,
that it is our natural state, and thus just,
but that there is promise, still, or a future
 awaiting. I find my hands praying, though
I was never raised religious.

3

It's said you can tell when something
you love is about to die. The pounding in your ears
like radio static, the falling in your chest when
you hear the ambient music stop. It's telling you
 you must listen. Something important is going to happen.
Like the scene in every movie where the monster
 is on the other side of the door and the main
 character doesn't know it yet, but we do, we're
watching from outside and we can see the knife
and the piccolo is crescendoing and no one
inside can hear it except for us. Or like a disease
that you know will overtake you, and you wait
 for days on end for something to happen. I
thought if I was dying, it would at least

be something interesting.

4

It's Christmas Eve. I'm at church with your
family and you're on the other side of the pew.
We're watching a reenactment of the birth of Christ
and the girl playing Mary is holding Joseph's hand,
and she's crying. Three boys are standing over
her with gifts. They're holding gold,
myrrh, and frankincense. The boy playing Joseph
says that he's leaving her for another woman. Mary
says that she's in love with the boy playing God. I don't
remember this part of the story.

Z

I'm waiting for you to break through the door
and plunge the knife into my chest. I went to sleep
and woke up in a hospital room and the bed is
taken. I'm waiting for a nurse to come through
and tell me that your heart rate's
dropping and to start compressions
and say that there's nothing she can do.
I'm waiting for death, so this story can come
to a close. I want to stop telling this story.

5

It's Christmas Eve. I'm at church with your
family. There's no nativity scene this year.
It's a sermon about death, the funeral, the
crucifixion, the eternal life. We dip
the bread into the communion blood,
and it still tastes like wine. It's a funeral,
but this one's not yours, it's mine. Your blood,
my body, the war machine marches on.