



Winter LeBlanc

Pillars of Light

are

Purple and Red

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for Nathan

*Look, the trees
are turning
their own bodies
into pillars
of light*

Mary Oliver

Pillars of Light
are
Purple and Red

Nysa

gather on the ground
and sing lullabies
to the child of tomorrow.

blossoms of aster
feed him
and lotus
and honesty

and you
shall be
turned to star

and I will
build you a chimney of garnet
that glows through the night,
light the pyre with zeal,

and the purple god
shall be yours to love.

and I will
watch your rain trickle down
his face like mica,
crush amethyst in his hair,
and drown a thousand rhymes
in search of the heaviest treasure
to anchor you.

and I will
plant the redwood sentinel
before the crystal cave of Nysa
and solemnly await
your homecoming, beams
of violet upon red Earth
everything worth living for

Mortuary

the hermit pine
who wanders far beneath this ledge
needn't wait long. the snow drips
into the trees'
dark deserts. March buries her
sisters and their bodies melt,
meeting the pine roots
in their craters.

we lay on the needles
and try to forget. notice
our fleeces rich with sun.
March's carmine cheeks
glow soft over the falls
as the Ides unfold. the mystery passes

through her and then nests
in her hair. overcome by it all,
we lean on the sky and head home,
crawling back into a newspaper.

Lighthouse

a cut in the blinds-
stilts from the sun supplanted,
six hundred million
miles per hour,
pervade the shower.

I hold the wall
and scour the beach
for electron shells
remembering the farther
I walk, the farther
I must return.

activate turn signal
click clack click clack click clack click clack

the ultra-sonic
whisper of a bat,
dogbane tiger moths weeping.
what's taking place
at these impossible frequencies?

throwing flame,
neuron fire,
three hundred miles
per hour still seeing,
sun drops like waterfalls,
the flume of Apollo running like

*emanate emanate emanate emanate emanate emanate
emanate emanate*

Sonnet for Mind (from Spine)

each night, you float above my ivory hand
and I can only wonder what you find
on your twilight flights, at your hidden shrine

and so I hold this place until you land,
meet you at the door, brush off the sand
that you've tracked in on your purple coat lined
with dream. I, Spine, and you, my darling Mind
no longer estranged, try to understand

why each day, you grow heavy with sorrow;
Ophelia's dress, osmium flower,

gray riptide, supermoon of tomorrow,
a storm cloud above an ivory tower.

you start to believe your coat is borrowed
and I hold you, no words and no power.

Event Horizon

the last thing
at the river
were the words
you left

so sorry

they lay on
clementine
peels
forming blood pools
like elf cups
as the river rose
erasing your memory

on the stone
face of Niobe
black forms burning
behind your eyes
the holes that
keep suns in tow

sometimes
not even light
escapes gravity

Crisis

forget prayer
tonight, the church of madlove
descends
like pure fire

alarm spreads
through the forests
we cross
to confront our friend
in crisis

we polish our words,
stiffen our faces,
and present our insides
like planets with iron masks

but nothing
prepares us
to stare into the face
of a second self
the dread
of our betrayal
concentrating deep within
the darkest part
of his pupils

his irises swirl
around their dark centers
every word
is broken glass
on our lips
even
we love you

shatters

breaking his trust

Bread Poem

and the hills
appeared purple
and then blue
and beyond that thresh-
old we did not know
anything more.
so, we ran into
a field
of gold ochre
and returned with blonde straw
and midnight flour.

our jackets swelled
with straw
that had crawled

into our bodies
like caves.
small, white feathers
sputtered out
of our coats
like coughing fits
as we morphed
seeking crossbeams
for the scarecrows
of our minds –
the wheat-beings
threshed by the
blunted sword
of Melpomene.

but,
as night drew near,
we abandoned our posts

and ran toward the hills
as carnelian sun
dripped on our hats
like egg wash
and flour found
our pockets
like promise.
so, we drove off
to bake bread
and smile
and dance around
the oven like Earth
and beyond that thresh-
old we did not know
anything more.

Crisis II

had my first cigarette
that night outside
the hospital
the smoke cloaked
our nerves like kids
in a fort

I know safety
feels better
when you save
yourself

you keep telling us
this madlove
is ridiculous, fear
we haven't reached you

silver clouds spilling out
of our hands
finding the slightest
gaps in our stories
to slip through

looking at your feet

remember
all my talk
on Thompson,
how you opened
like iolite splitting
beneath the weight
of my arrogance,
too engulfed
in my own shade
to see you leagues

below where
black is really
far purple

Sundown

8:01 PM

a hum

like leaning over an electric burner
in the kitchen at night

hear restless water

and the gushing of your heart

red kettle golden tea

jasmine pearls

your mother opening the door

taking off her jacket

pouring herself a glass of wine

8:32 PM

anxious in the shower, again,

my lungs and my heart

wrestling because I'm too tired

tell the kids to stop fighting
my brain must be upset that I let
my guard down.
I mean
brain named me, thought of me
brain me

8:55 PM
if I write fast enough
I can distract myself from the pounding
I must be ruthless in my letters. drilling
down to my genes
unwinding
watch how Rosie
does it so softly
from her cat perch on the love seat

*apparently, there is a penguin
that looks like a witch to some folk.
“They kill witches”, she said.
I continue listening
but I think, “Who is she? Why is she going on about
Dr. Richmond going on about
penguins being beaten to death
like dirty soles
getting wacked together in March”*

Song for Crumb Girl

exit through the entry
my auriferous view
of the azure cities
that tantalize the tall

shadows stand like sentries
guardin' past the wall
in their backward pity
they alkaline the soil

lately feeling fenced in
mirages on the sod
still the busy people
pantomime the dogs

climbing through the entry
garden past the wall
still the busy people
never reach resolve

Hundred Mile House

hardly heard you enter

can't tell

has it been a long day?

tilt my head
and listen to sink water
dribble down your chin

lunar droplet
porcelain tub
cosmic wind

I draw you

a bath of high fantasy
and a hundred miles

the steam gallops towards you
the sweet wanderer,
the jewel-eyed haze
rising abreast with its lore

ghost finch soaring forth
lands on your shoulder
inviting you
to immerse yourself
in its mythos

in its
dried flower sky dwellers,
hallowed pools of oils,
salt crystal sprites,

and liquid worship
that knows no Sabbath

Far Red

-after Federico Garcia Lorca

In far red foothills, deep
inside, massive orb

thrums. Its surrounding stones are
doing rounds. Do you want to sing?

Here, the voice of fox
hums like a yawn on a train.

The den in your chest is home
to the red beast in front of you.

You've swallowed the stones
and now sing, inside, the head

of Orpheus. Here, your songs
are buried and rise from the Earth

like snake tongue. The sweet grass
on the hillside, extending far beyond view,

sobs dewdrops on the resting place.
Those mornings get quiet and weep

while night consoles them
from the pockets of the foothills' shade.

Acknowledgments

Cover design by Stone Collages
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