

Sprouts

by Darryl Price

I feel more like sprouts than cucumbers. Oh, hey. I came here to tell you something you already know, but maybe can't remember. Or maybe it's me who is remembering something I meant to say, but didn't. Oh, hey. There's alphalfa and mung bean. I love these skinny little vegetables. Snow pea. Oh, hey. I hear thunder, but I don't hear rain. That's just the way it goes, sometimes. The sun was out not too long ago. I feel more like moon than stars today. Oh, hey. Strange times or not, I'm glad I feel something more than just anything

with you. Why does it have to be so sad?
Oh, hey. I know they want me to be silent, but I couldn't choose to be that boring, would you?
I'm not in my cage carefully practicing my most inoffensive words to spill before them. I'd rather shine a light.
Oh, hey. I'm in the middle of doing something here. Another artpiece or something quite like it. Yeah. Don't get too excited. It's not about you. At least, not on purpose.
I feel more like Cranberries than Wilco, like tomato soup than salad. Oh, hey. I feel more like the wind

blowing the leaves at the tops of trees than the bird calling for a game of catch the seedpod with his sunny forest friends. I'm not planning on leaving, but it's still a wild world out there. And many good hearts get stolen from us all the time. Oh, hey.
I feel more like wearing my baseball cap than an appropriate hat. I've walked in these same comfortable shoes everyday
over a year now. Please don't go away. When you do I can't see out of my left eye for

shit. That's a metaphor I guess for something larger than

sea or sky. I don't live with regret. But I
do wish I could hear your voice. It's a good
voice. You could say something, anything and I would come
to look in upon you. Oh, hey. We are but
instantaneous sparks, set up by the larger flame. Oh, hey.
I guess by now you're wondering what the point of
all this wringing of the clouds might be. I think
you know. You've always known. But we are afraid. I
feel more like peanut butter than a jellyfish. Just wanted
to see if you are still paying attention. Oh, hey.

It's always been nice to know you are there. And
now I must pack up my belongings and be out
of here. I appreciate the shelter. I hope you appreciate
the song. Oh, and hey. Eat some sprouts for me,
will you? Goes good with grilled cheese. Thought I had
more to say, but maybe next time. These letters do
more than keep themselves seated in envelopes. They also wait
to hug you with words. Oh, hey. I've run out
of sentences to say to you. But it's okay. We'll
always have this one time and that one time, too.

Bonus poems:

Ship Beneath a Rug
by Darryl Price

It's only me and it's only you. The rest is just history
sitting on somebody's library shelf waiting to be discovered and
rehashed. With
a drink and a pipe. Until we learn to laugh again that
is. It's your stolen childhood they are talking about in hushed
whispers
above your sleeping head. They don't really care about us. And on
and on it goes. It's only me. I'm sorry that they did

this to you and I couldn't stop them. Forced you into their
menacing kitchens. Forced you to eat the raw open wounds with
them
over silly songs and stupid prayers. They did this to me, too.
Only I was pretending not to notice the blood on the family
shawl. You'd have to be an idiot not to notice the size
of those dark shoes sticking out of the corner by the oven.

That's where the fear of clowns comes in. It's always just some
sinister people in different disguises. Standing in places where they
don't really
belong. Much too close to certain people's ankles. John knew this
much
to be true but it made him bitter. I don't want to
be a bitter man. Takes up way too much of your
valuable and limited time. And leaves a bad taste in your mouth
besides.

Sorrow shouldn't always poison you in the heart forever. Pull the
damned
arrow out and get on with your life. There are things in
you that you do not need. That you never asked for. That
need to be emptied from your head right now. Stop waiting around.
We're already in it. It's only me and I am no good
at pretending to be someone else. That's what I tried telling them

at school, and at home, but they beat me to pieces anyway.
Hey. Don't worry. It's only me. Your friend. And we are somehow
still in the world's filthy greedy grasp. But. I've heard of the
brightness of the light that sits at the center of the seven
celestial walls. One second of looking upon it, just one and you
are completely blinded for several days. But afterwards you cannot
live a

cowardly lie. And that's only the beginning of the next amazing
voyage
out. You'll get there. We all will. It's only me. Only you.
We don't have to prove anything to anyone. I know they hurt
you with their fear and ignorance of Atlantis. It doesn't matter what
you call it. It's just another word for home. For soul. For
the love that is the essence of all beings. For sailing ships.

(People Walk By) Spewing the Seeds of Love
by Darryl Price

"I am not a gun."--The Iron Giant/Ted Hughes

Hate makes a pretty picture,
but it's not telling
you the truth. All the free
stuff in the world isn't
going to make you happy.
Hate makes a pretty

offer, but it's holding
back on the down side of
its town. All the free sex
in the world isn't going
to make you a real

man. Because in spite of

your lust for power and
money you need to learn
how to give in order
to truly be happy.
Hate makes a pretty good
pitch, but the hole in its

heart isn't worth the hole
in the head you'll be receiving
with its cold handshake.
All the free gasoline
is going to appear
on the final bill

with a neatly typed skull
and crossbones to boot. Hate
sounds good until you listen
to the lyrics. All
the free weed in the world
isn't going to take

you far enough away
from yourself to ever
forget the faces of
those you've harmed. Hate makes you
stupid and petty. Only
love adds the right amount

of everything to
everything else. Listen.
We're in this together.
That's just a biological fact.
Hate makes smog

instead of oxygen.

Hate fires the gun out of
fear, not out of hope for
something better for the
ones we love. Only love
remembers why we are
each doing all of this.

With Your Eyes Closed
by Darryl Price

you won't see the sky falling down. With
your eyes closed you will forget her different
face ever existed. With your eyes closed
the ground beneath your feet will feel eternal and
much softer than sleep. With your eyes closed
you won't notice the rope tied around their
feet in that otherwise sweet pastoral painting.
With your eyes closed that fact alone might cheer
you up. Your eyelids soak up some rays.
Your eyes don't do the heavy breathing. Eyes
don't need to know who cares. With your
eyes closed you can veto every new suggestion
for change for the better. With your eyes
closed you can listen to the wind without
listening to the words. Your eyes closed have
nothing to lose. With your eyes closed you
can order more wine and never have to
get up and go meet with someone
to talk about the ones who are gone. Closed
eyes look completely empty. With your eyes closed
the world can melt itself off each and

every map up until now. With your eyes closed you make your own plastic sins come true without grace or truth to get in the way. With your mindless eyes closed love is quickly ripped open. With your eyes closed nothing will grow, except apart. Nothing will remember how to fly. With eyes closed we break down and are lost. With your eyes closed you'll never be who you wanted. Food and a comfortable bed are nice, but you need a hug from a friend, not incompatible lies.

Animals in Cages
by Darryl Price

I used to work in bookstores.
Those days are over for me
now. I used to work in
great independent bookshops. The world has
mostly changed a lot since. It
has lessened the amount of mysterious

and deeply profound bookstore experiences. The
criminals behind this change have come
pouring out of the back rooms
crawling more like ants than flies.
Do we really need the sacred
image of a child's fallen and

abandoned icecream cone to begin to
care? You don't get out of
this life without making enemies. What
a shame. I used to work
in bookstores. Why couldn't you let

me have it when I needed

it? Why? I'm talking to you.
I used to work in bookstores.
What's that Donovan used to say,
Beatniks are out to make it
rich? I still hold the occasional
book in my hand. The thrill

is not gone. Last night I
saw a whale turn into a
swimming milkyway. Does it really matter
where? And back into a boy
again. And back into a girl
washed up on the shore somewhere.

Not lost, but almost found. Give
her time. It will dawn on
her. This is our chance for
love. This amazing everything. It begins
right where you are. Over and
over. Sea and sky. Star and

planet. Atom and atom. Molecule and
molecule. Sand and sand. Rain and
rain. Hand and hand. I used
to work in bookstores. Now I
don't. Unless you count the whole
world as one bookstore. Welcome in.

