

The August Heartbreak Suite of Sorrow's Poems

by Heather Fowler

Tell Me Another One About the Pond

I am still angry,
though I do not want to be,
that I now continue to write
love poems to the you,
to the silvered fibers
of your soul-- continue to weep--
in the style of a sobbing
willow, green, verdant,
bent into

the water I feed,

(whose mass I create)
which seems a lake below me,
my reflection, a pool
of tears spent for you,
a storm's worth,
a lake's weight,
creating my own reflection--
so I may see me still

in love with you,
who is not present--

engender all self-

same ripples
on my blurring water,
confuse my
standing order,
with spills or
self-perception,
with my every stooping act

of new devotion.

Incontinence

What's the difference in another hour?
A year will pass with little to no change.
There you are in your imagination's ripped
Stockings. There I am, mending them by stitch.

Do I kneel now, for your affection? Did I
Ever? I regret your tears do not move me
Nearly so much as your smiles. Crying is
An art of which you have perfected

Your practice, involuntary participation, remediation,
Yet should you smile, this is new, this is fresh—
This is desired. I will know how you love me

By how you smile. Other women live always

In your tears, but they are not with me.
And they are not this now.

Shock Wakes Up the Heart

My heart hurts as I miss you here.
This was your intention, I know.
And nor is my reaction unique.

You train women this way,
to love you and lose you
this gracefully. I wish I had

just one presence of fist
to partake in just one punch
to your solar plexus,

to your nose,
to your heart-- like
spiking electronic

equipment

used in ambulances.

Technician: If you feel no pain,

why should I?

Why should I

place the paddles

so gently, my love,

like a trained professional

on Salvation Road,

saying: Are we clear? No?

Clear? (Hit him again.)

No? Thought not.

Flatlines-----playing borrowed time,

to the tune of your next widow's

atonal silent weep.

* * *

No One Can

No one can convince us we are pretty
when the object of our desires does not dote.

Commend us to your next of kin, spread the
flesh feast of gorgeous on a laden viewer's table,

provide those who will follow our words like clocks,
provide the admiration of strangers, the distraction

of afternoon comparison. One who wants can give
and give and give--yet we seek that one soft word,

one telling glance, from the one who withholds
or unmans us from our strapping selfhood,

whose neglect spurs such ranges of self-hatred or love.
We live consumed by need for more. Or less.

Mutter: Yes. Please, please. Only to you
do we listen: Fail to speak to us again.

* * *

On the Necessary Absence of Cake

Let's pretend for one moment
that we don't want cake: white cake,
yellow cake, red velvet cake, cake with
carob or chips, cake in cups, cake in
to-go boxes with cream-cheese frosting
licked or saved on these hard edges of
cardboard. What we want is bread and
water, lukewarm water, stale bread,
because then we can dream of cake
without needing to possess it
with habit. And if cake is like men,
the bread will not fool us. And if manna is like

water, the love will not catch us, and if
we get used to this cakeless, mannaless

situation for long enough, we can be
free to decide cake does not exist, happy
to go it alone, gumming the barely edible
yeast, mixed hydrogen--because bread and
water are not those addictive personalities
we are--and our greed that can't be filled is the soul's
impending cavity, piercing sinus near the brain.
Tight forehead. Plaque to the heart.

I want no cake.
I want no manna, no love.
I want not to want these things long enough that
I, balling my bread in small palatable pieces,
forget full-well what they are
or that I may taste in them
some sweet difference.

This is the only way: Pass the irons.
Pass the water. Pass no sugar.
Pass, no exit. Pass my time
as a mercy, then
like the fondest baker
in this prison's kitchen,

in this world,
and for no reason,
let me wear the bland
uniform of unseen:
Let me by you,
delicately, while I sob-- love,
let me pass.

All I Wanted

Was to stop being
That sad girl
With too much memory.
Life obliged
With repetitions
Of crying shames
In shapes of men.

Guess I should have listened
To mother's endless
Recitations: Can't squeeze
Water
From those rocks,
Or granite
From your sponge.

How did I go so wrong,
Confusing
Those wet things
With hard things;
Guess I'll never know
What's what--with
What. Ignore me.

I'm a savage with
Want's hard desires,

Willing them soft
Where will will
Invariably fail--
Some one heart's
Impossible delusions.

A Simple Second Singer Relates

No one else matters.
Let's make that clear.
From the night to the day
There is simply one light
Or one absence, yours—same from
 The moon or the stars,
The sun or your table lamp.
How can it be so
Ill-advisedly shut off
As I miss you, in this
 Warm dark curtain of
Mental black? Yes, it is, Leonard
Cohen, the cracks,
The fissures,
Where my light comes in,

Abundant where
You are or have been. But you,
Let's be honest,
You are just singing
Your generic love song

As I am weeping mine,

The post-traumatic dirge,
Sent forth from numb
Vocal chords, as your own
benign accompaniment.

