

## Yoshino

*(Published in the Plum Creek Review)*

In early April I was a Yoshino cherry seed.  
I remember it distinctly.  
How the folds of my skin protected from the cold.  
I must have felt so alive.

## And Filling their Cores

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And filling their cores, the aptly-named  
empty suitcases, who had earlier that decade  
taught middle school Spanish and  
divorced at the lower docks,  
tightened ties and faced each other.

They stopped discussing  
and started sharing each other's  
ink stains, guiding their colossus  
along the hunt  
with arms of strung whites.

## Cupidon: On Adolescence

October: the leaves not yet inside the door  
we leant against its glass, the choral embrace  
warming our throats (our chattering knees)  
and you kissed me first, drinking me hollow.

November: I will only miss your best parts—  
uncapping us open, twisting us out, chase up  
and down the streetlamps fed a variable blueness  
will have that effect of vodka,  
rocking, and dulling the bulbs.

We should have taken the lakeside train and danced in Chicago.

This blueness, let us call her Winter Solstice,  
or Henrietta, is the factor of the generations;  
working class men culling the poultry dresses  
who can cook—the children miming, redbirds  
the apple trees rowing, into the clouds outsides  
torching, lifted in the coma of minor planets  
we tried the door. The leaves blew in and burnt off our fingerprints.

Henrietta: the only real memories of you are in bed,  
with your hair pulled back, daylight dressing your shoulders.

And how they said you were too dumb to be a grapefruit—  
your insides pink and wrapping us, their papers pinching  
hard the boom stick, round the maple and chewing it.  
You never came when we dressed up for holiday's Salem  
or Boston Commons. We hated you for that, and for  
your citrus gate, reminding me of lonely lips parting,  
letting in the waters. Solstice, your name is now Jaquelin.

Jaquelin: you are a butcher's mallet. Beat me until I empty.  
Fill a jar with me (to re-define our old closeness).  
And then there is this issue of remembering, as we were,  
how I invited you in and you scuffed the floors  
moved the furniture and left like that, the way you came.

That summer I promised we'd sleep beneath the moon.  
You wanted to remember that divine wholeness.  
There was this issue of fear.

### **The Three Lovers of Santa Inés**

were it not for their colors and complexions, their faces would have blown away  
    come december's storms  
were it not for their nativity, their earthiness, the rosaries of stone  
    would have brought them scoliosis by boat from the new world  
    their swollen stomachs wanting  
were they our sisters and brothers  
    our tables placed, we would welcome them, our chariots made  
    of winter and coal, and to keep us warm a sweet saffron patch  
    for mixing in with the others  
were you older then, you would have known  
    to hold your cigarette like you hold your woman  
were we the night and the moon, who would keep us  
    apart

## Trinkets from the Bazaar

*a sestina, almost*

You remind me of angels who  
 drink too much—wily, shapeless  
 things, always watching time go;  
*ker-plunk!* There drifts another  
 into solitary flow, still  
 as Pangaeian smoke trails.

Before bazaars, his father's feathers spread in trails  
 along the sunk-in air. Who-  
 ever built it loved it there, still  
 and caring as home should be, not so shapeless  
 as those the young souls stack atop another,  
 always watching time go;

*ker-plunk!* Watch him go!  
 'His 'scape faster than the old trails,'  
 one father said, 'a ways 'till oblivion,' said another,  
 an old-bearded poet, who  
 with his last and first good verse saved his shapeless  
 son still.

Now hold still.  
 This will only take one go.  
 Be a patient and you'll be a shapeless  
 trinket like before, spilling en-trails  
 across the universe of who-  
 knows-what, slipping from one asteroid to another

in the blink of a *ker-plunk!* And another  
 day you'll remember still,  
*all's well that end's well*, who-  
 ever you'll be that day, go-  
 ing off through Milky Way, spouting trails  
 of sparkles and shapeless

nights, or mutterings of shapeless  
 days. You'll remember another  
 time, the used-to-be trails  
 and the soon-to-come, still  
 as planets in the ways of things that go.

**there's a girl on the moon  
and she's been lost up there for years**

*(Published in Spiral Magazine)*

It was her birthday when gravity reversed.  
Waving past the window counting  
cloudy white heads that jumped the fence that

fell in when so many jumped it.  
And she went with the stars, the hundreds  
migrating East, the orbiting blue.

She is easy to find if you know her rotation.  
Times you spot her tied by the wrist  
to a strawberry zeppelin, kiting the surface

in search of home. Others she waits  
her feet in the emptied-out oceans.  
But the waves place in like atoms:

disperse (just once) into novas like rains  
that drop, deliver Sospita.  
Rockets and stars have gone over,

Tears of Saint Lawrence, seven cycles and  
in two hundred years will be statues  
commemorating the time

the moon buggy came, photographed  
the rock, flew off the sand and there she  
waded after, becoming smaller by the second.

Soon she'll have grown and be able  
to pick from the lunar branches  
and bathe all her own in the lunar waters

and orbit, too, and levitate in the cradle of space,  
(fearless) too. With milky ways on top.  
The forests and cities and oceans

out there.

## Bed Series

### HAMMOCK

Slid between our fingers, your fingers: to keep the moths from unraveling us in our sleep. By daybreak we met inside the folds to whisper each other apart, below us, the world ascending.

### DOUBLE

I tried to kiss you, but you thought I was trying to molest you so you threw me off.

### TWIN XL

At first you were the color red. Then around your horizons crept the blues and yellows, and I first saw summer in your hair. We slept like royals through the crashings out the window, the batteries exploding off the trees.

### FUTON

The animals are coming. One foot. Two. Three foot. Four. The animals are howling and the boys, drunk of the wine from the coolers, are hunting in the night. But we are safe here, in our corner by the closet. March us through dawn, dear embers.

### MOSS ON THE HILLSIDE

The first part of you she saw was your back. You could have been anybody. Could have been a father from school or the milkman. You were what she wanted then. She was what you wanted: wet steel in the afternoon. Welcome home.

## Cerebelladonna

*For Peter Black*

Greenhouse: He drank  
from canary grass roots, all  
worldly knowledge run dry  
a seaside orrery. Home.

Hot sound: he played canasta against  
all the king's men,  
living cantos, riding ventricles  
of rolled bleach paper that  
vanished on hardwood.

He says color lives at the world's edge,  
in his cerebellum, on stage  
with wasteland poesies,  
desert roses who hear  
what you say about them  
and say nothing back.

He says the grains of sand, self-  
observers, wait  
to be castled back on the winter beach,  
to plaster lawless solar systems  
(inner space).

When asked of  
embalmed poesies,  
desert roses, corpse  
chrysanthemums, He answers,  
'Later, they're gestating  
in the glycerin,' but  
only when asked.

## Rendezvous of Strangers

On the rail of the portico, with spring, between us  
a boy.

He swayed shoulder-to-shoulder, ribbed paperclips dropping out  
his pant legs.

Watching him move scared us, because  
he reminded us of us: older, younger each.

We asked about parents, and about the paperclips;  
he unraveled his golden curls and bounced them

and pulled on his pockets  
till the insides were out,

and paperclips dropped, like saffron sticks, and that said something  
about our pasts and our pigments.

Over the years, the air lifted him  
to standing.

In autumn, we asked who and why he was.  
My other in the wicker rocker, and me.

No answer.

Night came for the New Year, and we lay on the balcony,  
two boys and a man, the boards stuffed with fallen leaves—we slept.

Light snow, sunrise—  
the youngest woke me to say the other had gone. Where to

no one knows. He must have become a wrinkle and sunk away, said  
my new other, who picked from the white the colored clips and clipped the papers

the old man left,  
and ironed them flat with his palms, presented them.

Bank statements, one birth certificate, Polaroids, print of a Michigan license plate,  
and he asked what to do now. I didn't know, so we looked at each other.