

Selections from Rubric Refuted

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Cosmic Hypocrisy

Have I ever told you that
Once, I reached my arm
In the sky, to try
To pinch a distant star—
I wanted to squeeze it,
To secrete its sweat
And watch it drop from light-years away onto my tongue
Hope is funny that way,
Because my mouth is (still) empty
And I am (still)
Pinching
Each time my tongue turns
White with thirst,
I justify
A reason why it didn't work
Maybe I didn't pinch hard enough;
Maybe you've never been there—
You live on a different star.
Aching, I keep my arm raised
But I can't lie back all day,
So I work on blueprints
For telescopes, but
Never spaceships.
Say I found you. What, then,
Could I say? What before
You blind me, and burn me?
Yet, hope is funny that way.
Strange that I reach out, but withdrawal
Before contact.

And peculiar, too, that I both want you
and want me dead before I get you
That I'd prefer the blank cosmos
Over extra-terrestrial communication.

Structured

I am gonna sit here
In my Calvin Klein underwear
And eat this
whole. goddamn. pizza.
Dunked in white
Red dripping down my chin
In this queen-size fluffy blanket
I'll drink a Pepsi too
"Caffeine has a 12-hour half-life."
I do not give half a fuck.

I used to meal prep salads
Finely chop
celery,
cucumbers,
Grilled chicken

And I would fold oats into chocolate and peanut butter,
Like swaying wheat blades fold into soil rows bathed in sun

I don't know when I lost the time
To meet the sun as it started its daily transit
But I know I don't have celery
Or cucumber
Or grilled chicken, but

I have this pizza
bought from a gas station
and 40 sodas I stole from
an event I wasn't invited to
I'm eating this fucking pizza
And drinking this fuck-ass soda

The Oak Tree in my Front Yard

Doesn't

Yield,

Despite

The

Wind that

won't

Retract

It's scraping,

Cold

Fingers.

Have you ever had

the comparison drawn?

That, visually, a tree's branches

look like the lung's bronchi?

See, I don't buy it. Not one bit when I

breathe snow and feel mucus freeze.

How would it ever be a possibility, the

tree can survive these hellfrost winds?

Between cold coughs, I asked it,

"How do you manage 'till spring- not even

A coat of leaves to shield you?" and I

tripped over my answer, rushing back inside.

The girthy roots spend each season,

like the cold, scratching, digging deeper

Into soil. There are a thousand little

mouths, biting at the end of each root, sucking

nutrients and water beneath the crystal

scorched surface that my feet have not dug

Deep enough into, during my few

minutes, that I would have any

Chance of surviving

the winter, stern.

Write Poem Below:

I will write these
Happy words in
Vocabularies I know,
Scratching at ones
I hope to learn

~~

I will kill you. And twist
Your crude oil heart.
I will retrieve each cog
And listen to your filling lungs,
Steam engine windpipes
Heightening pitch
Until
Quiet.

~~

I will lay you, with a kiss on the forehead,
In the compost bin.
I will give you every burial right,
You've paid the price and earned such material decadence.
I promise you'll make the prettiest of flowers—
You deserve a turn at beauty

~~

I will not liken you
To Pluto, or mushrooms,
To ravens, or vultures,
To phoenix, or charcoal
I will forget these words
And appraise you for more than your function

~~

I will pesticide that rotten seed
Planted in your memory-soil
I will convince your bark to grow less dense, less rigid.
I will convince Summer to stay longer
And render you porous and flourishing

~~

I will find and flush every vial
Of black salt,
Remove from wall every Christ-crucified-cross

And dismantle every altar you made.
I will search for guides to tell them
No more.

~~

I will find the flame itself
And rehabilitate it.
A fire *can just* warm you.
You don't need to burn and
You never needed purification,
You, melting thing.

~~

And when I've renounced every
Metaphor, every
Abstract visual, every
Scientific diagram, every
Spiritual school of thought,
I will be left speechless until
I learn the right words you
Need to hear.

And until I do,
I will kiss you.
Fast and slow.
Soft and hard.
Dry and wet.
With pools and embers in my eyes.
Until I find the way
You need to be caressed.
I will write *i love you* until it is all you know to be true,
Even though I don't yet know these words' meanings.

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