

Poetry Series

mimi brown
- poems -

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Constant Leaving

You speak to the brides
through the cold thin air
of treason,

betraying them by your
constant leaving.

And each white woman
accepts your sport
as love,

the winnings returned
ten times over.

The golden cup you drink from
whispers 'victory'

over virginal evasiveness;

the shy advances of
a woman child;

the desperate moods of
a dancer;

the forgotten passions of
a sister.

You betray each one
and leave them
so complete.

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Haiku: For A Soldier

I missed you today.
Yesterday, your footprints were
found in the gray sand.

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Kiki

The town square was tepid in the early morning light.
Tea for two and a squirrel begging for food.
Serenity transposed on a single blade of grass.
A moment's pause in a possible lifetime.
Conversations rounded the trees as the cars
started their race to work, school and every place
that was not where we were.

Innocent enough, how the words carefully spoken
mingled with the changing traffic lights.
And something deeper, rising from our
mutual but separate ideas of where to go next.
The flutter of a bird wing and a heart wishing
for more or less the same thing.

At full day break, the moment passed into an
eternity of regrets and future sorrows.
We rose from our park bench, discarding
the now empty cups and walked out of the
sunlight wondering what happened and
would we ever feel that way again.

For E.C. with gratitude and love

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Missed Opportunity

Cool air and a ripe apple lie forgotten
on the bed of summer.

A chestnut orb, prickly piece of
sabotage, finds my step as I transverse
the too overgrown garden.

How did this season end without
my noticing?

The smell in the wind, almost caustic;
it snaps my head around and I see
below the used gooseberry bush
remnants of the care rendered in
spring.

The heirloom sweet roses wilt and
feather the ground with June's
party dresses. Their dance cards
are full and I have
scarcely lifted my eyes to
witness the memories.

Autumn waits now at the back gate.
The tang of a step taken off down the road.
In my negligence,
I have no choice but to follow.

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Moving Day

Time has moved in, bringing his
dusty cloak and a steamer trunk.
With a creak unnoticed before,
he lifts the brassed lid high
to see a jostle of postcards
and faded photographs;
bits of rock and a satin ribbon.
A bitter scent wafts from
the frayed edges of garments
worn in happier moments.
Days of penny candy and
the fruitman calling his wares;
apples, bananas...ripe cherries!
The items inside wadded up
like old newspapers; a whisper,
a sigh and the strains of music
no one has heard in years.
Two rings, a book much loved and
a jar of sunlight speckled with sand.

His hourglass lies shattered
at the bottom.

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Nightwatch

I wait at night
for the man to come.
Tired of daylight dawning.
Eyes blinded wide
in deep resistance.
Warm coffee, acrid lips
bitter lung cannot
breathe a breath.
I wait at night
for the man to come;
the eyes have lost the colors
of darkness to blue,
too red to see.

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Poem Whore

Pick me, she thought, as the poet's eyes scanned the audience.
I will listen as you play your dulcimer and recite
the words I wish I had written.

Choose me, she thought as the poet invited her up
for coffee and hooky on the school calendar.
I will buy you food to feed your skinny soul.

Have you opted for me? , she thought, as he handed
her the carefully written poem,
I will cherish every word as gold.

Pick me, Erato, I need you to be my poem whore for once.

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The Beach House

The summer we spent at the beach
left us far from where we started.
You were content to spend your days,
nights, in quiet somnambulism.
Spending endless days without
waking or caring or seeing the
turbulent waves slowly pulling
the sand from under our feet.

While I spent my days walking the dunes
looking for driftwood and shells,
sweet pea flowers and scrub pines.
The days were cool and the seagulls
called their warning.
They should have been whispering
my name, that and goodbye.

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The Slip

During deep discussion it slipped out;
the tiger long caged, the skeleton in the closet.
A secret so hidden, it's cobwebbed form
floated unheard for seconds.
Suddenly, the light grew brighter and
there, on his face, the knowledge he has
always had became truth.
Unable to continue, he walked from the room,
his shoulders sagging as he went.

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To A Woman Gone

The house on the corner was empty.
When I passed by, there were no
reminders of us having lived
on the third floor with the slanted
ceilings and the mice.
I do not know how long you stayed
after I left so abruptly
with half my books and all my love.
A friend said you moved to the ocean.
Another said you may have died.
Still another claimed you moved
to Arizona where the air
helped your lungs.
All I know is this:
the windows were dark,
the wind chased me down the block,
and you were gone.

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Vito, Circa 1902

You went to the
top of the mountain
where the trees stood
aside to give you
space to dream.
Fir covered and rough,
where your fingers
have worked the soil
for centuries.
Long days working
the sweat from your brow,
your hands raw and
dirt encrusted,
but the fruit as pure
as your valley.

Now what comfort can I give?
Your mountain bare,
the trees naked,
your eyes closed.
All I have is
your name,
my life,
this poem.

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