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Smoked Blood and Lavender

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SMOKED BLOOD AND LAVENDER

A Thesis

by

DIANA L. ELIZONDO

Submitted to the Graduate College of
The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
In partial of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

May 2016

Major Subject: Creative Writing

SMOKED BLOOD AND LAVENDER

A Thesis
by
DIANA L. ELIZONDO

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May 2016

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ABSTRACT

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My project is a demonstration of how the Gothic genre can still have an influence in contemporary poetry as well as how the traditional forms can still be effective when developing diction and originality. This project is a collection of poems that addresses a range of issues in society and politics, as well as the deconstruction of the notions of romance. In the introduction to my thesis, my poems are analyzed stylistically, as well as the themes they represent and the sources that influenced them. Furthermore, my poems are divided in five sections and each focuses on a theme that the poems in that section share. The first section focuses on how trivial love can be, the second contains poems about the dark side of nature, the third has poems about my personal life, the fourth focuses on social issues and the final section contains poems based on my dreams.

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“Modern Lilith” is published in UTPA’s *The Gallery 2012*. “Therapy” is published in UTPA’s *The Gallery 2015*. “They Are Coming” is published in *La Noria 2013*. “The Circus,” “Their Reign Ends,” and “That Shadowy Thing” are published in *Along the River 2: More Voices from The Valley 2012*. “Vampire Kingdom,” “Jack O’ Lanterns,” “Driving through Spotlights,” and “Before I Paint” are published in *Along the River 3: Dark Voices from The Valley 2014*. “Chatty Skeletons” is published in *Yellow Chair Review 2015*.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

My project is a demonstration of how the Gothic genre can still have an influence in contemporary poetry as well as how the traditional forms can still be effective when developing diction and originality. This project is a collection of my poems that addresses a range of issues in society and politics, as well as the deconstruction of the notions of romance in everyday life. Since my poems are influenced by personal experience and the tones are morbid and dark, many people would categorize them in the Gothic genre. I like to avoid addressing my poems with only that label because the style has been considered as part of genre fiction, which does not have much regard in the literary field. However, I find that writing my poems that are not in that style to be difficult because it is the writing genre I am most comfortable and familiar with. Thus, I am obliged to describe the Gothic genre for this project and how using its elements enables me to deconstruct or criticize the issues I like to address.

The Gothic genre originated in the late eighteenth century “with the publication of *The Castle of Otranto*, where Walpole expressly made terror his ‘principal engine’ (Davison 29) and was followed by works by other Gothic writers like Mary Shelley and Edgar Allan Poe. The Gothic genre mostly focuses on horror and the supernatural as a response to the historical, political and sociological contexts of the late eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth century. The Gothic genre also borrows some of the elements of Romanticism by focusing on the importance of the sublime, which consists of overwrought emotion and provokes ecstasy in the

readers, and the free expression of the artist's feelings, characteristics I use in my poems.

The Gothic genre also uses sullen language to express gloom and horror and supernatural events. Since some of my poems contain commentaries on society, the use of the elements of the gothic genre enhance their intensity in stating the atrocities and repression taking place in the system we live in. The elements I use include, "shocks, supernatural incidents and superstitious beliefs set out to promote a sense of sublime awe and wonder which entwined with fear and elevated imaginations" (Botting 41). Although the genre has been reduced to a sub-category in contemporary fiction, it still has some influence to this day. My poetry, for instance, contains the traits of the Gothic genre, but they are modernized by using the forms of contemporary poetry.

My poems are not only influenced by poets like Edgar Allan Poe and Edna St. Vincent Millay, but also by contemporary poets like Dana Gioia, who aided me in modernizing the gothic traits in my poems. Although Gioia's poems are not categorized in the gothic genre, they do contain themes revolving around death and sadness. Some of my poems are socially and politically themed so using the traits of Gothic literature helps enhance the imagery and exaggerates my approach to these subjects in my poetry.

My poems are written in free-verse, but also in traditional forms that follow rhyme schemes or a regular meter. My poems are also brief and are mostly written in a language common in human speech. The traditional forms used in my poems consist of decima and haiku, and other forms like fractal and list poetry. Furthermore, some poems, written in first person, are created in different personae and some based on my experience. There are some poems that are written in first person based on the aspects of myself such as my identity, family and other events that occurred in my life. For example, "Limbo" is based on my experience in high school where I was barely noticed by anyone throughout those years. The speaker is not a persona because it

focuses on what I went through in those years at high school.

However, there are other poems written in first person that don't connect with me, but are created in different personae instead. For instance, "Sort of Gratitude" is one of the poems that is written in first person narrative, but is not based on my life. Since I have no experience at being in an abusive relationship, the speaker is a persona I created from the stories I heard from people who have been in that situation. I use what I learn from those stories and summarize it in a poetic form.

The first section of the thesis, "Ripping a Heart in Two," deconstructs the notion of love poems by addressing how trivial love can be as well as the negative results from it such as heart break and betrayal. "Modern Lilith," for example, retells the myth of Adam's first wife Lilith. In my poem, instead of being rejected by Adam and God for being assertive, Lilith chooses to leave Adam. I've gained inspiration for "Modern Lilith" from "Love is not All" by Edna St. Vincent Millay. In Millay's poem, she demonstrates how love can be trivial by listing what love can't do with lines like, "Love is not all: it is not meat nor drink / Nor slumber nor a roof against the rain; / Nor yet a floating spar to men that sink" (Millay). My poem not only points out how Lilith doesn't need to validate herself with another, but being independent doesn't make her a monster when she states, "humans aren't the enemy nor the reason." Furthermore, the poem can be seen as a feminist piece because it focuses on a woman who doesn't need a man for a sense of fulfilment. My poem is written in free verse, because like Lilith who refused to conform to social conventions, I wrote my poem without following any rhyme schemes or a regular meter.

Another poem from the same section, "Useless Thing," does not list the things love cannot do, but instead it explains how having a heart can leave a person vulnerable. For instance, my poem states how, "A heart's purpose is to shatter in a sadist's sharp, hungry fist / ripping a

heart in two with a twist” which presents a very strong image of heartache. I also used the decima form to create rhythm and motivate me to develop creative methods to select diction. The form consists of “ten line stanzas in octosyllabic meter with four rhymes in various patterns” (Finch 156). Furthermore, the decima is traditionally used in Spain from romantic pieces so it also adds a sort of irony in my poem because even though the poem is written in the traditional pattern of *abbaaccddc* and has ten lines, its theme is anything but romantic.

While these two poems address the trivial and painful nature of love, “Claimed” is a poem that focuses on the insidious nature of seduction. The poem is written in iambic meter that helps to create subtlety in the narrative displayed in these lines, “Our fingers entwine as mad lust rears,” and “Your loss has become our victory.” The poem’s tone is inspired by Robert Mezey’s “The Lovemaker” in which he uses diction to create a combination of a sensual and ominous tone such as, “I have felt / desire take my part, / but lacked your constant fault / and something of your art” (Mezey). Like Mezey’s poem, mine suggests that sexual desire needs to be fulfilled but at the same time the act can also be seen as manipulative or one with dubious consent.

“Your Cage” is a poem about how using sexual pleasure can blind someone from realizing they are in an abusive, unloving relationship. It is a response to the popularity of the novel *Fifty Shades of Grey*. The sestina poem has six words that are repeated in each stanza to reflect how the abuse goes in a cycle with lines like, “Your kind words helped me forget common fears / And my humanity when enslaved by sessions of lust. / My will’s gone when I was placed in your cage.” The length of the poem demonstrates how long it takes for the narrator to realize they were deceived into withstanding the abuse in exchange for pleasure. The poems address the cynical view of how love can be unnecessary and even deceiving.

Not only do my poems deconstruct the ideal themes of love, they also express the

macabre view of nature. Most of the poems in “Cloaked in Morbid Attire,” present nature in a morbid or a dark tone, especially when the topics have to do with the things that occur at night or how Autumn possesses a chilling atmosphere. Many people have the fear of what is lurking in the wilderness and the poems of this section exaggerate that. “Nightly Theatre” is a haiku about the noises heard at night when owls hunt their prey, sounding like, “Reenactments of murder.” While the Buddhist version of the haiku depicts nature as pure, the Christian version of haiku “evinces a sense of nature that is fallen,” (Finch 218) and the Christian form supports the gothic tone used in the poem by depicting the dark side of what occurs in nature where animals survive by taking away the lives of other creatures.

“The Grackle” is a prose poem, a hybrid form, which is a mixture of the elements from poetry and prose and contains, “the language of the everyday-but a poem is something else again. A poem is language-as-art-object, something set on a pedestal, meant to be viewed or read” (Alexander xxviii). “The Grackle” is inspired by another prose poem called, “The Chameleon at Home” by Duane Ackerson that is also a character piece that gives human characteristics to an animal by how it acts and thinks. My prose poem addresses the aspects of the grackle, presenting it as a poor man’s raven with lines such as, “The grackle prefers searching for scraps of bread and fried bits of chicken since it lacks taste for leftovers from decomposing bellies.” The grackle is portrayed in a passive, pitiful light for lacking the dark, frightening traits. While the raven provokes a sense of melancholy, the grackle can’t be intimidating like the raven.

Unlike the other two poems, “The Caretaker” is modeled after a writing exercise instead of a poetic form. The exercise used for “The Caretaker” is called “animal words” in which the poem is written from the point of view of an animal without mentioning the sound it makes or its

features, but the animal is evoked or described through its actions and personalities. The narrator in the poem is a crow living in a cemetery who sees itself as a self-assigned caretaker as it says, “Though I can’t stop all trespassers or fulfill the garden’s needs, / I’m always searching for more carved names to remember.”

The concept of the poem, “November,” is based on my assumption on how Thanksgiving doesn’t get as much attention as Halloween and Christmas and the atmosphere in that month doesn’t feel special or exciting. “November” is about the nature of November and how it is average compared to October and December as it mentions, “Darkness flees yet confronting mortality remains, / Orange tears have fallen to the earth / And air is freezing, but still no bleach / To whiten all the surroundings.” The poem’s tone is bleak as it mentions, “November removed the shrouds of horror, / And is still bare of winter robes,” to suggest how November is a reminder of Halloween being over and Christmas is more than a month away. November acts like a pause between two popular holidays. The nature themed poems depict how people view natural things such as animals and the night’s atmosphere and associate them with the things they fear, such as predators and death.

The next section “Darkness is My Reflection” has confessional poems that reflect my identity and the struggles I have faced. For example, “That Shadowy Thing” is a free verse poem that states how I view my gender identity as well as the difficulties caused by a society that lacks knowledge or concern towards the notions of gender. Even though the media and the internet seem to be focusing on issues of gender and there is an increased awareness of “gender neutrality” and “trans-gender,” I was lacking knowledge on the wider aspects of gender at the time I wrote the poem. Although I’m labeled female, I don’t see myself as one nor do I see myself as male and I explain it by questioning the things I lack such as, “Where is the ring to slip

into a lover's index? / Where is the key to unlock the sacred chest? / Where is Medusa's head to petrify the men?" I also state in the final stanza that I have no gender and see myself as a silhouette that "only arouses fear and paranoia." Not only does the poem address my gender identity, but also how I feel inhuman for not having gender due to the repression caused by society that insists the individual can only be either male or female, thus resulting in a gender identity crisis.

"Bleached Blood" is another poem about my identity, this time concerning my ethnic background. The poem is about how even though I'm Mexican American and I have sympathy for other Mexicans who faced discrimination, I never experienced discrimination directly or celebrated any Mexican holidays as I mentioned, "I'm annoyed, never torn by the blinded scale that favors prejudice, / I obsess over Death without offering meals to my deceased loved ones, / no one in my family ever did." I'm aware of the hardships that other Mexicans are going through, but I never knew what the experience was like since I've never had to struggle to maintain my right to stay in the United States and it makes me feel that I have been neglecting my heritage. Although I'm not pressured to be Mexican American, I still attempted to identify the Mexican culture by learning its history, legends and following the news regarding the issues of Mexican immigration. Furthermore, my lighter skin color and English, which is my first language, discourage me from identifying myself as Mexican-American. This is reflected in the lines, "Camouflaged well in Great Grandfather's European blood, / I'm always in white armor to block false accusations and gunshots." I feel that the way I look and talk cause me to be very distant from my heritage and prevent me from being depicted as a Mexican American.

"What Happened so Far" is modeled after Deborah Harding's poem called "How I Knew Harold" that lists the dates with a few lines that explain what happened in those times. While

Harding's poem is not in chronological order, the timeline in my poem progresses from 1996 to 2013. Unlike the other poems, "What happened so Far" is less morbid in tone and there are a few humorous lines, "Around 1998, I don't recall anything interesting happened that year. Whatever it was, it wasn't important anyway." Humor, though not common, is also associated with the gothic genre with examples like Robert Browning's poems that are regarded for having dark humor and Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* that satirizes the gothic genre.

"Gothic Nature" focuses more on my personality and interests than my life experiences as it discusses the Gothic subculture I associate with. The poem is inspired by an essay I wrote for a cultural studies class in which I explain the influence and significance subcultures have on society. I chose Goth as the main example for that topic. The poem is also written in list form because it consists of lines and stanzas that are all connected with the one idea or theme. The form also organizes the narrative by replacing hierarchy with diversity as a structural principle which makes the explanation of the subculture simple to understand, especially when it comes to the notion of what the Goth culture should represent.

The fourth major section of my thesis, "A Country of Graves," contains poems that focus on political and social issues. The elements of gothic poetry advance the imagery and metaphors to portray those issues in a negative light. For example, "Vampire Kingdom" is a free-verse poem that uses the traits of vampires to create an allegory of how the American government and its politicians repress the people with lines like, "They hold our existence in sickly pale hands / Never spare the weakest of society / Predators in suits and deceiving smiles" and "Spitting lies at their prey from both sides." Not only do these poems focus on the repression caused by the government, but they also focus on how society maintains control over people through television.

For example, “The Circus,” displays how the news shown in the television has an impact on the viewers. The poem also uses allegory, but closely follows the example of Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Conqueror Worm” by using the elements of strong diction and narrative. In Poe’s poem, he uses strong and direct diction to intensify the horrific images like, “And much of Madness, and more of Sin, and Horror the soul of the plot” (Poe 65) and “In human gore imbued” (65). Poe also used narrative in his poem about angels watching a horrifying play of mimes being eaten by a worm, which is an allegory for the dark aspect of human history.

Like Poe’s poem, “The Circus” uses narrative to tell about the gruesome acts performed in the circus tent and how the spectators have been seeing them over and over again. The events taking place in the poem are an allegory to what we are exposed to on television such as mass shootings, murders and reality shows with lines like, “fire starters, psycho gunners, whorish clowns and chimps in suits that sling mud at one another.” While most of the poems from the fourth section are narrative driven, “Never Ending” is very abstract. This poem lacks narrative compared to the other poems as it addresses the horrors of war and drug dependency. The poem had to be shortened because it makes the message more effective when the poem ends with, “Nothing ceases or changes. / Everything keeps descending, / never ending.”

“La Llorona” is a poem based on a Mexican legend about a woman who killed herself after drowning her children and her ghost wanders around the river to look for them. In my poem, however, the legend is used as a metaphor for the struggles the Mexican immigrants face in supporting their children. As mentioned earlier, I’ve been following the news and events regarding the issues of immigration and using that information for my writing. My poem describes how the mother wanders, “Every night to search in vain / For the right amount to send her back.” While La Llorona legend is stating that the mother can’t reunite with her children

because of her sins, my poem states how the mother can't reunite with her children until she can earn enough money to do so. The legend of La Llorona is a good parallel to the issues of immigration because it portrays the separation of loved ones due to the situations that are keeping them apart as the poem states, "She'll never find happiness / When she can't cross back to her home / To unite with her loved ones."

"Screaming Heads of Clay" is the final section that contains poems that are influenced by my dreams recorded in my dream journal. The dream poems are separated from my personal poems because my dreams don't directly reflect my personal life and have no conscious impact on my identity, but they do potentially possess the gothic elements that reside in the horrific and dark imagery inspired by my dreams. I select a few sentences from my journal and add some lines to them, making them into poems. For instance, "Walking Through" is based on a nightmare I had where I was walking past demonic looking people and witnessing terrifying sites such as, "Burned corpses bound in chairs and stools." I used my dream and some references to Dante's *Divine Comedy* to write my version of traveling through the first circle of Hell. I also gained inspiration from Agnes Wathall's poem, "Sea Fevers" in which she made references from "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." She addressed how she is different from the main character and also contains samples of enhancing imagery in some lines like, "the skeleton ship tosses" (Wathall) instead of using an average line, "the ghost ship tosses." In my poem, I made references to *Dante's Divine Comedy* with lines like, "The tail coils itself to decide where the souls should descend." Furthermore, instead of being a witness to the judgment made for the sinners like Dante, I'm one of the sinners, who waits, "for the tail's position to state my fate."

"Iron Dragons" is a fractal amplification poem that is written with fragmented lines and the "Diction, surface textures, irregular meters, shifts of genre, tonal variations, and punctuations

are regarded as defining formal elements” (335) to make the narrative blurry and dreamlike. The form is helpful when expressing the discontinuity and fragmentary nature of dreams and combines several images from every dream I had to make a poem. The stanzas are structured to look like an hourglass which parallels with the repeated lines about the sands.

Like “The Grackle,” “Journeys” is a prose poem except it focuses on dream like imagery and the narrative is a bit surreal yet concrete when discussing about the dream sequences and nightmares that are encountered throughout the journey such as, “vain dolls with necks stretched up to the clouds who want to remold me to their unoriginality.” Like the other dream themed poems, “Journeys” is inspired by fragments of what I can remember from my dreams and are combined into a prose poem while adding a little plot into it. The dream poems have little or no focus on communicating a message, but there are some dream poems that reflect my subconscious and how it addresses how I felt towards certain things such as encountering stressful moments in my life. However, the dream poems belong in a different section because the dreams that impacted them are responses from the subconscious and the personae in the dream poems are only created to set up a story around the vagueness of the dream sequence. The aspects of the dream poems are what separate them from the ones that focus on politics and my personal life because they are inspired by my direct views and consciousness.

“Lost in Rome” is a prose poem about a dream I had where I found myself in a European city while, “The rain pours and fills the edges of every street and road as I tried to find my way out of Rome.” I didn’t know where the dream took place and I only recognized the buildings being European and old so I made the poem about being lost in the rain in Rome. Since I can’t recall why I wanted to leave the city, I simply added some details to fill out the blanks to explain the sense of being unwelcomed by stating, “I wander further down the alleys, but I’m still

surrounded by Rome's towering fangs that threaten to devour me. There is no one around as I walk in the endless showers and feel the Roman disdain following me."

The Gothic genre and traditional forms can still have an influence in contemporary poetry as well as be effective when creating diction and originality. Using the aspects of the gothic genre and the Romantic Movement in my poetry helped me to not only create the intense tone, but also helped send the message across in deconstructing the ideology of romance and demonizing the social conflicts even further. Both the gothic genre and the Romantic are associated with using language to form overwrought emotions and the sublime to provoke a sense of pain and tragedy in the themes of deconstructing love. They also provoke a sense of horror in the theme of addressing political issues by taking acts of injustice and exaggerating them to make those occurrences people are used to seeing as atrocious as they are supposed to be.

The reason my writing is mostly influenced by the macabre is the same reason why horror movies are mostly themed driven. Sometimes you need to scare the audience into the realization that life is not fair or even safe for everyone. My poems address issues of identity conflicts, and for that reason will be relevant to the lives of many readers. In my experience of writing, I learned that I shouldn't be discouraged from writing a style I'm most comfortable with and instead embrace what I want to write and reinvent the elements from the gothic genre. I also learned how writing traditional forms of poetry can help challenge and develop word choice and language.

CHAPTER II

RIPPING A HEART IN TWO

Modern Lilith

No man has made a claim on me
no longer young and still not tamed
and I intend to stay that way.

Call me a reject, I couldn't care less,
it is I who chooses isolation, not Fate.
I prefer to be a free spirit than to be a pampered servant.

I'm not condemned nor a mistake,
Nor do I ask several demands,
I just choose not to have a master.

Although I seem inhuman,
a demon drinking infant blood,
I don't need carnage for sustenance or for vengeance.

Unlike the succubus, I have no grudge,
humans aren't the enemy nor the reason.
I have no use for detours in my path.

I would rather spend my life searching,

Than have another being offer answers.

Love is substitution for the slothful.

Thus I decline my assigned position

and leave my intended husband to another.

Useless Thing

A heart's purpose is to shatter
In a sadist's sharp, hungry fist,
Ripping a heart in two with a twist,
Then once more to piles of tatter
And drop pieces as they clatter
On the floor, emotional gore.
The body becomes cold and sore
Covered with thick stitches and dark scars
Blissful joys will be felt no more,
Eyes dimmed like dusk bleak without stars.

Your Cage

Can't tell if it was love or lust
That pulled me by the neck
When you dragged me with your leash.
Your hunger brought great thrills and fears,
Turning my needs to eternal flames
As I whimpered for more, inside your cage.

I used to kneel when you breathed down my neck,
I used to crawl whenever you pulled that leash,
I used to enjoy how your lies soothed the flames
And pain that would fill anyone with deep fears.
I used to feel content when you locked me in your cage,
Blissful lust.

I once believed pleasure existed in flames
And love lived itself in the bruises of my neck
Whether from your fingers or from your leash.
Your kind words helped me forget common fears
And my humanity when enslaved by sessions of lust.
My will was gone when I was placed in your cage.

Deceived by your gestures and acts of lust,
I was convinced I was addicted to your flames,
Punishments and strangulations from your leash.
I believed my home was inside your cage
Where I was protected from reality and fears.
Submissions rewarded with jewels around my neck.

But I finally see the bars of your cage,
Finally feel the aches placed on my neck,
And see the ugliness behind your caresses and lust.
I became less than human because of your leash,
As my skin turned to ash because of your flames.
Now my arousal is reduced to real fears.

Pleasure can't distract me from my imprisonment in your cage.
Your sadism can't be hidden anymore by divine lust
And caresses no longer soothe scars inflicted by flames.
Can't ignore your teeth stained from kissing my neck
All along, you were the source of my fears.
I never again want to be held by your leash.

Not fooled by the diamonds encrusted on your leash,
Nor the velvet cushioned inside the cage,

I won't go back, burning in those flames.

Her Infernal Prose

Was it depraved having his eyes look up at me? Different position, but still impaled with his heat. It is to Adam, who pointed at the flower bed.

Lie back down, he ordered, but I disobeyed. I kicked his loins repeatedly before leaving him in unfulfilled agony. First man denied by me.

I exited the so called paradise, searching for home beyond divine borders. The other land is not approved in His image, but is luxurious for a damned queen. My domain to rule, not serve.

Thriving in carnal joys and pleasures, I receive gifts from numerous lovers. All beneath me, satisfied every night.

I'm renounced from scriptures, but reminisced for female rebellion. Freedom makes the woman more human, not less.

Echoed For Years

Your voice echoed for years

That once brought me great contentment

In my mind,

But hearing you now brings fears.

In my mind, your voice echoed for years.

Seeing you caused joyful tears,

Now your absence makes them signs of torment.

Your voice echoed for years

That no longer brings contentment

In my mind.

A Sort of Gratitude

I'm left with mementos of tragedy
On my skin, all black violets.
I've grown tired of being your conquest
With every bit you've taken from my flesh.

I was drowning in my own dark waters
While fading away from the inflictions
That filled inside my bruised lungs.

Finally tossing the rusty chain and deluded loyalty,
I'll never wish you well nor acknowledge you again,
Though I might reminisce the moments of naïve bliss
Conjured by your masking charms and fibs.

After all, I'm grateful for what I learned
From years of your hellish sessions.
Love is a word used for traps
And I'm carrying this heavy lesson,
With a grudge and bitterness,
But thank you none the less.

I Hate You, I Want You

I

Hate

Your

Ignorance,

Arrogance,

Nonsense,

Lack of conscience,

And masses of madness.

But

I

Want

You

To

Moan,

Groan,

Shriek,

Scream,

Bleed,

Plead,

And beg

For

Bliss

A kiss,

More,

Mourn,

Whine,

Cry

For

Relief,

And mercy.

I

Hate

You

But,

I

Want

You.

Claimed

Trapped in velvet spreads and hovering shade,
Your resistance has been drowned in sealed lips,
As logic fades while every fabric's torn to strips.
Your pleasure's denied by years of learned shame.

Your pride is swept away by each caress,
Your freewill broken from sensual stress,
Our fingers entwine as mad lust rears,
And need grows and shows in strained tears.

Now fulfilled into a form of glory.
Your loss has become our victory.

Rose

She's a model of natural beauty
With small petals of soft, apple red
And formed by a wise, caring mother.

She's snatched away by your ravenous hands
that cut and trim for sensual use.
You abandoned her to display her shame.

Don't "dear" me and offer such mockery.
Processed honeyed words won't bring access to me
And I reject your poetic lies with flowery fragrance.

A hunter presenting broken trophies,
Your primal intentions hide behind those roses.

A bouquet of your many victims
And I'll never be added to them.

The Way You Love Me

You showed love through orders
To keep me in your arms
And bound by your ring.
You loved that I cried for joy,
You said I looked lovely with tears.
You loved me when you were satisfied,
But hated me when you were not.
You loved how I crawled and begged
Even when you were not aroused.
Crying, begging, submitting
And dissatisfaction brought
Nothing but purple tattoos.

That Empty Promise

Giving me a thousand roses

Doesn't help me forget

They will wither away.

Offering me real diamonds

Doesn't convince me

They will shimmer forever.

Feeding me the best chocolates

Doesn't assure me

Our moments are always sweet.

Telling me you love me

Doesn't stop me from

Counting the times you don't.

Always

You said “always” whenever you vowed

To me like you meant it.

You added “always” to your

Delivered gifts to be convincing.

When I hear you say “always,”

You’re only saying in bluff.

You claimed we’ll always be whole

With arrogance in a bouquet.

Your “always” are never close

To the truth or to your heart.

Your “always” is a false dedication

I’ll never believe and accept.

CHAPTER III

CLOAKED IN MORBID ATTIRE

The Grackle

Like Snow White's stepmother, its eyes are shaded in jealousy. Bright green eyes can't inflict fear like the ones in soulless brown. All black, but small, slim and lame, the grackle can't terrify or inspire like the raven from up north. The grackle makes cracked whistles instead of echoed caws, signaling grim times ahead. The grackle prefers searching for scraps of bread and fried bits of chicken since it lacks taste for decomposing organs. A scavenging nuisance is not suited for the role of a psychic undertaker.

Nightly Theatre

Owls scream, cries echo

Reenactments of murder

Scenes rehearsed each night.

Death in Wilt

Pink rose once divine,
but time has drained her petals
now wilted and gone.

Autumn

Summer's sobbing heavy tears. The heat banished from the earth by chilling breeze howling in triumph. Leaves painted brown and red fall to their deaths at a graceful pace unveiling large hands piercing out like the living dead. Pumpkins sold to sadists as the latest sacrifices: insides ripped out, scarred and burned. Corpses displayed on porches, warding off spirits.

Joys of life fade throughout the land, nostalgia and departed visitors rise from graves, showering the living with senses of awe and dread. Amusing screams and iconic boogeymen plague in mortal memories; the bewitching season will soon arrive. Darkness shrouds early across the sky. The moment of worship draws near.

Jack O' Lanterns

Pumpkins aren't convenient enough these days

No damned spirit would fear a wee flicker.

Ridding ghosts demands greater craftsmanship.

A bottle grenade flung inside

Glass eyes and wide mouth lighten by ember.

A quick procedure in making wooden faces shine.

There are other hollow canvases needing to be filled.

True beauty comes from orange and red blaze.

Such masterpieces created once a year.

Every sidewalk decorated with giant bright smiles.

The Moon Abandoned Us

The moon abandoned the suburbs, leaving us with our fears. The moon doesn't look over his shoulders when the light barely lights the long roads and street corners while small eyes shine from the darkest distance. The moon hides his disdain, powdered face that ignores our cries when the creaks and cat hisses echo at midnight and the wind claws and crawls across every roof. Worn out by disappointments and our thanklessness, the moon lets chaos conquer the night when he fades away, leaving us to drown in the dark.

Rain

Secluded, lovely and cloaked in morbid attire,
your presence refreshes me from daily dullness
and the merciless sun's whippings that sting my skin.

You bring soothing gray to cover the faded blue,
and your calls possess such godly authority,
luring me to run out to your embrace.

Though you rarely visit these dry plains,
seeing you through my window in your dark coat
is always a pleasure I savor.

I'm willing to let you subdue me

As you leave me soaked and satisfied.

The Caretaker

I was never assigned this responsibility
but took it on simply out of curious instinct and love
for gray rows and naked oaks.

I stand guard when the winds come charging
and scare away the silent isolation.

I pass the time by flying over the stones and crying out,
learning their names in every row,
watching the darkness drown the sky,
checking what things dwell over the iron fences
or seeing if stones can sprout when bathed in rainfalls.

Though I can't stop all trespassers or fulfill the garden's needs,
I'm always searching for more carved names to remember.

Fall after Dark

Drying, dying brown grows all around
As leaves break and fall from above
And grackles crack cries in every tree.

The winds shake, making rattles with rustles
And white light shines in pitch night sky,
Eyes peeking through shades and shadows,
Accompanied by chorus of crickets.

The heat loses strength from autumn's reign
And the air is colored a deep blue,
But its shade hasn't darkened by winter yet.

Overwhelmed with darkness and nightly creatures,
Mortal minds are grasped by a fear of natural things.

November

A month long withdrawal
Between eves of October and December.
Darkness flees yet death remains,
Orange tears have fallen to the earth
And the air is freezing, but still no bleach
To whiten all the surroundings.
The fears gone and the cheers still absent.

Mysticism lingers around us,
But we can't identify its source.
November removed the shrouds of horrors,
And is still bare of winter robes.
When stripped away from orange and black,
November's naked without the green and red.
Just a moment of eerie nothingness.

Outside My Window

The trees creak and crack

As their bare branches bend

And wave with wind's wrath.

Blackness spreads all over

The skies, hiding the viewers

Though their eyes still shine above.

Howls and hisses echo

Across the darkened fields.

The beasts lurk there,

Hiding in the darkness.

The River

The river reflects

The moon's glow

As the whiteness floats

On the ripples and flow.

The light against the water,

A strong diversion from

The darkness surrounding it,

Hides secrets within.

The river's black waters

Keep broken bottles

And shattered skeletons

From curious eyes

And keep the secrets

That people drown.

CHAPTER IV

DARKNESS IS MY REFLECTION

Maria

Making tamales every Christmas
Until nicotine finally broke her.
Always seen with a scowl
Now replaced with a sad smile.
Distant and stern
I met her at church, one last time.
Thought I knew how to cope,
Was proven wrong before her,
When I choked on my goodbyes.
Knew nothing about my grandmother
Until I found the photos she left behind.
Until my parents told me,
I didn't know her frail appearance
Hid a knife wielder willing to defend
Against robbers and rapists.
She wore crosses around her neck
Now dressed in rosaries and thorns.

What Happened So Far

Around 1996, I entered middle school where I gained recognition as a Fonzie impersonator thanks to my black, leather blazer

Around 1998, I don't recall anything interesting happening that year. Whatever it was, it wasn't important anyway.

Around 1999, we celebrated New Year's Eve and the world didn't end. I thought it did the second the power went out, but the panicking under my sheets only lasted two minutes.

Around 2001, I saw the world change from a sophomore English classroom as the planes crashed inside the T.V.

Around 2003, after years witnessing the chaos of my parents' marriage, I told my mother being single and childless is easier.

Around 2008, I was in New York when I let some Tibetan monks exit through the door first. Hopefully, I earned extra karma points.

Around 2010, my family and I went to Hawaii where my brother spent the entire vacation earning the reputation of the broken legged, screaming drunk. You might find him on YouTube.

Around 2013, my brother told my parents the he was going to be a dad. I'm no longer pressed to carry on the legacy.

I Have Lived There all My Life and Should Have Left Long Ago but Couldn't

I have lived there all my life and should have left long ago but couldn't. Native of neither country, I was born shackled by roots buried deep in the ground and too heavy to pull out. Not enough air to scream or whine but sufficient to keep me breathing.

Time stops for the Valley, but not for us. Buildings multiply and the people keep aging, but the dying green and brown is eternal. Still I would rather die from boredom than the frostbite of the harsh winters roaming the North. I hate being born in isolation, but I hate conforming even more. Dreamt to fly yet scared to crash. Non-Christians are damned for never hoping for better bliss. I'm trapped in a limbo between two countries that neither can help me escape.

Gothic Nature

Outsiders dwell in dark street corners and explore midnight.

They're not obliged to do so, but it's a good activity for insomniacs.

The demons of materialism and hypocrisy blind the outcasts from seeing
the line between rebellion and conformity,

expressing themselves in black attire for attention and pride.

Difference comes from within, not from pale powder,
dark lipstick, boots in spiked armor.

Goths take the notion of Death greatly as they ponder

And wonder where the dead travel after their burial.

They embrace Darkness from inside and out,

Society's fear-filled ignorance sends the Goths into exclusion,
not their need for recognition and worth.

A Goth knows that changes never cease in the shadows,
when keeping the rebel alive despite cultural decay.

That Shadowy Thing

There's a black figure in front of me
It moves the same way as I do and has my shape.

The figure is like me because it is me.

Darkness is my reflection, my true form

Always been that way.

That's what I am.

I'm neither Venus nor Adonis,

My face has no features to attract the sexes

Nor do I have a voice to lure them in my arms.

I am only a void with nothing to prove

Having no rights to give or receive.

Not he or she.

Where is the ring to slip into a lover's index?

Where is the key to unlock the sacred chest?

Where is Medusa's head to petrify the men?

Where is the sword to slay the dragon?

Where have they been hiding all this time?

Nothing below.

I have none of those things to be admired

A thing that lacks only arouses fear and paranoia,

A black sheet which can't be drawn or colored on.

A shadowy thing.

It's Past 3:00 a.m.

I'm still staring at the ceiling. Conscious, anxious, and nervous from waiting throughout another night, laying on velvet sheets. Thoughts tearing, ripping and clawing the layers of my brain tissue, keeping me awake within the darkness. There's no one to push, punish or pulverize me out of reality and pull me down the pit of temporal death. I saw the black nails clinging to the bed's edge along with eyes glaring red, shining dread my eyes aren't shut tight. Weariness bringing illusions to life. Overwhelmed with fatigue, I open my drawer and pull out a gun.

To the Wasted King

Bow down and be praised by
the mad man with the paper crown
who gulps nectar with deluded pride.
A twelve inch needle compared to a mere thorn,
he still blames the world for his flaws.

The king drinks and boasts,
pretending to be Dionysus,
all god-like drunkenness without grace or immortality.
Oblivious to the ridicule and disgust from all.

Blindly living in luxurious shit,
he crawls across the puddle of foul nectar.
Beelzebub incarnate gloats through mumbled buzz.
All is a joke to him as he is a joke to all.
I doubt he'll ever figure it out.

All hail the wasted king
of false pride and wasteful gluttony.

Filled With Ashes

The ashes are too heavy
To carry inside me
As they fill my lungs,
Darken my heart
And clutter my skull.

After the spark fades
The ashes gather and grow
To overload my organs
Leaving me still and numb,
Struggling to breathe.

The spark always returns
Out of the ashes
And burns the weight away
As I stand on my feet again,
But the light never lasts.

The light dies and leaves
Ashes behind to fester again,
Reducing me back into a doll

Stuffed with cinder and bones.

Bleached Blood

I never received unfair afflictions.

My parents crossed the bridge without a scratch.

My mother didn't run for me to be born on American soil.

I was taught to speak English without having my tongue shaved clean.

My feet only faced hardships on tiles of malls and parks.

Armored well in Great Grandfather's European blood,

I'm always in white camouflage to avoid false accusations and gunshots.

The suit gets heavier with the growing guilt.

I only sympathized, but never experienced the indignities that burn souls,

I'm annoyed, never torn by the blinded scale that favors prejudice.

I obsess over Death without offering meals to my deceased loved ones,

no one in my family ever has,

and my native language is reduced to second when my tongue is half formed.

I never experienced having nothing to gain,

being shunned for walking bravely on broken glass,

or facing stones for my sins of struggling to survive.

I can never be like you.

Dreams without Sleep

Lying down with eyes closed

But still awake and thinking

Of dreams I should have.

Instead of seeing exotic realms,

I hear the wind creaking

Inside the walls.

I waste nighttime doing nothing

But waiting to grow tired.

My eyes move behind the lids

As my mind burns with thoughts.

Another nightmare I must endure.

Limbo

I spent four years going from classroom to classroom without being bothered or harassed by my peers. I moved, talked and acted like them, but they didn't see me as one of them. They never tried to get rid of me, my presence didn't bother them much. They never hated me, but they never acknowledged me either. I was rarely noticed as I passed through crowded halls. When I dropped something, they looked at the fallen pencil and wondered how it happened. The few who did see me were either startled or frightened.

In Iron

I learned to accept the cold
pressed against my skin,
locked in a cell.

My fingers bloodied
and sore from scratching
the walls.

The moments of warmth
forgotten from days
trapped in freezing iron.

I can't help myself
from going back inside.

CHAPTER V

A COUNTRY OF GRAVES

Never Ending

The guns and bombs fire
while cherubs cry
in metallic agony.

People trapped, motionless,
from feasting on pills
and venomous sessions.

Nothing ceases

or changes.

everything keeps descending,
never ending.

The Circus

Tonight is the circus's final night,
spectacle of odd charades and atrocities
of fire starters, psycho gunners, whorish clowns
and chimps in suits that sling mud at one another.

The clowns bow after their lackluster stunts,
the crowd laughs at the oblivious jesters
with fake smiles stretching across smeared makeup.

The other actors burn and shoot everything they can find,
shouting at the audience to look at them.

The people frown, but are still entertained.

The performers leave the stage
leaving blood, ashes and filth behind.

The ringmaster realizes the exploitation has to end.
The crowd saw every gruesome act from the troubled performers
and senseless tricks from the lethargic harlequins.
They will grow tired of the endless encores.

The tent goes down and the show is finally done.
The freaks are gone along with the clowns,
Leaving a barren field, littered with faded posters.

Vampire Kingdom

They hold our existence in sickly pale hands

Never spare the weakest of society

Predators in suits and deceiving smiles.

Draining our essence 'til we cease living

Stripping our rights; reduced to livestock

As they consume their bounty with bloody greed.

Spitting lies at their prey from both sides

No monster is exempted from centuries of infliction

Your dedication's worthless to infernal gluttons.

Dwelling in white palaces, staring down with hungry glares

Mindless, broken mortals prepared for endless feasting.

Lugosi's corpse rolling in shame.

Human herd, too deceived and dumb to revolt

Undead worshipped and guarded under the sign of freedom

A monument of a stake, such atrocious irony.

Ill-fated mortals produced, never born

In the kingdom of vampires.

Therapy

Poisoning minds to rid ailments,
healers hide ignorance behind coats and degrees
while their prescriptions mask sadistic apathy.
Reckless treatments paralyze chatty lunatics
into breathing bodies robbed of souls.

Protecting the sane by entrapping the abnormal in cushions
and contagious madness strongly upheld
by powerful paranoia and superstition.
Cries echoing through halls mistaken for crazed fury,
suffering ignored like the damned.

From manic to withdrawn,
zombies made through pills, replacing volts.
Voodoo civilized.

Driving through Spotlights

Night sky stripped of moon and stars, replaced by gray clouds. The buildings vanished from my view leaving a long road shined by street lamps, a frozen, black river up ahead. Realized that I ventured too far from the city, decided to head back. I took a left and found a long, barren road with street lamps placed on each side replicating an image of a hallway in a gothic manor. Even with Katy Perry on radio, nothing distracted me from the unsettling feeling of isolation, wishing for other cars driving by.

Looking ahead, a group of small figures under the spotlight of a street lamp. I drove closer and saw children standing in a circle laughing at a girl with her mouth wide open and cheeks reddened and wet, clenching her stained skirt on her knees in a red puddle. I drove on and looked ahead turning the volume up.

I heard a loud bang to my right, my eyes turned to see a man lying in another spotlight. There were people walking across, unaware of the dead body on the ground, the bloody footprints left behind. I kept driving, looking ahead and turned the volume up some more.

Further down the road, slammed the brakes when my path was blocked by white men in business suits furiously stomping on the ground. A mouse running around, tied to a small pole escaping from giant soles. I honked at the men to get off the road, but kept trying to kill the mouse without even flinching.

“I could just run them over. No one would know.” I thought, remembering the children, the people walking by. One hard step against the pedal, they’ll be dead like old dogs. Overwhelmed by my superego, just drove around. Took a left turn, my apartment complex was up ahead and drove towards the parking lot. Getting out of my car, images still branded in my

memory, my hands shook with fear, but mostly by guilt and frustration. I went inside and locked the door. Took my pills before bed.

Their Reign Ends

Keeping distance for survival, we wait for their deaths with centuries old disdain. Hiding in holes from above and below, we observe the balding mammals waste their existence, destroying each other and everything else. Destroy to gain and repress to control is their nonsensical notion of life. Manmade pandemonium as blind dedication to their pointy temples, but not God. Annoyed at the brats He made, He is finally pushed to fulfill their careless requests for assisted suicide, leaving the anti-Christ without a purpose.

Climbing out of the ground and the trees, shielded from apocalyptic chaos, our patience pays off as we are freed from our minority status and rebuilt from the remains. Once often tolerated for our squeaks and fluffy tails but mostly called vermin for taking up space in their excluded civilizations, we lived on as we looked out our windows, sockets of ivory skulls, as we claimed the world once more like our ancestors after the dinosaurs. Saluting the extinct species with little fingers aiming at the ground.

Food Chain

The rats ate the pigs as they lay without care
And they ate the crickets that won't stop chirping.
The dogs were devoured, ending their nightly howls.
No animal is spared from the rats' sinful hunger.

The rats feasted on donkeys and rabbits too,
Even the cats were eaten in one gulp.
Disease spread by their eternal gluttony.

The rats will eat without fearing poison,
Traps, guns or other threats from the people
Who fear being consumed and left headless.

The rats are slowly eating the flag,
Gnawing away the green and white,
Leaving the bleeding eagle behind.

They Are Coming

We're chased in burning wastelands,
Forced to hide in cars and vans,
And barricade ourselves in torn shacks.

What we do won't matter
They are coming.

Swarms searching through cities
They reaped hundreds away, but look for more.
They're always hungry, always hunting.

They are coming.

To them, our survival is illegal
We can't live there or even here.
We're not allowed to be human.
Both sides are infested with monsters.

They are coming.

Our home becomes a country of graves

And the free lands is a lie they created
To lure and trap us in endless despair.

We see each other as abominations
And say, they are coming.

La Llorona

She looks for the children
Who vanished in the river,
Leaving their mother wandering
Every night to search in vain
For the right amount to help her back
Into their small arms again.

A ghost of hopelessness and heartache,
She'll never find happiness
When she can't cross back to her home
To unite with her loved ones.
Her children only see her in their memories.

A mother without children
Is a curse for the dead.

Empire

Sight will be regained in stitches,

The thick smog will clear,

And the cords will be unplugged.

The empire will burn in mortal hands

When all nine infernal circles rise.

Black Dogs

The black dogs run and pant to survive
The bullets and saws.
They travel in packs, but leave some
With broken paws or dried throats behind.
No hope back home and hardships dwell out here.

The mutts can also swim across waters
Said the armed hogs guarding the fence.
They charge, trample and tear up skin
To keep black dogs from bringing the Armageddon
That foams in each of their mouths.

The dogs howl baritone prayers in hot nights
And look around to see if anyone notices,
But no one cares to answer their cries,
Except coyotes who promise freedom
And guide them to slavery instead.

The black dogs continue running and panting
To survive the horrors from both lands
The bullets and saws.

The Modern West

The showdowns and gun smoke
Have returned as this year's trend
As everyone buys pistols
And wears them with confidence.

Disputes over parking spaces resolved
In a body bleeding through its holes,
And paranoia fueling the urge to pull
Triggers and kill anyone within a few feet.

Justice placed in our hands as we grow mad
With constitutional rights and invincibility
As we state protection to disguise
Manslaughter and trivial squabbles.

We gain warmth from holding guns,
While shooting at our enemies
With burning relentlessness and pride.
We put Blood Meridian to deep shame.

CHAPTER VI

SCREAMING HEADS OF CLAY

Journeys

Overwhelmed by boredom again, I left my bed to venture out of my house. I went out prepared with my mouth sewn shut to keep pig demons from bleaching my tongue and wearing sneakers to run from Cerberus whose eyes flash red and blue. In travels, I encountered plastic, vain dolls with necks stretched up to the clouds who wanted to remold me to their unoriginality. Whether running or soaring to the skies, I never feel the wind against my face, but still feel a presence embracing from behind. All the while searching for the river princess to get me across to the other side and slay malicious seraphs that breathe endless lies. I returned home, still tired and gaining nothing.

Before I Paint

My latest model has finally arrived. No appointments made, but usual in these cases. Walking up the stairway, he came into light, letting me examine him from distance. Young adult in early twenties, hair shoulder long and shining gold. Quite built, but not too muscular.

He entered my office and poured himself some wine. Without my permission of course, though never bothered by that manner. After finishing his wine, the model took a few steps, slow, clumsy and shaky. I grabbed his shoulders to hold him still. Refusing my aid, he struggled out of my hands. He pushed me away, his foot slipped, fell down the stairs.

I watched him tumbling to the tiled floor, hearing bones crack like marionette limbs. Following down the stairway, eyes still locked on him staring back at me. Looked more divine on flowing crimson beneath than white marble alone. I captured his beauty with a flash of my camera, anxious to begin painting.

Iron Dragons

I watch the iron dragons guard the dry red sands,
While sitting on piles of velvet bones, listening to medicine
As visions of love and vengeful dead enter my skull.

The dragons let the sand pour into the glass.

I witness alternate themes of the apocalypse,
Supernovas, terror missiles, and merciless storms
Blowing man right off of the earth.

The sands continue to fall.

I drown in confusion and ecstasy,
And give my loving demon a ghostly smile
As it feeds me blood flavored kisses.

The crimson sands are almost gone.

I spend the remains of the wasted night
Sipping yellow eye tea, while conjuring tremors
And carving grins on screaming heads of clay.

The glass above now empty and the one below now full.

Walking Through

Down the narrow, dim halls where the judge waits,
I paced myself between walls painted in worn black,
Trying not to disturb the residents passing by
As they glared in yellow and others glanced in red.

They think I am a foreigner with colonizing intentions,
But their suspicions are wasted on me at every step
While I peek through open doors displaying horrors.

A limping centaur freshly skinned for amusement,
Burned corpses bound in chairs and stools,
And pale men with foreheads branded by hot halos.
Nightmares witnessed from every corner of the mind.

I pass the halls and enter the lobby filled with suspects
Gathered in an endless line as they wait for their sentences.
The tail coils itself to decide where the souls should descend.

After years watching the unfortunates walk out or fall,
I went up the staircase leading to the pedestal.
The judge pondered with tapping finger and straightened tail

As he observed my deeds and thoughts through my eyes.

I tried to view the towering entity with seeming courage

As I stood and waited for the tail's position to state my fate.

Red Room

A space formed into a square with an exit on each side. Poorly painted with doorframes badly stained, the room is new, though it seems I've been here before. From a film or a childhood dream that was almost forgotten.

In the red room, blank faces with eyes stare at nothingness. Everything including me is ignored. Perhaps I remembered an old wound inflicted on me years ago or I learned some chances aren't worth taking, both in ambition and romance. All coming from an ill built room in dried blood and dirty magenta.

Wooden Box

I quiver from the terror lurking in you
as you sit on the table proudly
taunting me with your secrets.

Mild curiosity mutated to temptation,
I'm seduced to wonder what's inside you, box.

Well carved and smoothed to perfection
beautiful deception fully recognized,
you lure mortals to seek what you hide inside.

Old gems, nostalgic trinkets or Pandora's leftovers,
do you have what I horribly desire or regret?
I'm trapped between caution and recklessness.

My hands ache to touch your apple shine,
rip open the shell to expose your possessions.
My fear of consequences shattered in small shards.

I can't tolerate this irritating madness
As my fingers press against the cold lid.
Vicious eyes and fangs revealed in the opened box.

Lost in Rome

The rain pours and fills the edges of every street and road as I try to find my way out of Rome. Shielded by the ancient arches while surrounded by the endless rows of pillars, I can't find the way out of the city where the skies refuse to remove their gray veils. I wander further down the alleys, but I'm still surrounded by Rome's towering fangs that threaten to devour me. There is no one around as I walk in the endless showers and feel the Roman disdain following me. Are the people waiting for me to go away so they can walk their own streets again? Am I too foreign to be where I never want to be? Am I so tainted that the rain won't stop washing over me? Rome continues to harass me while I try to leave that damned city. There's no exit and I have to dwell in the infernal rain and empty streets for eternity or until I make the effort to die.

Dying by the Rotting Oak

I saw the world end while dying
By the rotting oak with fading eyes.
I witnessed no explosive light
Or animated nightmare
Smothering land and sky.

No bombs raining from human hands
Not even the ravenous dead forming swarms
As I was dying by the rotting oak.

Everything blackened in minimal climax,
Oblivion spread everywhere like spilled tar
And sounds were silenced by numbing darkness.
No one gasped when they were being swallowed
By the hungry mass of darkness.

Without blinking or reliving past moments,
I felt the sun's warmth slip from my skin
When the growing shadow crawled towards me,
Shrouding the view of the field from my vision
As I was dying by the rotting oak.

The conclusion wasn't glorious or gruesome

It didn't bring pain or a sensual release

And I'm left disappointed in the blackness

After seeing the world end while dying

By the rotting oak with fading eyes.

Mouths

They're big,

Small,

Fresh

And foul.

They whisper,

Mutter,

Yell,

And growl.

They spawn

Stories,

Songs,

And fables.

They spread

Wisdom,

Knowledge,

Lies,

And bullshit.

They're silenced

By rubber balls,

Rolled up socks,

And used cloth.

They're broken

By fists,

Stones,

And clubs

Ending stupidities

And protests.

Silence rules everything

When mouths are shut

With stitches of thread.

Knocks on the Door

Three knocks

I asked,

But no one replied.

More knocks

I asked again,

Still no answer.

Three taps on glass

I looked out the window.

No one there.

Loud thump on the floor

I went to the kitchen

The chair fell down

But no culprit around.

My lungs turned thick

And my heart struggled.

I went to the living room,

The door swung open.

Gun shot.

Apocalypse

Apocalypse arrives in a lightning bolt, her footsteps break the earth as lava bleeds from its cracks, dried black and acid rains in gallons from her eyes as she cries out bleached flames. Desperation drives mortals to rip out their own teeth to purchase immortality and survive the scorching darkness, while idiots try to drive across oceans in pink Cadillacs.

Apocalypse's reign reduces mankind to cattle in an endless stampede, forces dead mothers to spit out fetuses as they lay in their open graves and leaves cities buried in sand. Her merciless glare is known everywhere by the gray floating above us and the echoes of her footsteps.

The Screaming House

I seek answers inside a house that screams, “Forgiveness is pointless!” Its voices echo through the halls while I rip a serpent’s stomach open and find a tiger inside. Walls crack and fire rises from the floors as my teeth turn to powder. I find a flooded hall and swim my way into a bedroom where lovers once wasted their breaths for small bliss. More voices scream inside the house and I run out of the room to find zombies in the hall. There are no answers inside a house that screams, “Forgiveness is pointless!”

Chatty Skeletons

We sit on our head stones,
Eating sweet bread and sugar skulls
That slip through our bones.
Our bare teeth click and clack
When we talk about the bouquets
Brought to us by our loved ones
Who we left behind years ago
Or the children we never met.
We no longer have eyes
But we can still look back
And tell stories about our pasts.
We live like we did before.
We remember, feast and chat.

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