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Teresa Alexander

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Soar

Pounce on drive of desire,
Crowd the hope of fulfillment.
Mesh the two in order to soar,
Above the clouds of life.
Stationary equates to failure,
With the loss of a life lived.
Promise of more fills the soul,
Just as water fuels the body.

Standing

Standing on the cusp change,
I must look within.
Honesty comes forward,
And gives me the right.
The right to speak my mind,
To go to the inner realm.
Keeping what is important,
In the forefront of me.
Can't go back to what was,
Must carry on to what is next.
Abuse of the past must stay there,
Never to see the light of day again.
And that resolve is what keeps me going,
To the place I am destined for.

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Derrick Braden

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Pen

(Free-Verse Persona)

All my life I'm being used.
I'm being used every day and night by everyone, even you.
You use me to write your stories and poems.
You take off my cap, click my butt, or twist my body to expose my tip.
And then you force me against the white flimsy surface and scrape me against it.
And all for what?
To make your scribbles that somehow every one of your kind seems to love.

And while you take the fame and the riches they throw at you for the scribbles you forced me to make.

Where am I?
I'm outside in the cold metal prison that you threw me in.
Surrounded by my brothers and sisters, whom you used as well, then locked away when their blood ran too thin for you to use.
Or in some cases, stopped flowing all together...

So as you sit in your house, that is now twice as big thanks to OUR work.
Your house that seems warm and cozy, unlike ours that cold and cramped.
Remember you wouldn't have gotten there without us.
You wouldn't have gotten our "ink" without ripping off our heads, manipulating our bodies, and crushing our tailbones.

So next time you wanna make more of your poems and stories, use pencils.
Fuck pencils!

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Aaron Fletcher

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Remnants

I've been here before.
A forgotten memory in an unfamiliar place flows in just as quickly as it fades out.
The area my body currently occupies is not the source of my fleeting recollection.
But the space which my mind inhabits is pulling a feeling I had locked within the catacombs of my soul.
An already hollow space has been cleared of the last remaining evidence of contentment.
The emptiness that once filled the unoccupied is now joined by her ever-jealous mistress.
A name that once beckoned to me, calling me towards an abysmal plane.
A dame called loneliness has invited herself into my home and has poured us a drink.
Not a drink to cheer with,
There will be no celebration at this party of two.
The spirits being risen are only found in a glass that raises no higher than my upturned chin.
It is a drink called sorrow.
A drink that slithers down my throat,
Washed down by the tears I fight when your name fills my mind,
But leaves my soul empty

Developed

Two robins exist now,
Where before only stood one.
Scavenging through the fruitless urban garden, long before the blossoms begin to bloom.
Clouds are covering a once sapphire sky, as the Anthropocene expands noisily in the distance.
Gaia has left us, yielding to charcoal toned structures.
This city, a perfect synthesis of stone and steel, could have been built by Ozymandias himself.
A manmade wasteland has taken the place of a vast and beautiful forest.
The nature that remains has been created,
Not preserved.
Recreation and illustration are its only purpose.
The residual wildlife does not know this is no longer a habitat meant to sustain us.
The scraps left to be scavenged are gifts given unknowingly.
The toss of a crumb has been done more for amusement than pity,
But it is food nevertheless.
A new way of life has evolved from this geometric jungle of concrete.
The world is infertile, and bears no fruit for those who are starving.
I find myself lonely in this world
Where one can never be alone.
Noise and people operate around me, stuck in the routine of a scheduled life.
The robins escape into a hazy sky,
Fleeing from the sound of a siren; a noise that is just close enough to be distant.
I have been left, once again, to search for an imperceivable goal.
I find solace in the nearby distance,
A friend with a similarly unachievable feat ahead.
For a brief glimpse I see that comforting, yet sad, sight.
That image which befalls my eyes,
A lonesome squirrel, searching for food,
On a squeaking steel staircase.

Crosley

A pinnacle of human prowess stands before me.
A collision of art and stone held together through the strength of steel in the form of beams and rebar.
The tower crumbling beneath the weight of itself looks longing towards all horizons,
Seeking a sign of its incoming doom.
Power is what it stands for, a remnant of the urbane era that plagued a nation.
The once broadcasted signal of might and sophistication is to be left, forgotten, and removed from an already scarred skyline.
A warning is signaled in the plight of this dying beast.
A message meant for those whose vain seeks to outlive nature.
Beware to thee who seeks to rise above the human realm, to touch the sky with no offering of beauty or life. For your triumph shall be overcome when the world pulls your structures of steel and stone down"
A tower is falling before me, and I have no pity left to give.

Ripples

Water, leaves, time, lives.
The choices of medium that nature selects to exert its unstoppable, omnipresent forces upon.
A gentle breeze or a drop of rain.
Two of many tools used to create that ever expanding flow by the hand of Mother Earth herself.
Should I toss a stone into the calm sheen of a pond, have I become one of nature's tools?
Are we not part of the Earth's beauty?
Images of God himself, placed upon the world in order to refine his masterpiece?
After all, we can cause ripples too.
A sentence misspoke, a line misheard.
The gentle toss of the perfect stone; cast upon the waters of that fading childhood memory, left to be lost among the other "oh so perfect" throws, leaving nothing but those everlasting
Ebbs and flows.

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Christine Nicholson

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A Mother's Moving Day

She has been up since
three with the baby of
a low heart beat She has
been awake since six to
pack the car full of last
minute escentuals and cozy
memories She been moving
since nine with a little girl, a
toddlng boy and a box of
spilt cereal

She has been at the
wheel since eleven after
two diapers changes, a
bathroom trip and a few
tears

Now with a backseat
full of her heart -sleepy,
hangery, and fidgety-
she can breath.

Jane Doe

My car would look beautiful
wrapped around a pole in a
familial embrace with my body
inside.

My mind barks my death as
I drive home from work, when
willing to share they don't see what
I mean- my mind's auditorium of
sugarless details.

I see the dark empty road,
the red lights of my car mirrored
in the crimson that drips in a dip down
my fracters to pool in my lap.

The first cars to pass doesn't see
what happened, no one, not until
I'm in someone's way.

I see the blue light of a cell screen flash
in my window.

I feel the soundless scream.

I hear the dial tone of the nine one one.

Time beats along as sirens get loudly
closer , with sharp lights and then the
screeching
church of the door being ripped away, a
pulse is
Hoped for.

As three sets of arms remove my cracking
form, a uniform searches the rubble I left
for
my name.

Phone, cracked and dented,
It doesn't turn on.

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Devon Roberts

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Mother's Kitchen

I remember when the kitchen floor was still linoleum
And you said it was alligator skin and I believed you
Our house was built on his back
But he doesn't mind

At the breakfast table I tucked my feet up under my lap
And reached down and dropped some Cheerios on the alligator's back to see if he would flinch
I saved a handful of cereal and tossed it under the porch

At night
When my socks were full of eggshells
I crawled under the kitchen table
And laid down with a blanket covering my back like wings
To keep us warm and safe and believing

I pressed my head to your scales and swore I felt your fast heart beating
And though heard
Is that growling?
No, crying
"It's just the wind," you'd say in the morning

But I'd think it was the alligator under the house
I'd worry he listened to us and that we made him sad when we fought
Or when I doubted his existence

Eventually
My feet pressed down flatter and ground down all the eggshells to ash
And stopped eating breakfast with you at the table

Soon
You remodeled the kitchen
And ripped up the green and black crinkled alligator linoleum floor
Beneath I expected a heart in suspended animation
And expected him to turn around to say
"See that there?
That's the truth.
I told you I was real.
I hope you know I was good to you."

The floor is gray tile, now
When I listen I still hear my heart beating against the floor
And a sound that is not growling
No, crying

In the morning
I told you it was the wind
Yes- It was just the wind

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Asia Smith

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Belladonna

Tonight, I lie in my mind,
hand clutched to my heart,
Beautiful shades of violet fill my eyes.

Today I walk through the halls,
Looking for your smile,
Knowing I'd walk for miles.
Alluring scents take me away.

Tonight, I stare at my phone,
Eyes glued to the screen,
Praying for a response,
Praying for your warmth.

Since when did I start to feel like this?
Since when did I long for a simple kiss?

I get lost in your eyes
Dreaming of happiness with your beautiful blue skies.

Your hair, a precious curl
Oh, how I want to touch and curl the long strand around my hand.

You're a dream, I'm living in it
but somehow this is a nightmare killing me

Death is faster than this endless rain.
Tell me... Am I sane?

Will I ever get out of this pain?

Smiles, all clumsy,
Thoughts, all flimsy,
When did I ever get this bad?

So now I lie on my bed tonight, trapped with my mad mind.
Wishing something was to come by atlas she won't be the one

Yet I beg of her,
Hold my hand,
Take my heart.

The beautiful belladonna has taken me apart.

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Jasmine Warner

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Vulnerable Sadness

the makeup that took hours
is now smeared and swirling
down the shower drain.
the running water is loud enough
to drown my weeping, but not my wails.

tears becoming one with the stream
washing over my bare, shaking body.
a sadness I can't seem to pinpoint,
the tears flow and won't stop
no matter what I do.
I can't do anything, but feel,
but feel what exactly?

Drifting Into Darkness

a dark room, white noise
with only the sound of
your thoughts filling the space

tossing and turning
tangling and untangling
the sheets in hopes to distract
yourself from the words
you can't stop your mind from speaking

it isn't the lack of light
that keeps you awake,
it's the memories you
desperately want to forget.

no matter how hard you try to
push them from your head to
your stomach-
they still seem to belch their way out

the last thoughts you think
before falling victim to your dreams
that may or may not
let your sleep be peaceful

they consume your mind
to the point of wanting to
stay distracted, occupied
until you're exhausted,
so you won't be stalked
by the monster of your brain.

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