

Poetry from Jessica Smith

written by Guest Contributor | November 20, 2014

from *The Daybooks*

2 April 2005 / Stockholm

on the way to the hospital we try to remember
by bus who
I have lost interest St. Göran was
in everything your explanation involves dragons
dragons, swords,
I identify with the ones called "witches"
who hear voices
and would like to lead armies
there are no saviors here; we collapse in hysteric tears
we pound fervently at doors on pale lineoleum floors
but no one hears the strength to seek care
much more saint-like than the caregivers but
We cannot treat you
because we cannot do follow-ups they sentence me to the flames
and the medicine may kill you
we ride the bus back
with nothing, to nothing
no one can save us there are no swords
just dragons

21 June 2005 / Dalarna / Sweden

in alpine landscape
for miles, nothing flat
smallest brush takes years to grow
still offers only pale grey-green to the snow
begin to see gradations still unmelted in June
instead of the fantastic the color-subtlety of slow life
lichen and pale gold cloudberries
the blues, Nabokov, your eyes my memory of the cold
imagine Nabokov high in the hills
to study chloroforming butterflies
a naturalist of the dead
Lolitas everywhere arrested
the pale tiny wings beating near the ground
in isolation
the killing jar effective without poison
signal flashing wings
to escape

29 September 2013 / Birmingham

years after, when it couldn't matter
you left, I met someone else you met someone else
got married, had children I still had your uniqueness
never met anyone like you, got divorced, got remarried
who said immediately
that we were the same,
I held on looked into my eyes like a photo
to these crumbs of the beginning of the universe
your soul like mine to believe your message
to say you had never felt like that the talk a kind of bribery
our sex, then, just bodies
as if I made it up out of nothing the same as anyone
and the false world expanded by itself
but
patriarchy is its own revenge your sweet daughter who scribbles on the floor
whose little hand holds your life
to bring her wildflowers, will meet someone like you
write her poems
and tell her he never really loved her

12 October 2002 / Niagara Falls

before rejection acceptance
after tragedy left the man who threw me
laughter against the wall as I slept
for the power
life-filled birds circling for food
Falls too fast above speed-fed foam
sublime unexpected moment
kiss on the stairs
in the late tulips falling apart pink and yellow and red
to identify any particular
down the stairs,
bounding to greet me long walks to old trees
wild gestures wide smiles and wide hands
before I knew
cannot be identified time spills over
in any particular
the fraction our lips mutable thread

20 November 2007 / Manhattan

for Claudia's birthday,
we meet in three
she is thirty
a marker (in three years, a mother)
the fortune-teller everyone sees
but only tourists enter
intrigued by red hand
and crystal ball prominent
like Coney Island machine come to life
warmth of Thai food in cold night
not sure we are on a date, or
I enter and
cut the deck
for love (for not knowing)
a card map, a carta:
we don't know where
"a man whose name starts with M
in three years, a third relationship with someone you consider a friend
get rid of the ring"
we are going on the sidewalk
after you ask if she said you
in the yellow lights
outside New York
already dressing for Christmas
Saturn in Virgo



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Librarian for Indian Springs School, where she curates the Indian Springs School Visiting Writers Series. A native of Birmingham, Alabama, she received her B.A. in English and Comparative Literature: Language Theory, M.A. in Comparative Literature, and M.L.S. from SUNY Buffalo, where she participated in the [Poetics Program](#). She is the author of numerous chapbooks including *mnemotechnics* (above/ground 2013) and two full-length books of poetry, *Organic Furniture Cellar* (Outside Voices 2006) and *Life-List* (Chax Press 2015). The selected poems are from *The Daybooks*, a long project about micro- and not-so-micro aggressions against women in daily life.