The Apathetic Generation

I Give me your tired.
Those peoples with eyes weighed down by dark circles and noble intentions hidden within their waking hours.
See the shuffling of their feet.
Witness a revolution of trans-philosophical jazz and whisperings of tomorrow, next week, never.
Bleed your idealism, your optimism, your chivalry and respect.
These are the blackest of humors.
These are the guilty and the sinful; the causes of civil unrest, of enlightening discourse, of love, of hope, of a schizophrenic nightmare between today’s overcast grey electronic disturbance and the bloodthirsty clangor of tomorrow’s restless and pitiable afternoon drive.

II Give me your poor.
A symphony of gray cotton sweatpants and football announcers are bed time stories to the unworthy.
This is just another case of “white-picket-fence” syndrome.
Lie down on the grass and know that today the clouds will look a little more like ennui, and a little less like courage, heart, or brains.
Feel the needle stick, the cool rush of air replacing the burning smoke as its silky, silver swirls lead a revolution.
A revolution of pop culture idols, of Elvis impersonation classes, of self-made millionaires and self-proclaimed prophets.
For these people, pride and hate are just Band-Aids, and nihilism is only a side-effect.

III Give me your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free.
Take flight and whisper sweet nothings to the man-in-the-moon.
He knows that he exists only for the sake of dreamers and romantic ne'er do wells. Swim in a bucket of sweet and sticky vomit, composed of alcoholic daydreams, white-washed ambition, and the moral compass of a sociopath. Taste the cruel lye of industrialization's acrid pastimes and feel the esophagus, lungs, cerebral cortex of the American Dream dissolve before your very eyes. March west in search of greater things; of happiness disguised as white powders encapsulated in gold and found at the bottom of a concrete river. This Manifest Destiny is a deja-vu of scorched earth and promises a more utopian sunset; a blood red horizon aflame over the Pacific Coast that reflects shivering eyes of those who have seen the edge of the world.

Rendezvous

1.
You were always the strawberry bitch. Your lip gloss, Shampoo, And your favorite flavor of wine-cooler. The sticky red juice was the most private of jokes, A sweet and sour color that you painted my eyelids with. The same color that I hear and taste and feel in my waking dreams, Clawing, tearing, whispering sweet nothings and hollowing out my veins. And with a little squinting and imagination it becomes the fatal stroke in my hunt for The American Dream.

2.
So the conversation goes, oh you know the story. A bitter scent laced with waves of euphoria and the occasional all-night phone marathon. I could always hear the stinging bite of apprehension. Of love and Love and good old Southern hospitality. But the analogy of underwater voice distortion and asphyxiation And how they dulled your eyes full of broken promises were just another ruse. Just another loss of life,
Another five second temper tantrum that was the difference between
This generation’s savior and the next.
3.
So my heart sings a dirge sickeningly scented with
Jolly-ranchers melted down into
Roadside souvenirs.
Bruised and on display from the repeated attempts to
Slip through the thin steel bars.
A travesty of nature and human ingenuity
Sold ten for a dollar,
With a free glass of unsweetened lemonade, or
4.
That list you wrote to Santa in the first grade.
And this is the heart of the matter.
You regret that the rag-doll and plastic kitchen set,
Complete with two different kinds of forks,
Were your heart’s desire during that time
Where faith was all it took to get you to smile wide,
Your off-white teeth flashing in the summer sun,
And the juice dripping off your tongue
Was the only truth you’d ever need.

Diary

I am the fountain.
You are the blood cascading
through the air and stagnating around blue bicycles
and unmarried parents. No, scratch that.
That isn't what I wanted to say. I
am still the fountain. But you
are the children flipping shiny wishes that
land with a plop and sink unceremoniously to the
concrete. You will go home and record our interactions in your diary. The retellings will be flat. The ink will lie meekly on the page and I'll be reduced to a few scratches at the bottom of a cardboard box. I imagine that I'm in a zoo, with a bronze statue of an orangutan nearby, where the children will laugh and have their photographs taken. Sweet children, unafraid of the future. And then they'll burden me with the hopefulness of youth, casting their coins into my bloodstream. One will sit on the edge, drag her fingers through the water, legs kicking back-and-forth. She will speak to me. Her words will echo off the crimson pool, stamping her existence in a way your ink on paper never could. I will become her bastion, her diary with a pulse.

Abandonment Issues

We were staring at each other across the coffee table.

I started tapping it out. The song that you once told me everyone should know. I shook my head and bit my lip and you took it to mean that I'm a selfish lover.

You've never understood,
so I told you that
my home life was similar
to fucking a girl who is paralyzed from the waist
down.
Those were the types of abandonment issues that
I
was talking about. But you ignored
me and remained
lost in your own narcissistic
blue eyes. "Neither of us even drink coffee," I finally
breathed out.
I got you to blink at that,
but you only hesitated.
I should've known.
You never drowned
out your mother's screams
and thirty-seven attempted suicides
with headphones and a four thousand hour long
playlist. You finally stopped chewing
on your hair and told me, "This is hopeless, and it
has been from the beginning."
So let's go back there. It started
when you called me from the Waffle House
in Tucson
with your last quarter and
told me that you just realized you
had never said goodbye to your
grandmother. This was my turn to hesitate.
I was suspicious and
I let out a nervous laugh and
I responded that all my grandparents
had died before I even said hello. That was before
I
drove the three-hundred and forty seven miles
to bring you back home.
I got there exactly nine minutes
and sixteen seconds after
I put the phone back on the receiver and
took the time to pull on my tube socks.

It was raining,

and I wasn't sure if it would be appropriate to pull you

close and hug your head to my chest

and breathe in your strawberry shampoo.

But you made that decision for me.

Fairy Tale

The west winds had brought the frost to us.
So you covered yourself in the best blanket you knew,
a mouth full of pills and a glass of chardonnay.
“Oops,” you said.
“This isn’t the story you wanted to hear.
But it seems that with all the confusion about whether or not I’m yours to keep,
to lock away and only bring out when you want to feel the blood run through your
fingertips, I’ve forgotten myself.”
So I sat against your legs as you were reclined in the easy chair,
reciting the same list of names we had both turned to nightmares as we tossed beneath our
covers.
But your nightmares had more razors and hushed noises.
More filled nooses and the ever present breath in your ear.
Mine were more of the “Did you walk the dog and water the plants?” variety.
But the soft murmur of a red blur was always present in my peripherals,
and the headaches were proof that I was never quite able to tell you what the name of the
dog was.
So what if you grew bored of running your fingers through my hair?
You wouldn’t understand that I was never alone when we spent sleepless nights wrapped in
each others electronic voices delivered from worlds away.
You had once asked me to take you with me if I left.
And that’s why I checked my watch and asked the ticket taker what day it was when I was standing there in my sanguine smile with a surplus suitcase at my feet. I took it with me anyway. I climbed inside it and sailed the air waves like a lightning bug attempting to find Ursa Major. Or maybe it was Libra.

We both knew stargazing had always been your past-time and I had been too busy counting how many ways I could spell your name with four letters and still direct a PG movie. “It’s not that I won’t miss the color purple or the way you sing me to sleep,” you said as you released the curls of my dirty blonde hair. “It’s just that I’m tired of never knowing who will answer when I hit your name on speed dial.”

And the next time I took you out so I could count my heart rate, I knew it’d be your mouth full of regrets that was pressed against my lips.

Languish

My words stumble from my mouth,
becoming loose change spilt from a pocket.
They lay there,
between the ashtray and the quicksilver,
and in an unaffected tone you count the sense,
but brush it off with a flicker of your eyes.

We followed each other here through a maze
drowned in cheap booze and the vague
impression of good intentions,
or of giving second chances.

It was always hide-and-seek,
only without the counting and without any sense of closure.

I am uneasy with the slow-motion glow of the television;
I am uneasy with the Coke bottles and empty Chinese food containers;
I am uneasy with the way you fold your legs beneath you when you sit.

I am uneasy with the fact that neither of us remembered a spool of thread,
and the breadcrumbs.

Your seafoam eyes,
your sanguine cheeks,
your rusty ponytail,

all reminders of a struggle to find the entrance.
To say anything that you haven't already rolled your eyes at.
I am not a gargoyle,
posed on the edge of perception and awaiting an offering.
I wrote you a letter.
I got three cigarettes and one act of running my fingers through my hair into
writing you a letter.