

How to Cure a Lonely Heart

A poetic guide to falling in love.

Chapter 1: To Know Another

Self

on some sleepy days
in this glittering city
of silk lips and sharp eyes

i step through seduction
to my fantasy behind plain sight

to gain passage to hidden treasures island
the key is a disguise
battered old running sneakers
bug blinking glasses big
and baggy brown pants

transform; transfigure into
a tube of toothpaste
a ball of yarn
a pile of laundry

then in this town of wolves
you will become
not the lamb
but the maple
woven with the world's wonder
roving eyes mistake for a stage

then there you are amongst the plenty
fascination's maker
satisfaction made

When do you feel most beautiful?

now you see me
with the lamplight off
bare to the night that pulls shadows
up to skin

those places
where hands have encased my throat
clawed at my back
left my skin running red

Oh, your sweet light shines
caress as they were unbroken
lay on hands of no demand
but my rushing heart's faith

so I will bear this too
awaken with your mark
in place of the others
I have never before been able
to burn away

In what ways do you most easily express yourself?

in the quiet moments I give to it
my little heart speaks

more often
I starve her
I bewitch her into sleep

in weakness she captures
clips wing and sings to me

enraptures my ear with
songs of paradise
paint dripping fingertips
lungs rushing out

risking to beat

What makes you feel passion?

When my chest is battered and bruised
rain falling into it
When I am cracked and bloodied
on this forest floor

Cursed ray descends solemn;
provocation, no demand,
into the hollow cavern
I used to call *body*

“Bless back together these wounds
Stitch the hope that once felt so light to carry
Scrape good humor from the depths of
that well
built so long ago.”

and walk on to You

What have you overcome?

this long journey
of white waters
and thorn brush
once my calluses' hammer

same now in length of road
in twist and toil
but here I dance

by the winds that carry me
slipstream over the clearings
where the sun breaks through
my stalk that of the wildflower
that of the willow
that of the vine

to home where I have washed
from my skin
both blood and kiss
to home

What is something you've changed your mind about?

After years of burning,
letting my raging heart
fill my mouth with ash
belly
with hollow splintered charcoal

I wake to taste
slow steam of cup
heavy weight of sun
scent of burnt toast
hot tea on the tongue

and it feeds me
now
that I don't smolder so hot I am numb
to elementary graces

Such wonder I've found
in touching pages
that don't disappear singed
such solace in cool water
on my lips
such safety in knowing
I will no longer burn this house down

What are you grateful for?

how can I rise
to eyes I can't open?

ice in my veins
where once was honey

dust in my mouth
where once was wine

stone in my chest
where once was flesh

my tender velvet
shorn to the bone

all of my flowers
shriveled and cold

why bother waking
living eyes closed?

What scares you?

On a perfectly dull Thursday night, I discovered a trove of love in the bottom of my washing machine drum. Never before had I known man could touch true love with its hands, pinch it between fingers hardened by metal and wood. Smooth like cream, supple like velvet on pads so unused to relief.

Honest love in her corporeal form looks an awful lot like an oversized threadbare t-shirt, dyed splotchy pink three times over, an unrecognizable coat of arms fading on the chest. Once standard issue armor, from a past where your proudest accomplishment was the ability to paint yourself grey. This love is a relic, one made for shrouding your screaming cold limbs so nobody would ask you what you ate for breakfast.

But through years of care in a wash basin (when I did not yet have it in me to lay it to rest), the breastplate has been worn into a love that bends at soft swells and ferries towards home when you go to sleep. Long after I sheathed my obsession with cruel gods, it carries no reminder of my glory days as a killer, but of the small spark of self I managed to carry around in my pocket for all that time. I beam at her presently full grown roaming the garden, flushed by rest and creases and framed by the marks of her age. She lives naked, but puts the shirt on still to reminisce on the power it takes to put down a sword for the very last time.

What are you proud of?

heart, love, battlefield, sigh...

the tired longing I must learn to deny
turn in war for piano lessons
in a life truly alive

at these lessons I arrive
wire cut string tangles in my belly of chords
and teeth trained for breaking skin
keys that open no doors but remove fingers

still I sit
to find that music I ache to play
until it is the song of my dreams
an earned symphony
addicted to tripping melody

just mute the clangs over and over
and in that caress learn a
new tune
heart still heaving its sighs
unfettered by desperation disguised

What is the most important lesson you've ever learned?

You make me feel the splendour in the grass
the fresh Spring of starting over
the water drops of something new

how lovely it is to sway so light
to know this bed thaws every season

hands tangled in the pasture
green staining away cold grey
woven into me now
so strong
so true

Do you feel young?

I pour

I have poured my softness
into every
valley of the soul
that unfurled for me

I pour

I have poured my peace
into every
raging heart
that desolated me

I pour

I have poured my sweetness
into every
salted wound
that healed around me

I pour
pour
pour

I have poured to learn

what can be filled
and what will only flood

endlessly
I pour

Have you ever given or been given a second chance?

dead worlds, where the sun does not rise
have no tides
with you by my side
ripped from that dreamless
planet by your hand outstretched
enfolding mine
blanket on the sunrise

What do you dream of?

clever melody
squeeze my heart

sweeping stroke
lift my spirit

cinema flicker
still my soul

word of wisdom
mend my mind

write my life in pencil
then erase it with your smile

this is why we love you
your holy charm; your divine guile

What is your best quality?

Together I am arrival
a French gallery
smiles echoing desirous

an Italian lunch
warm nectar flooding my bones

a Spanish courtyard
ripe bursting on the air

the fantasy of your now
so much easier than mine

Do you spend more time in the past, present, or future?

The sound of his name used to
bounce off the kitchen walls
Ringing and pinging hollow
Like a coin to the head

Then the dog picked it up
Assumed it was fair use
Barked it with glee
every time I walked through the front door

The birds on my windowsill caught on
Sing it in orchestration
when the sun comes up each morning

The toaster, the bed springs, the dishwasher
all have rewritten the sound of that name
I live merrily amidst the resonance
savoring coming home every day to a return

Now you're here
calling the name back to me in the hallways
And I don't even remember where it came from

What do you like to be called?

Do not wait
for your gossamer honeysuckle spring
to let the hummingbirds come call

Call to them as you are
with your lightening cracked flesh

Call to them in the storm
that nurtures snarled root
lovelier than soft blossom

Let heaven shine
on your choice to prevail
above the dark earth

whether your petals
bruise and weep
or glisten

What's something you don't like people to see in you?