

I'm Your Huckleberry

poems

Erika Jo Brown

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I'm Your Huckleberry
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The author gratefully acknowledges the editors of the following publications where these poems first appeared, sometimes in different forms:

Anomalous Press

Captain Snugz Rides Again Again
Dirty Birdies
The President

Back Room Live

Faeries

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Alone in the Shower I Practice Peeing Long Distances
Spur the Threshold

Forklift, Ohio

Let Us Assume We Are Each Other's Best Blushing Brides
Sometimes Stars Shoot from My Breast
Light Verse Demands Radiant Turns

H_NGM_N

Depressive Narcissism, or The Case of the Lyrical I,
or Capers Are for Bagels, or Witness

Humble Humdrum Cotton Frock

Decidedly Lyrical

ILK

Making Life Better As We Live It

Jellyfish

Between the States
French New Wave Cinema

Petri Press

Bernadette
Violet is a ladyplant whose need for rain and sun
reigns violently.

Spork

Hail, No
Love is the Pits

Strange Cage

Field Guide to Tallgrass Prairie Wildflowers

Transom

French New Wave Cinema

Wave Press tumblr

Wind Advisory

A limited edition broadside of "French New Wave Cinema" was printed by the University of Iowa Center for the Book in celebration of the 2012 Mission Creek Festival.

CAPTAIN SNUGZ RIDES AGAIN AGAIN

Break a brandy snifter. Break any
small thing. A nugget of bituminous
coal. Not a heart. Not a lot. Afterwards,
improve yourself. Refrain from hitting
snooze. Fix a small thing. A bug or
capillary. Eat a schnitzel with capers.
Stop taking orders. Adopt a schnauzer.
Adopt a funny German accent when
commanding it to stay. Captain Snugz,
how is your mouth always so hot?
I love you more every day, not less
and this concerns me. You mug. Plus,
we live on a floodplain. It may all seem
non-germaine but G-d, sometimes
it's cloudy, sometimes luminous.

DIRTY BIRDIES

For my rabbit heart, nervous in the birches, I enrolled in a class for those with pain or injury, but it wasn't what I expected. A whiffle of light still flickers by the wharf. Once, I was adopted by a family of line dancers. When you fall in love, then you are just down like debris, a meteorite. Consider welding—to unite by heat or compression, after softening. Consider the silliness of yon weft without a warp. What a weave we make.

Wether, you are a castrated ram. Whelp, you are a young pup. Whether introduces an alternative clause followed by another alternative or not, or not. Cave paintings existed during the first ice age. Your problems are not new, although yes, it is cold in here.

Oh, counterfeit wampum! I saw the sign and it said, VARICOSE VEINS DEMAND EXCELLENCE. What are your demands? Consider how she whimpers when you unpeel the sheet music. Whoop, there it is. The foam-crustured waves are also known as white horses. Don't mind the noise, it's just birds loosing into the night.

SOMETIMES STARS SHOOT FROM MY BREAST

I am a hen scattering feed
around my house for you
who's seen me aflutter
over rhubarbs, ridiculous cocks.
You're an alcoholic and
I'm a cockatiel, your lack plus
my surfeit makes an integer.
It's math, it's a small chicken.
Let us chuck this starling
darling, never be lonely.
I look towards the horizon
while you, too laden with grain
to pray, you must find another orison.
But rook, song-belcher, this season.

GNOMON

Sometime in the winter of our lives,
I was all about tillage. An operation,
a practice, an art of little trenches.
Tell me about it. The season provided
its best sledge. I had not one pretty
tile to tickle me, with the exception
of a Turkish repro, from Israel actually,
a gift from my absent auntie. These lacks
were tugging, as tilapia does a line alive.
My ticker was rendered pointless, more
or less. There was a sadness no leopard
could dispossess. But for the repetitive
ticks of a tractor I heard this summer.

This is my Monday sad day triage
poem. My sad cabbage in Monday
pottage poem. Sounds from an acreage,
like a made-up plot device. Like a
sparkly beverage. From a crow's eye,
there is no progress. Love's test
is actually a common everlasting native
to eastern North America. Things like
this. The spillage and the mileage. The
carriage through these blah blah blues.

ALONE IN THE SHOWER I PRACTICE PEEING LONG DISTANCES

A modicum of tenderness is necessary
but ill-appropriate here. Our origins
are errant. The same old ghost
stories do not repopulate the present.
Sand dulls everything.

I lack the leisure to be rude
when conditions are crude. I've rituals
too, that unravel if you learn them.

I've touched a million things.
Fingerpads are a site of memory,
of feathery jeopardy, of treachery.
People tell me about mine all the time
in succor. I know, I say, look, there's
a future and it's a vast expanse of desert
with lightning. And I can't always find
the oasis. And you can't always find the oasis.

Put up your fingerpad. Tell me which way
the wind is blowing. I'll start a repository
of touch memory, bound in clean paper.

I don't know why my body malfunctions
in comfort, but in the wilderness
I am a fucking ibex, sinewy and hard-
scrabbling, avoiding scorpions, trying
new roots. You can't choose delight, you
must walk outside and wait for it to find you.

FRENCH NEW WAVE CINEMA

Because I don't care for Godard,
I am the loneliest poet. Go,
dart, to the heart of my beloved.

Tell him: we mythologize each
other when we're apart. Tell
him: I'm a bit of a tweaker. No,

I don't actually *sleep* with
deers out here. Check yo
navigational chart. In fact,

a perfectly respectable club jam
came on the radio today. Tell him:
I'm sorry for accidentally kicking him

in the gonads. It's too bad, too,
I had imagined us on a gondola
in a scenic place funded carte blanche

with affection. Tell him: I don't do
goulash without meat. Tell him: of my love
for gorgonzola cheese: garbanzos.

Tell him: of my objectionable
tartness. Don't forget that part.
My goal is to go steady.

Although I'm rather cerebral,
I don't know shit about
beer. The avant-garde won't

protect me here. If I need you,
I know you'll be available to hold
my mitten on a starry evening. Oh,

tell my love nothing. I'll do it myself.

FAERIES

We have named the names but still
our capacity for desire and
sorrow is like a grand hotel.

This day was like cigarette ash
on the porch of a wild friend
whom in dreams you seize
and forcefeed sparkle cake.

On the porch also, faint memories
of undined wishes
like the flaccid nub of a party hat.

We see the good students
walking to the park in the sheer
cacophony of spring being nearly sprung.
Touch it.
The dancers wait for no thumb.

VIOLET IS A LADYPLANT WHOSE NEED FOR RAIN AND SUN REIGNS VIOLENTLY.

See, Violet, the ladyplant prefers
simplicity, the vinaigrette, the matching
of components indivisible and weak,
like starlings and sky, the villainous
sky towards which she reaches.
Vinyasana helps. She vibrates
when her little islet feels overly
pliant. She fancies herself a Vidalia
onion aguing a vindaloo stew or
a nice vichyssoise on her few
good days. Those inviolate
good days, when she doesn't feel
vicarious, an invalid, invalid,
a victim. When a mundane item,
a hydrant, for instance, resists
becoming something violent,
a trident with evil intent, for
instance. Mightn't she enjoy pollen
riven by the gem cutter above?
Things as themselves: angular,
faceted, sugar. Sweet Guadeloupe.
Vile vines creep 'round her planty mind.

PILOT PROTOCOL

In turbulence, there is no Kareem Abdul Jabbar. Sometimes your eyes are glassy, sometimes cloudy. When you see your dead pet on the ped mall, you must act similarly to when you've had a bad day in the sky. Refrain from acid, though the wondrous fountains of, I don't know, chocolate, or better still, salty caramel ice cream goo, might seem ideal, they're apt to make you keel. Trust me, I've been there. I've been an ornament to success, despair, and feathery ennui. Just keep the plane up.

HALF-NELSON

Somewhere, an actual balloon floats into the horizon
of a Midwestern town. I know that because I see it.
Everyone is sad. I know that because I talk to people.
Smart people are good at schematizing sorrow
in ravishing models. Somewhere, the whale-like
thrumming of French hip-hop thrums. Someone
has left a tissue in their pocket that sneezes
all over the new load of wash. General fruit
is not appealing, but three young apricots before
you, well. Please accept this half-ditty, half-prayer.
For once, it's not pity I'm after, just beauty.
There is no transaction like this. Forgive
my being forward at the end—rain hitting
a pane, canary-yellow, chai. Try it with me now.

ABOUT THE POET

ERIKA JO BROWN is from New York. Her chapbook, *What a Lark!*, was published by Further Adventures Press in 2011. She was educated at Cornell University and the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop, where she was a Capote Fellow in Poetry. Most recently, Brown taught at Savannah State University and co-curated the Seersucker Shots reading series. Brown is currently a PhD candidate in Literature and Creative Writing at the University of Houston.

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