

I will have to write this in sonnet form
 something to give you boundaries and shape
 the way dewdrops collect on the tea rose
 in accidental magnifications.
 You've asked me to say what matters, my love,
 but are dissatisfied with my reply.
 You want to argue it, but why, my love?
 You pose nothing against it but your sighs.
 It is gone now, my love, gone is the time
 of smorgasbords, fondues of thought, thick accents
 sounds of a Brooklyn accent, Shakespear, years
 overridden by city buses, woody sublime
 a blind child who could make out hazy lines,
 until she broke away – and not easily,
 by torpid heart and mediocrity,
 the likes of which she didn't realize
 A kind of impatience grew, fertilized
 by torpid heart and mediocrity,
 the likes of which she didn't realize
 until she broke away – and not easily,
 a blind child who could make out hazy lines,
 sounds of a Brooklyn accent, Shakespear, years
 overridden by city buses, woody sublime
 of anthropology, geology, hints
 of life beyond boating parties and bikinis.
 She wouldn't know until she escaped that smallness:
 it is a state in which whole lives can rest.

Each year in Ohio and Missouri,
 our parents devoted their time to homes
 they dreamed welcoming, but we kids, left wild
 with cousins who were strange and mean, unknown
 to our way of being, felt the estrangement
 they chose to ignore. Like the immigrant
 kids who learn words between the lines, they sent
 us into the fold so they stayed ignorant
 of why they rose out of what we came to know
 as the dark side, not a vacation
 one wants to skip school for, but our whole
 summers spent in these memorable places
 taught us an important algebraic equation:
 parents have children to solve what they've evaded.

If you are fashioned out of granite, I bet
 centuries go by before the finest crack
 can be seen, and another few to get
 through to any center of your thing; way back
 the story of Plato's cave got my attention,
 how stories are built around shadows sometimes,
 and something else too, that kittens kept from
 sight early on never see, though they're not blind
 physically. I didn't write in my diary
 about this since I didn't know it yet, but I
 wrote, true or not, and ferociously,
 believing feelings there grew quiet,
 then I set them on fire – inephably,
 but actions like dreams tell us more than we see.

PREPONDANCE OF

SELF-PORTRAIT TRIPTYCH: ESCAPE

PLAYING HEARTS

We kids cut our teeth on diamonds, our hearts
 on spades and clubs. Our first houses weren't made
 with brick or straw but with a deck of cards.
 Jokers were wild, aces were high, we played
 for high stakes, as if our lives were on the line,
 and of course they were each time we shuffled
 the fifty two chances to fail or be blind
 to each other's feelings or needs, to muffle
 kindness or care, to unlove each other,
 and we did it so well, we went on to higher
 feats like that, each with our own misnomer
 and sense of ourselves as queen, king, or joker,
 depending entirely on the luck of the draw,
 when we were born, and the jungle's heartless law.

Please recycle to a friend.

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Barbara's Itty Bitty Sonnet Collection

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By
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