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## ***Crossroads***

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## **-Forward-**

This is a collection, lovingly offered, of some local poets for you. This is a series of songs. This is not long, but it is meant for you. This is the crossroads of disparate voices. This is meant to be fairly rough in our formatting choices, but not in the content within. This is meant for mulling, discussion, & pleasure.

This is nothing more, though certainly nothing less. This is quick so come be with us.

Come listen.

Gratefully yours,  
- The Editors

*This publication unapologetically maintains the equal right of free expression without regard to race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, age, disability or genetics.*

*The whole is something besides the parts.*

## ***Crossroads***

Stranger! Hi, sorry, you know I hate to impose,  
but since we've met walking this crossroads  
here by our high-ceilinged halls  
and the crawlspaces of pleasure,  
can we wave in passing -  
forgiving ourselves for stalling the other's motion,  
of course, & having with each stitch of language sewn  
in passion warmed each other - be for this moment one,  
before we go keeping on?

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## ***Anxious***

I tear this white wallpaper  
And throw it in the fire  
Just for the satisfaction  
Of seeing red sparks fly  
Stark before the torn, creamy backdrop

And under my nails  
This white wallpaper  
Sticks around for days.

## ***Silent Warfare***

We've left the elephant in the room too long.

It's too uncomfortable to breathe,  
it's a gray, suffocating, monstrosity,  
and guess what:

we killed it.

It can't speak its mind because you won't  
hear its screeching cries for help;  
and I won't offer a hand to pull it out;

this will be its coffin of soundless fury.

all we've buried is a brittle,  
bone-white skeleton -  
a broken,  
once beautiful creature.

### ***Mimetic Metic***

I have been playing  
a stranger in a strange land,

A native imposter;  
Have you wondered what it would be like  
to come back anew?

this place can never be new again:  
sad really

to have the feeling of -  
overwhelmed -  
being stripped from you.

### ***A Series on Finding Home: Part 3***

I have come to the conclusion-

*-No. No  
I misspoke- the realization.  
Because nothing is conclusive  
Even science is just theory  
Built within methods  
Born to be proven wrong.  
So yes, again-*

I have come to the realization  
That these bones-

*-That is to say my bones  
Or my home  
Because they encase me  
That is to say they encase my soul-*

These bones, my bones  
By definition  
Can break, fracture, split and shatter.

***When Heath Ledger Played the Joker***

I am  
not  
crazy. I am  
not.

I put on a mask  
and try not to choke  
on face paint.

I am always smiling.  
I only ever wanted  
to entertain,

to make all laugh  
and laugh  
and laugh.

I understand men  
better  
than they do. Men

feel pain  
and love  
and don't wish to die.

Unrequited loves  
If only you could leave  
Everything behind you  
But you're here  
In this mirror  
And then it hits you  
Remembering the laughter  
You have given other people  
You're here  
To be happiness

***Title***

## ***Happiness and Other Unrequited Loves***

Happiness  
Much like a distant memory  
Seems to be unreachable  
An unrequited love  
Happiness  
Like true perfection  
Seems to be unobtainable  
A work of fiction  
Happiness is a designer drug  
Get you prescription filled  
Better have health care  
Better have health  
Happiness is an island  
You can only get to  
If you can leave everything else  
Behind you on the other shore  
Happiness is an unrequited love  
It's finding yourself lost  
In brown eyes staring back at you  
In a mirror wondering  
Why the fuck  
You're even on this planet  
Why you have so many

I put on the mask  
and become him, but then  
am I still a man?

I cannot stop smiling.

I look out  
at the city  
from a penthouse window.

A black shadow  
flits across the moon:  
he who will never stop looking for me.

A purple glove covers my face and mouth.  
I swallow  
and they all  
go down  
easy.

## ***A Haiku***

The ladybug felt  
A breeze so it spread its wings  
And it flew away.

### ***Dear Little Bigot***

My nose bends in reverence  
to that time I got back up,  
bits of my face left behind  
on the ground next to chewing gum.  
You better run, you told me,

like I was a dog you were betting on  
at the racetrack. My hair mixed with the mud  
caught underneath your fingernails  
as you held me, grinding my cheek  
into the brick that came to know me

better than my mom ever did.  
You ran through your options  
like browsing porno at a sex shop,  
perspiring excited and glancing at the door  
until the daisy told you he loves you not,

and my belly  
became your boot and you  
kicked

kicked

kicked

but it wouldn't fit.

*Crossroads*

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### ***View From The Room Where I Keep The Best We Ever Had***

Gone from mountainous expanses or widening skies, I  
can't find the way clouds open upon themselves, I can't  
find the sound you planted in me when I go back and  
back would unlock the door, press firm my feet to  
splintered stairs just to hold that memory, tiny jarred  
cardinal sun, but never put finger to moment to mouth I  
don't want to remember how we tasted, I already know  
distance tastes like strawberry jam, a cup of tea, the  
steam, rolling, climbing over itself up to my hand,  
reminding me of an always more and I never  
understood but that's how it felt to close my eyes  
underneath you clouds opening upon themselves,  
thunderous crash of mountains trying to caress one  
another Even then you were gone, we were too red for  
you to teach me how to open

*Kim Henry*

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## ***CRY***

I cry the widening sky, only and always opening into  
gaping solstice or stratocumulus morning like the  
overflow of a bathtub, I think, God, if I could move like  
that, if I could open into something new like what's to fix  
can't be found just swallowed, just churn of cloud coming  
into nimbus, a glutton siphoning all our rain and sweat,  
sweet taken by sky, and now something new, something  
bigger, and then I, the widening sky, never finished and  
always whole

Did your mom hug you? Or did she leave  
your shoulders cold, like ice cubes  
underfoot when you were scared  
of the night, a child? I can relate,  
can you believe that?

Were you borne of Virgin Roger?  
Did Antichrist impregnate  
the womb of your faggot dad  
with the next coming of vile sin,  
like a skunk under the house?

My back bends in fear when my shoulders  
feel a chill and steel against a stolen stature,  
I'm still not as tall as the dog shit  
on the sidewalk. Sincerely, I walk on,

through a field of pansies and lilies  
which dance like round flat pebbles  
over the surface of the ocean and I rest,  
safe between blades of seaweed.

### ***The Third***

You can win only once in your life  
And if you choose sobriety, your hands  
Will shake forever trying to hold a forkful of eggs  
Over the wooden table.  
Move slow.  
Whatever you once missed, you possess in  
Hot meals forever  
And the ability to finish sentences.

When running out of good stories to tell,  
Invent another life altogether.  
You are The Third,  
And the men before you who bore your name  
Took all the best beatings,  
All the best arcs and tangles  
And you are running out of good stories to tell.  
Laugh wide-mouthed.  
Explain tender truths that never happened.  
They said it skips a generation,  
But you, The Third,  
Feels it run like a thread.

holds her thirst until sun down is attacked by five men at  
a train station  
and I dream that maghreb is the waning light from which  
we were first born.  
On Friday the khutbah is a hush. The rain outside is the  
sound of old knees  
bowing down in sujud. On this day made doubly holy,  
Aisha finds him  
through the parting of the curtain that divides the men  
from the women.  
In the light passing through, shivering silver and wet like  
all godly things do.  
And still I cannot see him, but I know that if my  
prostration is what colors  
the skies dawn, then his skin is dark like the stain on  
polyester.  
Neck the curve of dangling thread. For him I dream our  
joining  
is like prostration too and if there is dawn then I out of  
love  
am tired of its smoke and if I say bismillah then by love it  
is a beginning  
but not of elegy, and if there is no more rain, if a hand  
closes the parting,  
is no longer some holy site nor the spring I have  
wandered to in pilgrimage,  
if we all say amen so that dawn and dew and day may  
return again,  
then for love I hold my tongue instead.

### ***Origin Story as 'Ashwaq***

The word for lover is 'ashwaq and I look for him in the voice  
of the wheat skinned Imam whose breath whistles like air  
through the Prophet's gapped teeth. It is Aisha, three  
weeks in love  
with this ghost of a man, who thinks he lives somewhere  
in the masjid.  
By the shoe rack, she says. The one stall washroom in  
which wudhu  
is another way we drown. I have yet to see him, this  
discreet lover,  
and still never have I dreamt him myth but a fellow  
worshipper  
who hears dhuhr adhan and spills against his musallah  
shadow  
beneath Hajar's feet. For him, I do not pray, I dream; I  
dream  
as I always do, that I wear white for days and no one has  
died  
and even if the world is gone with my people there is still  
a return  
waiting for all of us. In Venice a man is struck down three  
steps  
after declaring his love and I dream it was not flesh the  
bullet hit  
but clay still straining with Adam's first breath. A girl who  
for love

In deep city winter, with a moon that glows  
Huge and bloated,  
Slow all breathing chemically  
Until extremities are numb.  
Later, when your heart limps painful against your ribs,  
When your thumbs are punching always into metal cans  
When you are split open all over the edge of a broken  
wine glass,  
You will be awake  
You will have won only once in your life  
Everything else is sweet aftertaste.

[illegible]

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[illegible]

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