

Collected verse

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Chapter 1

Poems from *Missives*

I wrote a silly short story a while back. It was meant to be a joke; a pseudo-victorian epistolary romance. It didn't really go anywhere, even though I submitted it to at least one publication. That's fine, though. I got a kick out of it, and the person who inspired it did too.

The end result was silly, but did include some poetry snippets. I didn't really think anything of them for a while, but one of them, the last here, kept coming back to me. on a whim, I completed all of the snippets into poems in their own right. They're presented in the order in which they appeared in *Missives* itself.

1.1 **Though the flow'r may bloom ere long — *February, 2017***

Though the flow'r may bloom ere long
and night recede unto the dawn,
so yet may loves embrace grow fond
and still be spoilt upon the wan.
Brave are you and wield your smile:
A cudgel, tool, a keen-edged blade.
You are not wan, love is not spoilt;
thus I be slain and love not fade.
Have I any need for flow'rs?
For nights, for dawns, for words or breath?
With so keen and fond a blade,
There's naught to fear in life or death.
So slay, then slay! For now, I care not how,
I need for naught but that which love allow.

1.2 Delay, then, the morn — *February, 2017*

Though every climax approach a denouement
And every dawn a night,
Every moment worth sharing
May be worth stealing.
 Were it with you,
 Delay, then, the morn.

When every touch lingers as if forever
And yet seems to pass too soon,
Hearts reach out to hearts,
To seek, to aim, to keep.
 Were it with you,
 Delay, then, the morn.

Surely it's cruelty that need begets need begets need,
And yet need may bring pleasure.
Pleasure may hurt, ache, burn,
May steal hours of night.
 Were it with you,
 Delay, then, the morn.

1.3 Thy gift — *February, 2017*

I reach for the ewer of water,
I hope to quench the heat.
I beg for yet another serving,
I hope to fill my need.

The water — cool — cools not
Without thy merry presence.
The food fills, passes, is gone —
Yet leaves me empty, yearning.

Though the heart may quicken –
Though the tongue may lap –
I shall sup no greater meal
Than thy gift entrancing.

1.4 You find me at a disadvantage — *February, 2017*

On reading letters late received,
I felt within: the fox —
Yelping, yowling now, crying needfully —
Myself, a craving beast.

You find me at a disadvantage —
Panting and aswish —
Would that distance be traversed as easily
As hearts towards yearning hearts!

1.5 A rose, single, now blooming — *February, 2017*

A rose, single, now blooming
may indeed bless the stem,
yet are not roses clipped and shown?
Undoubted tis a blessing to them
who receive such a gift!
Yet now unmade is the flower
which adorns thy mantle with its grace
and withers, however slowly, by the hour,
until tis faded to nothing and dust,
though some scent remain forever amidst the must.

A rose, single, now blooming
is perhaps best left on the stem,
its beauty to be admired amidst the growth.
Surely 'tis better to long for that gem,
than witness beauty wilt and dry!
Yet now one must long indeed, must burn,
Must yearn forever for that grace.
To watch that growth, to explore stem's turn,
day by day would destroy, weakening one by the hour,
A rose, single, now blooming, forever holds all power.

Chapter 2

Mental Health

Poems on mental health. Maybe I'll write a better intro at some point.

2.1 There is too much fire in me — *June, 2016*

There is too much fire in me

There is too much fire in me to be described by the soldering iron's tip.

If I were to draw that across my flesh,
it would all spill out at once.
I'd melt, eaten whole by flames,
and flow into a pool of molten silver.
I would be borne up through the clouds,
and grow lighter by the second.
Sublimation would claim me then,
atoms would scatter, diffuse.
All that energy poured to the air around me,
an imperceptible increase in temperature.
Particle would excite particle
until I'm felt only as warmth on your face.

But even that would not be enough.

2.2 Cycle — *February, 2017*

Up cycle
Down cycle
Round and round

Push cycle
Pull cycle
Round and round and round

Here cycle
There cycle
Round and round

Bounce cycle
Slide cycle
Round and round and round

Free cycle
Wild cycle
Round and round

Unstoppable cycle
Uncontrollable cycle
Round and round and

Slam cycle
Crash cycle
And round and

Cut cycle
Burn cycle
And and round and

Crush cycle
Destroy cycle
And

Plan cycle
Note cycle
Rou-

Shower cycle
Wash cycle
.

Up cycle
Down cycle
Round and round

Chapter 3

Miscellany

Most poems don't come with a category, or are only very loosely defined. Those wind up here.

3.1 The dogs assure me — *March, 2015*

The dogs assure me:
There are volumes of meaning –
Life and death –
And time;
Past, present, future –
In the scent of a rotting fish left after the flood,
Or a trace of scat,
Or the coyote, long passed,
But not everyone reads poetry.

I'm not so lucky, all told:
The rich scent of meaning –
Heady, intoxicating –
Rises only from words
And the way you rest your hands on the table.

3.2 Being transgender — *October, 2015*

You get to explain gender to all of your friends —
And all of your family —
And maybe once more to be sure —
And random strangers —
And maybe, like, doctors and nurses who should probably know better;

You get to explain to your partner that nothing has changed —
And that you were always this way —
And that really, honestly, nothing has changed —
And that this has no effect on your love for them —
And I promise;

You will get to come out again —
And explain that it wasn't that being gay wasn't enough —
And explain that it has nothing to do with who you like —
And explain that that shouldn't matter —
And – oh right, this means you might be straight after all;

You get to go through that awkward period of growing your hair out —
And learning how to ask for a more feminine haircut —
And trying a curling iron for the first time —
And figuring out how to eat noodles without also eating your hair —
And the worries that you're just trying to be rebellious;

You get to worry whether you're maybe just trying to be rebellious —
And whether or not you might just be faking it —
And whether you're really Trans Enough or not —
And whether you're maybe just appropriating femininity —
And whether or not passing really matters to you anyway;

You get to dress up in your best clothes —
And your best makeup —
And worry that your shoes are too masculine —
And have your hair game on point —
And convince the doc that you deserve those patches and pills;

You get to go through puberty again —
And it will be weirder this time around —
And your skin will grow soft —
And you'll get more sensitive to temperature changes —
And – YEOWCH! That's a new sensation;

You will cry a lot —
And bite your tongue often —
And lower your gaze —
And learn to take up less space —
And talk softer;

And your dogs will still love you.

3.3 When I fall, I will remain whole — *November, 2016*

I keep hoping that, one day,
I'll spring palladial from the bole of a tree.
Fully formed, asexual,
Conceived without desire or intent.

My body will be virgin and clean,
My mind fresh, my soul at ease.
The tree, behind me, will stand crooked,
Bole seeping until time and air dry sap.

I will be a flat expanse of green, made up of new cells.
Everything will work together, a machine running smoothly.

I keep hoping to, one day,
Function with unity, unflagging.
Organized and purposeful,
Intent only on fulfillment.

My vision will be clear and unclouded,
My will affirming, strong, and sure.
And when I fall, I will remain whole,
Confident that I lived well and unapologetic.

3.4 Meaning & Self — *February, 2017*

There's some duality between sources of meaning,
Between the types of stories we use to back identity.
It's not quite good & bad or light & dark,
Though I'm not yet sure just how to define it.

Dad used to punish the dogs
by locking them in the basement.
If he was really mad,
he'd toss them down there by the scruff.

Mom moved me & her dogs to a new house —
moved us three days early during the divorce.
Her dog punched my ex stepdad in the crotch the night before,
the nut-shot to end all nut-shots, & our time there.

Few things make me feel as deeply about life as parenthood,
even if it's just me caring for my dogs.
Some reminders of that are intense enough to be raw, painful,
salt in the wounds of mortality, maybe, or the ache of maternal love.

The meaning behind the story of me & my dogs
comes with a story of its own, or maybe several.
It's bound up in stories to come,
& these stories nest infinitely deep.

Remembering that & shaping that,
It's a part of making the meaning in my life.
This isn't better against worse,
it's not mom against dad.

It's not a dichotomy at all, really,
now that I think about it.
It's something subtler, comfortably complex, a topic of its own.
I guess it's just meaning & self.