

Hester Prynne of India

A woman in her tower
Stands in the mirror
And sees reflected the sea
Of filth, up to her ears, a line
Where the gray sea skims the tips
Of her short black curls.

Hair that haunts,
Taunts – it is a waving liberty
Bound in sin.
Hester Prynne's skin desire,
India's authority,
Strangling women with definition.

The mirror with brown face and Arabian Sea,
Twenty-first century Bombay
Reflects a witch with snakes
Growing out of her scalp that burns
Certain secrets of some same, taboo sex
And jean shorts.

First generation of woman
To unfurl wings of pure unchasteness,
To smile without a blush
On unveiled freckles of shoulders and legs.
This fortunate fall from grace –
The self-inflicted A –
Hiding in a glass box.

The illness of modernity
Smells of singed hair,
Her black curls blown to the sea,
She must wear them short –
An obscene gesture
To the threadbare shackles of tradition.

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No Requit

From Germanic origin –

Old English

heorte

Dutch

hart

Latin

cor

Greek

Kardia

In its thorax cage the white hot, red hot drum
Plays the ageless beat of kismet.

In and out and in
And the bubbles of oxygen are washed out –
Travelling 60,000 miles a moment,
Praying for three billion beats.

Oh! That tireless crux of the body
Which has never had rest
Since the flutter of life into being –
But what of the ship of Theseus?

The silver pinpoint of anguish
Slices microscopic holes in the beating flesh
And removes bits around the edges.
Hard lines mark the regrowth.

My monomaniacal heart
Falls into the trap of having you
On the tip of my tongue
And in photos – and for years.
Like Ahab without the vengeance
But the beating Moby Dick may yet drown me.

A puncture: two notes of a song or the scent of a memory

A pain like the squeeze of a sponge
That wrings out the air
And leaves the ghost pain
Of your heart against my back.

Walden 2.0

To dearest Thoreau –

See the man and woman
Hand-in-hand admiring
The passive Walden.
See not
The photographer documenting their engagement.

To be back on your Walden
Is a dream that confidence has forgotten.

In our heaving hurry
Fears and pleasures, as deep as puddles, form
A pseudo lawn over mortality.
How disturbing for you to see now
That shadow, which loomed so close and breathed so heavy
And dark like the exhale of a train,
Has breathed us in – thoroughly –
In the whirring black I can't find the trap door.

Cogs in a maze,
Rats in a machine,
I've lost the ability to blink.
Remember the patriotic duty
It takes a village to raise the GDP.

But growth for the sake of growth
Is the ideology of the cancer cell
And America is ill –
Farmers strung out on fertilizer,
Beans grow in perfect circles.
Sick with gluttony
But capitalism turns disease into profits,
Prescribing diet pills.
The pathological mono-modernization
Strip malls and sense of place
Texas or Maine
It's the same.

But Walden still exists
So let's lay on the warm sand
Eyes closed –
Try not to hear the squeak of lawn chairs,
The smell of tanning lotion.

Emily Dickinson Upon Waking Up

Wake in the morning in sheets –
Dewed with bad dreams –
What has been.
Eyes open with a violent sigh –
So ends the silence.
Shoulder blades un-crushing
Meterless, and rushing.
Hissing breeze –
Pollen-dusted bee's
Golden cloak crashes.