



Pens et Manus

ADVANCED POETRY WORKSHOP

FINAL PORTFOLIO 2016

Peasoupi

Andrew L. Trattner
May 10, 2016

Introduction: Jamila Smith-Dell

A philosophical senior at MIT—whose words sparkle with such well-engineered chemistry it is alchemical—Jamila navigates presidentially through the waters of vice and virtue, words and the unspoken with a deft sensitivity to the wind and a firm grip on the tiller.

She is not afraid to explore the depths of her identity, and she is equally comfortable diving into seemingly humdrum surroundings to surface with a glimmer of the next clue. Jamila writes what she knows, and she really knows what she writes. She speaks to us all with powerful evocations of active passion (as in *Cobalt Meadow*) or rebellious ennui (as in that one sonnet that was really an anti-sonnet *Closed Parenthesis*).

Put your hands together, folks, because we are in for a treat this afternoon. Without further ado, I give you Ms. Jamila Smith-Dell!

An Appetizer: Sampling

Peasoup

'twas peasoup and thoroughly
art-i-cu-lat-ed and
when the shell burstingly
plumed aflame Satan
whence stood on
a hilltop proclaimed
to the natives that
into the darkness shouts
all that is hated

Busy

my father kept telling me it was ok
when you miss my call, i know
you must be doing something important
fun
so when the phones broke and i was busy
i never took the time to set the call back up
and when we spoke of our 2 years silent
i discovered that i was not busy
and my tears drowned

How are you?

Orange scarf brushes the world aside
flinging window light up to where
it belongs on her
face.

No thanks,
no coffee, tea, chocolate
maybe next time.

Pages of skeleton memories rest opposite
their living children breathing infusibility
into brighter than oxygen she slides
down chair's embrace.

Her eyes repose.

Blink.

ocean-coaxed wave swells
out onto land where the sea creatures
bared to death set in city blocks
tumble down alleys and floods traffic lights

Ra summons nations
sandblast ripping apart
heaves of pyramid quaking clouds
crumble down

Blink.

Nostril Iron

sun stabs eyes bright hot pulsate skull down gallon down recycled syrup gallon
up rolling slide up chute sewage paroling early death boil ocean drill oil surge
crack pressure frack spurt lymph ozmoozing mucus membrane cocoon bang
rattle bone-slap conch hiss sizzle bubble pop sting cut flare nostril iron tongue
grit air lip pollution bile growl anger bowel gurgle howl

Food

Bright Red Box
stolen from Kentucky
Fried Chicken replaced
popcorn shrimp
sent from heaven
with Norway-sparkled water
extra oyster crackers
and local hands
sewing
pillow-
warm
bread
she eats alone too
and why
is the butter pat so hard?
excuses herself
Spicy grit-dip calls
shared somehow silence
for two mints
softly excused
on the way out.

Spinach drowned
sherry butter
rose petal caviar salad
with crab.
Liver pâté and yam
who needs wine?
scallop, shrimp, tilapia, lobster—
were you out of the butternut squash?
—No, please leave the spinach. . . better to be extra full.

Another dozen mountains
3 forks
this time
Cheese
softly topping
beet salad
softer than conversation
another face
another book
another glass?
2 knives.
salt pepper polished aluminum cheesecake to go.

Oncoming

slowly shaking sleep sinews stiff
stretching supple
a couple neck rolls and shoulder waves
the tide comes in
gathers tides pools secrets
fills my butterfly

sidewalk blues rocks into ballet bounce
as my butterfly pirouettes
into pinpricks of light
saluting the morn away
resurfacing, prepares

pattering wings
surging up
buffeted
cheerful wind
cloud rust car rain
a lofty fight
torn in two
still

i turn towards the city grey
and graceless plod at level pace
impelled compelled propelled forward
to jog (march fly?) this one man race

and though the pace picks up from here
my butterfly slowly disappears