

Table of Contents

Hammad Kareem <i>Picasso Dreams</i>	4
Elizabeth Gourde <i>Hand Blown Glass</i>	5
Chiara Douglass <i>Ode to Baby</i>	6
Joseph Steven <i>a love poem about your eyes and how they look under moonlight</i>	8
Stephanie Afonso <i>The Possibility of Ravens</i>	9
Smooth Doubleb <i>Is Love Real</i>	10
Chelsea Mason-Basilere <i>Pink Canopy</i>	11
Bojack <i>The Met Gala is for War Criminals</i>	13
Hammad Kareem <i>The Strange Sun</i>	14
Tiffinie Alvarez <i>Supernova</i>	15
Brandon Quintin <i>5lbs of Worry</i>	16
Jason Murphy <i>Window Under Repair</i>	18
Vivian Vo <i>Angel Crest Speed</i>	19
Brandon Quintin <i>5lbs of Worry (cont'd.)</i>	20
Mackenzie Alvarado <i>A Mother's Love</i>	21

Joseph Steven <i>psyched out!</i>	22
Natanya Furgal <i>At Long Last Love (1975) dr. Peter Bogdanovich</i>	23
Elizabeth Gourde <i>Twitter Feed</i>	24
Natanya Furgal <i>eden's thicket</i>	25
Stephanie Afonso <i>Steel Diamond</i>	26
Tiffinie Alvarez <i>nonlinear</i>	27
Elizabeth Gourde <i>I Wish I Was</i>	28
Tiffinie Alvarez <i>frigus</i>	30
Natanya Furgal <i>Pluto by Hades Himself</i>	32

Hammad Kareem

Picasso Dreams

The Picasso face stared at me with sadness
A deformed clown reflecting a dimension's madness
Yet true beauty is often found
In those things whose strangeness astounds
and behind every painting that Picasso made
is that curious quandary that has lingered and stayed
What else is in the room with these creatures of angles drawn
What bizarre existence twisted upon
could they be entities that don't come out at dawn
entities of the night from an abyss undrawn
there is a reason from the painting they're gone
or perhaps hiding like a whispered chant or song
past the face what strangeness lies
a geometric hellscape or a mysterious surprise
With strange lines that angle and curve
A strange divinity a holiness served

Elizabeth Gourde

Hand Blown Glass

I invited you in, my esteemed and welcome guest
you accepted, thrilled, with an expeditious “yes!”
In you came and you sat and you stayed,
and each of my hopes began to raise.
It was easy to fall, so easy to love,
and I thanked the Heavens, God(?), clouds, whatever’s above.
You left me something, some thanks for my hospitality,
but this vase was too dear to be no more than a formality.
It lay in my hands like a fine piece of glass -
this beautiful, intricate, fragile mass.
In my hands it sat, in my hands it would rest.
I thought, foolishly, “in my hands it is best.”
But I got greedy, selfish, and I held it too close.
I held on so tightly, much tighter than most.
I have always kept precious things safe in my care,
and they never before seemed to damage from wear,
but, quickly, this schooner, fluter, beaker, delicate glass,
damn near shattered from a touch too crass.
So I sit here wondering if I should let it go,
wrap it, preserve it, ship it, or display it in a show?
I wish I knew what to do with my blessed piece,
because I think the place where it is safest
is far out of my reach.

Chiara Douglass

Ode to Baby

A handprint
she stares.
A cold pressed instrument that
plays on the ends of
her hair that
falls to the cold dusted floor
when her daughter pulls out of
Helplessness.
She falls to the floor.
She caresses the floor.
The floor turns to water.
A whirling pool of water
drowning her mangled strands
that no longer feel the tug of her
Restless daughter.
She opens her eyes.
They sting.
The water quickly turns to burning ash.
A wilting smoke that carries her
from the clogged drain of her kitchen sink to
walls that bleed red,
red that swallows her whimpering body and
rests its hand tenderly over her
bittered and blistered soles that
turned concrete when she was
supposed to run.
Why didn't she run.
She had the chance.
To finally be free.
Free of the thick air that
pillows her heart and
tears her away from the one
she was supposed to protect all along.
Brown and battered she lays,
swallowing the pleas
that scratch at her tongue.
Her lips begin to tingle

and her heart starts to mourn
as she watches the sprinkle
of her baby's shadow
dance around her
forgiving her for letting her go.

Joseph Steven

A love poem about your eyes and how they look under moonlight

When they peer at me
I want to gouge them out,
keep them in a decaying mix
of formaldehyde and strychnine,
then build an oak display shelf.

Stephanie Afonso

The Possibility of Ravens

Oh, how I summoned the hatred for death
but also for life
in the even rain like white candlelight
for the sorrows and gold trials new
for the ones who have wilted flower bodies.
No one said it would be easy
at least I will know in the end of light
like a watchful bird
whose cruel caws wait for prophecy and lost souls.
Angels and saints fly high
angels and saints are reapers.
There will be a day when bells
ring so loud for death to stay
no more?
I wanted nothing
it wasn't the love
it wasn't even mine
or for me to love.
Cunning ambition drove me to crave more of the power and insight so I wait
for the fateful day things would all change
fire would consume
feathers of ravens
faux black wings
whose strength cuts through wind
and call warns the others that there is death.

Smooth Doubleb

Is Love Real

Love... Where do I start... Where do I begin
Is it fake... is it real... is it even true now?
It's up to you to decide,
Just like life, love is... what it is.
If it's all of a sudden then that person is weighing two options.
You and someone else,
Then when you take that mentality just to protect yourself
Now there's going to be an innocent person who you might get with
And you do them the same way because of naive
And then the cycle continues, that's why it Never stops.
I'm a rider, not a fighter.
I like how people change but memories don't.
You could be with someone and either feel like
It's the closest you ever been with a person
Or they can feel a million miles away.
You did a lot and I fell back,
Now you pass by like a car with a strap in it.
Everytime I think of you,
You bring ice to my veins just like D'angelo Russell,
Everytime I see you,
You bring heat to the brain, call it a fever.
It's like this,
I don't want you back because I'm counting stacks
And the money won't bring you back because I'm selfish & timeless
I've now took my focus/ caring about people off and put my focus and faith in God,
Like always and the only people who can come into my focus/ faith are close friends,
Family, and people who are going to help or be in my future goals.
If you want to take something out of this poem
Take and leave with this
You don't even need a gun...
You don't even need a pill...
If you ever want to die...
Fall in love... and you'll get kilt (pow)

Pink Canopy

We bought the bed canopy for Heather. She wanted pink so I went with Joanie to pick out the fabric to make one. I looked through pallets upon pallets of color, silks, and cotton, sheer and knit, before coming to the conclusion that it would be so much easier to buy one. We did at Macy's. It was fifty dollars.

The canopy is hanging over my head. I don't know how I ended up in Heather's bed. She might have fallen asleep on the couch and John and I might have gotten in a fight last night so I came to sleep here. I don't know. I'm pretty groggy first thing in the morning.

My mouth is dry. I try to swallow but I'm parched. I look to my right and see the bed stand with a glass of water on it. At least I prepared myself for this. I sit up a bit and reach over. My back cracks. I take a sip of the water, holding the liquid in my mouth for a second before swallowing. Better. I put the glass back on the table and snuggle under the covers.

We got Heather the canopy. It's pink. Pink is her favorite color. I was going to make one myself but I realized that there were too many choices of fabrics and I was overwhelmed. We got it instead at Macy's for fifty dollars. Joanie went with me.

Why am I staring at the canopy? Maybe John and I got into a fight last night.

I try to remember the last fight we got into. It had been a while. My mind is kind of groggy first thing in the morning so I have trouble remembering stuff sometimes. John takes advantage of that and laughs at me. First thing in the morning is when he'll tell me that he accidentally spent our vacation fund on booze, or that he let Danny and Billy stay up until three in the morning so they'll be cranky when I try to get them on the school bus. I usually do not fight John though. He's the love of my life even though we bicker like cats and dogs.

Why am I in Heather's bed?

The door opens and I look to my left. It's Joanie, but she looks different. Older. Of course, she's older. We are all older. Heather doesn't live here anymore, she moved out years ago. I'm just groggy first thing in the morning. It takes me a minute to wake up.

"You gotta get outta bed," Joanie tells me. She's always been one to tell me what to do. She bossed me around when we were in nursing school together, she criticized me for going steady with John, she helped me raise little Johnny while John was out boozing after our gunshot wedding at the town hall. John was the love of my life though until he died. Wow, that was a few years ago, I think.

"I'm tired," I tell Joanie. "I just woke up."

"Sweetie, you woke up two hours ago." Joanie walks over to the curtains and draws them so sunlight slaps me in the face. I wonder why I'm in Heather's room. "Up, and at 'em!"

I was going to ask where John was, but then I remembered he was dead, and that my husband's name is Paul now. Paul and I never had kids, but he raised Johnny, Danny, Billy, and Heather like they were his own.

"Five more minutes," I tell Joanie. "Why are you here?"

“Paul is in the hospital, remember?” she asks. “He fell last night, remember?”

Joanie talks to me like I’m a small child. She always has. I look around. Why am I in Heather’s room? “Why are you here?” I ask Joanie.

“I just told you, Paul fell,” Joanie tells me, sighing in exasperation, even though this is complete news to me. She pulls off my covers, and I see my legs are pasty white and my veins are electric blue. I have to remember to go out in the sun. Heather goes in tanning beds all of the time, even though I have yelled at her not to.

“Maybe we should go outside today,” I tell Joanie.

“It’s ten degrees!” she laughs.

“Right.” It’s winter. “I knew that.”

I stand up, and Joanie cries before putting a walker in front of me. “I don’t need that,” I tell her.

“Like hell you don’t,” Joanie tells me, and she grabs my wrists and plops them on the walker. My bare feet are on the wood and it’s cold. Why didn’t I wear socks to bed? I have to do laundry later.

I look around. Why am I in Heather’s room?

“Where’s Paul?” I ask Joanie.

Joanie sighs. “Let’s get you breakfast.”

Bojack

The Met Gala is for War Criminals

A Buddhist monk high on opiates
prescribed by a doctor who fucks the Sacklers,
sits down in front of the Met Gala in a black robe with a can of kerosene next to him.
War pigs growl at the Gala,
having been unshackled for a few hours from the factory farm.

They suck on mother's utters, feeding their walnut-sized brains with antibiotic laden milk
President Piggy inoculates with.

As the Buddhist monk sits cross-legged
He lifts the tank of kerosene above his head.
The junkies surround him to huff the valuable smoke that will emit from him
once his act is fin,
To get high just one last time before the national-guard enforced curfew.

The bastards in blue start to crowd around,
Ready to launch an attack.
It's too late, the kerosene was just for show, his robe is already drenched with gas.
Light the match and down in flaming history he goes.

The Tax the Rich wearing socialite pigs, the Peg the Patriarchy bullet proof vest wearing
wenches turn and oink in sheer horror as the rabid and deranged junkies ceremoniously dance
around the cross-legged, flame engulfed monk.

This world we love.

Hammad Kareem

The Strange Sun

The strange sun emanating its light
Enables the creations to come into sight
On that pastel summer day
Bathed in the sun's long rays
On a green and blue rock
The sky seems to talk
It speaks to the clouds
They tell a tale of colors so loud
And the dizzying greens and browns
Magic and heat around

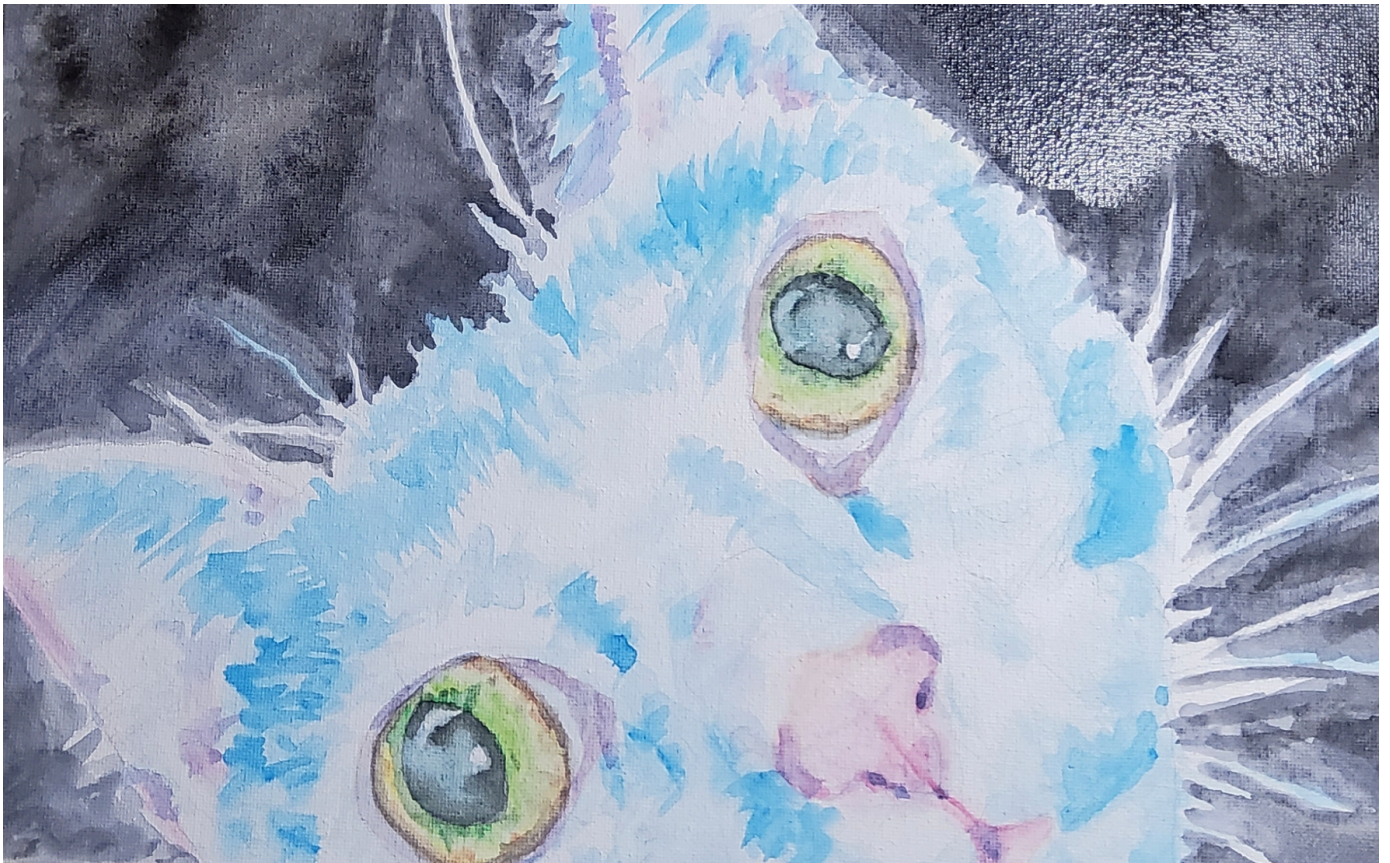
Tiffinie Alvarez

Supernova

Point out to me the constellations on your ceiling
Made by sticky tack
Left after the stars had fallen.
Remind me what it was like for me
Before time moved too quickly
And I was aware of it.
Tell me stories from your childhood
Days on soccer teams and
Backyard camping trips.
Smile at me through eyes watering
With tears of laughter
And cheeks cramping from smiling.
Fill me with warmth
So I never have to fear that one day the cold
Will make me fall like the stars did.

Brandon Quintin

5lbs of Worry



Brandon Quintin

5lbs of Worry



Jason Murphy

Window Under Repair



Vivian Vo

Angel Crest Speed



Brandon Quintin

5lbs of Worry



Mackenzie Alvarado

A Mother's Love

The Love of a Mother
Is Unlike that of no other—
Never Forced—solely raw Affection—
The kind where
Words aren't needed—
I feel Safe—in her Presence—
Morning—the smell of homemade Breakfast
Fills the space of the tiny Home—
While Her favorite Music plays—
Unconditional Love is that of a Mother's—
One you don't Beg from a distant Lover—
Kind that can be taken for Granted
But one so Wholesome—She loves you anyways—
From generation to Generation
If done right—Spread upon littles
Day and Night—A ripple Effect—
Nourishing the Hearts of tomorrow—

Joseph Steven

psyched out!

the trail of tears makes OklaHOLEma whole
so i repeat sasha
sash-
SASHA.
SASHA-PLEASE remember the tree rings:
how we counted them until i got amnesia
and u used me to relieve every breath of coasting
sobbing and desperate
we blasted music to drown out your moans
but i stood there silently waiting for it all to climax
because you make me sick
and i make you sick in the heart
but thats fucking fine because together
we fuck in a pile
of piss and cum and i
get to lick it all up
like the dirty piece of driftwood i am
because im that tree you carved M+S
then S+S
then finally Love is Dead before branding
all three into your throat
my roots soak up your blood
because i'll be frank
and you can be sally
you taste
so
ripe.

Natanya Furgal

At Long Last Love (1975) dir. Peter Bogdanovich

Curl sunsets over
the blue jay song within you—
Jo knows how much I worry but
you don't, you don't. Seasons
shift and combust in the time
it will take for you to hold
my thoughts, feel the weight of them—

This will take years.
Do you care? Do my words crumble over
your ears, does my sound make you weep? Attention
deep over your heart-wound, my hands do not have
the intelligence to stay away. Yours do not
come close to mine.

I wonder, I wonder.
We are simply perpendicular mirrors—
my sun polarizes your moon;
do we make a difference? Can you see
my teeth scattered—I tore them out for you.
Would you tear your hair out for me?
Rip the skin from your throat,
burst God from your chest?

Not that I want you to.
I want our hands tied together like fate tends to do,
whisper some prophecy below my
chrysanthemum teardrops—
feel my agony as if it were your own blossoms
ruptured within your hush.

Elizabeth Gourde

Twitter Feed

“i love having breakfast.
i am a train and yogurt is coal
shoveled into the fire that is my brain.”

i love cool sludge
how it fires my synapses
prevents the weight
of the world
from forcing, folding, collapsing.

the apple of each day
keeps the doctor at bay,
but as for my mind
it's the plate in the sink
with congealed yolk on the rink.

oatmeal and curds
are the only whey
to get the little engine that can't
to survive the day.

Natanya Furgal

eden's thicket

let us return to each other by our own hand,
sparrows to spring, kiss soft flush
feathers to honey—your skin yearns
for my touch of
equinox,
my knuckles paint snapdragon thickets
over your cheekbone, gratitude
and gratification,
finally.
stretch my lavender passion
unto your absent
affection—affectation
driven from wrist to
unleavened wrist. you don't
want my attention
anymore—
the goldfinches have sung our
Gospel since Genesis. Demeter
yearns for our fated folly to flourish—
where is your soul searching for
when I am Juno?

Stephanie Afonso

Steel Diamond

She came to me in a state of unconsciousness.
Those eyes of stolen moonlight,
Hands of healing hearts.
It had been years since I last saw her
Playing in the school yard.
She was so young,
So beautiful.
So torn.
But now, it was a comfort,
Seeing her again, older– battle worn.
Intoxicating words slide from her tongue,
Floating into my ears and dizzying my mind.
Her voice had become a tattoo on my soul.
Words of titanium and brass
That pulled me from the ruff and turned me into
The diamond I am today,
Steel.

Tiffinie Alvarez

nonlinear

- iv. I wish you had died before you ruined Taylor Swift for me.
- x. I'm so tired of life not being linear and so sick of you dragging me back through the ditches with you.
- v. I remember the taste of marshmallow peeps on my first Easter post you and the way I associated that sickly sweetness with your memory in a poem two months prior.
- ii. I met someone new in September of 2015, but you're still in my rearview on August 31st waiting for me to come back home.
- vi. There's a song playing on 95.7 about red lips and rosy cheeks and I flashback to hospital cafeterias and tear stained napkins before the second verse hits.
- iii. I think about you every time I slip my hand into his and they fit together like puzzle pieces.
- ix. He buys me yellow daisies because the color reminds him of me and all they do is bring me back to the shade of your bedroom walls.
- i. I'm caught between him and the ghost of you and I so often wonder if my idea of you is stronger than who you actually were.
- vii. He's got posters on his walls of bands you used to scream to and there are no calluses on his fingertips from playing Wonderwall until they bled.
- viii. When I think about you in the future, I'd like to do it in passing without tears or old memories in my eyes.

Elizabeth Gourde

I Wish I Was

“When should I come over?”

“Whenever’s most convenient for you.”

That’s when you can have me —
absolutely any and every time that
works best for you.

“What do you want to do?”

A whole lot of nothing
but whatever you want to do,
preferably in your room,
where I can sew my affections deep into you,
gingerly trace them into each sinew,
tessellating testaments of my love
until they overcrowd
overburden
your
backbones

I inevitably go
and the only vestige
is a numbness

I don’t walk my fingers down your spine
I tip-toe the tips
and I whisper when I part my lips
and the only suggestions I make
are my hands by my hips
because I’m terrified

that I will leave you bald
and naked
from all of my tressing

and I will leave bruises
on your back
from all of my caressing

I wish I was something
you could pick up and use
a brush

a candle
a mug
a liquor handle
something that satisfies
but can easily be turned off or put away
something never too much
something just right
enough

yes, something
you can pick up and use
something with meaning
something you wouldn't want
to lose

because my touch might be gentle
but what I feel is not —
I'm mild Ms. Manners
but my emotional porridge is too hot
and my tough love too tough
and my rough sex too rough
and my enthusiasm too much
but
still
somehow
it is never enough

Tiffinie Alvarez

frigus

I'm so tired
of trying to write you into
the person I wanted you to be
instead of the monster you became
when you made me.

Cold.

In the North Adams blizzard
you made me walk through
the day your father came to visit that
man who made you dark and twisty
thorn bushes in Eden
things I shouldn't touch
but reach for nonetheless.

Tiffinie Alvarez

my mothers hair had flowers woven in it and my father had dirt under his nails and i was the result of their years of irresponsibility

i think that birds aren't real because they went away when my father did

—and I think my mother may have had something to do with that

what with her locking me in the tower for months

—and months until I figured out how to tie my bath towels together and

used four years of ropes course leadership retreat skills to propel down the side

—of the house into the arms of a man who could have been my father because

he was that much older than me but still fucked me like I was grown

—and then straightened my schoolgirl skirt before helping me climb my makeshift ladder

up to my old tower bedroom four years post first escape where my mother found me sitting

—on my bed as if I never left

—and the bird sang to me as I pretended they were never really gone.

Natanya Furgal

Pluto by Hades Himself

i want to climb the deep dirt
let it seep into my hands
char the creases of my undone knuckles
with black streaks of something i
don't understand yet want
to be—
my love for my child
would be disastrous.
bound indefinitely to the grimoires
of personal impermanent puerility
she would cry for another mother
other than this—
do you know
this christening?
lips beaten to a pulp
by your own teeth?
pedigree dog slobber
over earth, my blood
curdles quick if i yearn
to cradle already
hollow coffins—