

AWAKE AND ASLEEP: THE WORDS

I'VE DREAMT

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by

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# Rondeaux

## Fearing Love

I see the way you watch me, close and far.  
The way your eyes will hold me, shining stars  
that dare to dream a future love of two.  
Afraid of love unknown, I run from blue  
you, from likely future harm and scars.

You chase, knowing the fear my eyes impart  
belongs elsewhere, then run beside, so my hair  
is farther back than you! Will love ensue?  
I see the way you watch me, close and far.

First I'm still afraid, but time apart  
and near reveals you're kind and gentle. Dear,  
my heart has grown to love you more than fools  
admire their gold. So come, we'll walk all through  
the world in sync, a sweet and lovely pair.  
I see the way you watch me, close and far.

## What I Can't Turn Off

Ears are different from eyes or noses, the poor things. When my eyes are assaulted (seeing spiders comes to mind) their lids can slide down and reject the horror before them. The smell of a dead mouse rotting and crawling with maggots somewhere

unknown, if I hold my breath, can be briefly ignored.

What about the crunch of someone eating, murmur of whispered words at a library, sniffing of cold sufferers? These sounds, which bombard my ears, can't be turned

off, like the ticklish feel of a light touch or a soft and temperate breeze. Or the painful flare that runs through my nerves like a shot when I'm felled from a tall and grassy hill by gravity, blood staining my clothes. The pain then yelling "Beware!" on repeat, though I know and wish to be spared.

# Villanelles



## Villanelle

My darkened skin, like night  
as darkened day, differs  
and frightens those without sight.

The blind search for the light  
and hide inside their quarters  
from my darkened skin, like night,

the bearer of problems. The weight  
of presumed danger overbears  
and frightens those without sight,

who ignore the sameness right  
inside me, think what matters  
is my darkened skin. Like night,

it cloaks the world that light,  
although unchanged, uncovers,  
and frightens those without sight.

The blind want to take flight  
or run under the covers.  
My darkened skin, like night,  
frightens those without sight.

## Letter to the Murderers of the World

I know you've caused a lot of mischief,  
that there's blood on your hands,  
yet your deeds make me fear myself.

Your hands have slashed innocent veins with vicious  
precision, at best; broken life they couldn't mend.  
I know you've caused a lot of mischief

and you don't care. You're the misfits  
that want the people of the world to be damned,  
yet your deeds make me fear myself.

My mind can't mend you, human as well,  
not a monster but doing things I can't stand.  
I know you've caused a lot of mischief

and that I could too. You're malicious  
yet I could, without knowing, be your friend,  
so your deeds make me fear myself.

You're out there now, on a mission  
to bring the lives of many more to an end.  
I know you've caused a lot of mischief  
yet your deeds make me fear myself.

# Sonnets

## Santo Domingo

The fine and light grains of sand on your beaches  
are gently massaged by the back and forth motion  
of small and rainbow waves. Behind, the leaves  
of your palm and coconut trees shadow a portion

of paradise. Dotted the sand are rich tourists,  
their skin whiter than the grains beneath them. Dear,  
your most precious parts aren't for those fed from your breasts,  
no, resorts and their beaches belong to wealthy strangers.

But the calming sound of rain on a tin roof,  
the sense of one among your people, the ripe  
fruit that hangs on your trees ready to be pulled  
and enjoyed, the freedom of joblessness, more, we keep.

These treasures are harder to see and lesser known,  
but they're grand riches that still remain our own.

## The Rising Fall

I walk on a flat road, it's perfect: no bumps,  
no dents, all smooth. From the middle I inspect the sides,  
beyond which I see the sky. It's blue, with clouds,  
and still. Like it's stuck forever. I'm wearing pumps

and a short skirt, like I never do. Clacking steps  
announce my arrival to none. There's nothing ahead  
except the static sky. I reach the end  
of the road and stand at an edge, before a drop

that looks infinite and sky deep. I don't think  
for long because I must get ahead: I jump  
with my eyes open, expecting a fall, but I rise  
instead. This new anti-gravity plucks  
me up against my will and struggles, and pulls  
me closer to what? My future success or demise?

## My Words

I've tamed a wave of wild words and, riding  
on its tangled back, I search a wordy puzzle  
for more. My lasso circles above my curly  
and lengthy haired head and naked, sweating,

tan body; prepared to catch the fleeting,  
complete words I spot among the single  
letters. It's hard. They're fast and my mind struggles  
against the fear of falling through openings

in the wave, like the O's. Who controls the words that come?  
Don't know, don't care. I must catch them. These slip  
into view and are caught one at a time: alone,  
night, silence. They're mine of my will and not, some  
other being brought them here, but I chose to stop  
and lasso them, make them mine. We've become one.

Dancing Shadow, a Curtal Sonnet

I used to picture my shadow in chains, forever  
subject to changing winds (my whims). But truly  
I'm the one enslaved. My chains are words written,

enforced by others. My mind beneath their heavy  
weight like my body under gravity. Will  
my voice ever be heard among those known,

a chorus, written and spoken? People guard  
against any change, thoughtless. My shadow, though?  
I've seen her dance to rays of sun, freely,  
without the worry prying eyes will judge  
her, make her heart bow.

# Sestinas



## 21st Century Ads

You think, "It's such a waste of time,"  
and I couldn't agree with you more!  
Why should the need to exercise disturb  
your daily life? See, I know you're tired  
so I've devised a device that is magic,  
the truly perfect solution to your problem,

and it is indeed such a dastardly problem.  
The Full Body Wrap Trimmer will save your time!  
Wrap it around your body to sweat and experience magic  
fat loss and muscle maintenance. The more  
you let FBWT exercise for you, the less tired  
you will become! Don't let exercise disturb

your fun. Actually, don't let defecation disturb  
you either. Defecation is an embarrassing problem  
we all face, and even when we're not tired,  
we don't want to spend our precious time  
doing it! Well search for relief from it no more,  
I have the perfect device for you, the magic

Defecation Assistant 3000! DA3000 is so magic  
that when you use it your sleep won't be disturbed.  
Before bed, put its nozzle in your anus and more  
feces will be removed from deeper within than when it was your problem!  
Turn it on, fall asleep, and spend no energy or time  
relieving yourself, except of shame! You'll be tired  
less often as DA3000 works for you! Are you tired

of constructing your own thoughts? How magic  
-al would it be to not waste your time  
thinking? Don't let this trifle disturb  
you for another minute! It is an incessant problem  
common to everyone but don't worry anymore,

the Thought Stimulating Helmet will be more  
than happy to think for you! It'll never get tired  
as it stimulates your brain with electricity, relieving you of your problem.  
Place TSH on your head and magic  
will happen: your thinking will cease to disturb  
you. Take back control of your valuable time!

Let no problem take away your time  
and wait no more to buy these magic  
devices and stop being disturbed and tired!

## Moon Time Thoughts

Lying in bed, I want to skip  
the frightful hours of the dark night.  
So should I fall asleep?  
Should I pass the time  
under the covers, eyes closed, unaware?  
Or would that be wasting my life?

Sometimes I wish I could put my life  
on pause, not have to live it or skip  
it for a period. I'm aware  
of those moments in the day or night  
when my mind seems to stop, although time  
keeps crawling. I might as well be asleep.

No, I willfully refuse sleep;  
I'm listening to the rushing sound of life  
that's outside and hoping for moon time  
to pass quickly, although skip  
-ing it is out of the question. The night  
is simply too dangerous, I must be aware

of everything at all times. If I'm aware  
nothing can catch me off-guard. Sleep  
-ing simply leaves people defenseless while night  
cloaks their fears. The day is when my life  
thrives, and I'd never want to skip  
it. I cherish every bit of sun time,  
  
while fearing every second of moon time.

Yet I'm also painfully aware  
that I won't be able to skip  
being unconscious forever. The enchantress sleep  
will keep calling my name. Throughout life  
I will find myself succumbing to her at night,

my resting body left without fight. The night...  
I don't enjoy that time,  
except, perhaps, in dreams. But it's nice seeing life  
cloaked in light when I awake and become aware  
of the fact that I've been seduced by sleep  
again. I hate and thank her for allowing me to skip

the night I fear, but don't wish to skip  
defenseless. How much time will I be unaware?  
How much life will I spend asleep?

## Adjacent Mazes

It is dark, but your path is moonlit  
and you see what you must to walk  
forward—the only way you can thanks  
to those tall, living, green walls that surround  
you elsewhere. Time passes as you travel from long  
corridor to long corridor, twists and turns

coming at random intervals. It turns  
out that you are traveling within a moonlit  
maze. Your strides are measured and not long  
as, beneath the sky overhead, your bare feet slowly walk  
on damp earth. You wonder what surrounds  
this breathing labyrinth, and who to thank

for finding yourself in it. You start to thank  
something holy as you make one last turn  
towards the exit and hope to be surrounded  
by free, open space soon. The white moonlight  
shines on your lively, disheveled hair as you walk,  
seemingly, away from it. Your toenails are long

enough to cut skin, it has been a long  
time since you have even looked at them. Thank  
-fully you reach the end of the path and you walk  
out into a larger ... hall. You turn  
around several times to examine it. The moonlight  
reveals the hard, smooth surfaces that surround

you now. A goosebump-producing cold surrounds

you, coming off the stone walls and floor. It is not long  
before you have reached the end of the moonlit,  
unlively hall, but when you start to give thanks  
again, you notice that it is another turn  
that lies before you, and that your walk

to freedom is not over. And so you walk  
on the hard floor, less hopeful of a future not surrounded  
by a maze. One after another, the turns  
come and go, but no matter how long  
you wait, they do not stop coming. "Thanks  
a lot, malevolence!" You continue toiling by moonlight.

Perhaps you will walk forever in this moonlight,  
surrounded by changing corridors that are long  
and end in turn after turn. Who can you thank?

# Blank Verse

## How Caring for People Works

I think caring for one person, let alone many, is a daunting task. I picture a set of dominoes, neatly standing, forming a whole that either stands or falls as one. If you care for a person you wish them safety, joy. The first of those seems simple enough, it's the joy, which feels like the light of the sun has graced your mind, that's hard to maintain. Imagine how many people that one person's joy depends on and you'll see how, one by one, I ended up caring about everyone.



## The Imagined vs the Real

My top and bottom lashes become one, and  
the darkened world before my eyes comes with  
the tightening feel of my leg muscles tensing  
as I squat. My arms beside me, I push against

the ground with my feet, and spring into the air  
above. Like a slow wind, it brushes down  
my skin for ages. I feel my body reach  
the edge of Earth's atmosphere, stop, and begin

a slow descent. The air beneath my feet  
collapses, my body cutting through. It becomes  
a wind-like rush up my skin. My feet then land  
with a soft thud on the ground. I open my eyes

and real returns. The world is divided in two,  
the azure sky above and the green grass  
below. This time, I really jump. I see  
the green slowly begin to push away

as azure pulls me close. But Earth, my feet  
a mere couple of inches off the ground,  
is selfish and wraps her arms around my legs.  
I quickly crash on the grass with a loud thud.

# Original Form

## What's Wrong with Today's Men? A Half-Sestina

The headlines read "What's Wrong with Today's Men?"

They're blowing holes through themselves and others with guns,  
bloody bullets exploding through bodies or remaining buried

within them, more often. These aren't the men who'll be buried  
in uniform, wearing honorary medals of murder. These men  
don't kill for oil, the cross, or the American flag. Their guns

aren't righteous! When one of these men puts a gun  
to his own or someone else's head, it's because buried  
in his life story is red hot anger or gray cold loneliness. Men

shouldn't kill unless ordered to by more important men! Guns  
may only prepare US-approved bodies for burial.

## The Pain in My Seat, a Half-Sestina

My chronic pain cuts me like the dull blade of an old, frequently used knife. But unlike a knife, sharpening it would be a terror to myself, and throwing it away is impossible. Don't worry. You don't have to shift uncomfortably in your seat,

or avert your eyes. Just carry on, like I do, and let the words above take a backseat to the smile on my face. You'll notice that there are wrinkles beside my lips, but not beside my eyes. That my beautiful brown orbs seem to look at you and, in a way,

through you, simultaneously. Maybe you'll notice that their inherent shine has gone away. If I let myself think about the pain, I ask, but why me? and wish I was in someone else's seat. Now you're probably yelling selfish! at me in your mind. Yet at times I also think: but

I wouldn't wish this on my worst enemy! I know this seat is mine to keep, but sometimes I can't help wishing I could walk away.