

### **Fallen Garden**

The flowers I coaxed into brightness have entered the season of rain and death, some shaped like mindless doodles and some like the silver spires of science fiction cities, some like warrior angels in heavy gold breastplates and some like metal spoons bent by telekinesis, some like broken traffic lights and some like the chewed stub of a pencil, some like failed revolutions and mass beheadings and some like a cold voice that asks for me by name.

### **Jesus Loves You**

There were a lot of stars that night, constellations in the shape of a dancing bear, a winged horse, even a hammer and sickle, but there wasn't a lot of light. Different things looked dangerously like the same thing in the dark. A woman with the beautiful blank expression of a mannequin strolled out a window as if it were a door. Witnesses were anxious to describe what they thought they had seen, a bumper sticker proclaiming Jesus Loves You. Oh, how bourgeois! I hadn't been born yet when she fell with a scream or I probably would have been having a beer at a four-lane bowling alley that doesn't exist anymore.

\*

**Howie Good** is the recipient of the 2015 Press Americana Prize for Poetry for his collection *Dangerous Acts Starring Unstable Elements*.

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## My Mother's Garden

The flowers that bloom here have done so since creation.

They hold the nectar of a God that simply wishes for recognition.

The cardinal comes by every morning  
to tap at the window.  
Tap tap tap day and night  
at the window.

Everyone says it's Frances  
but I don't know. It could be Vernon  
or Sarah or Pop or Fay. So many possibilities,  
who would want to offer a *hello* or *I miss you*.

The yellow rose still opens and closes with seasons.  
The cactus spreads out and suffocates.

The life that flows through this space is expansive.

The bumble bee.  
The nectarine tree.  
The Mockingbird and her eggs.

The Bluejay and the remnants of footprints  
of children who played hide n seek  
cops and robbers  
and fetch with their dogs.

There are unseeable roots here.

How beautiful the Hummingbird  
and the whiz of tiny feathers.  
How beautiful the hands that caress these leaves.  
How lovely the voice that sings here and echoes a love that cannot be forgotten like the passing  
of winds.

We consider a closeness every day  
in our hurried lives.  
We cannot forget the consideration of the fertilization of our beauty,  
the way she cultivates legacy,

with the melodies of Songbirds  
and dirt too rich to be discarded.

I know all the pieces of God live here.

**Sarah Frances Moran** is a writer, editor, animal lover, videogamer, queer Latina. She thinks Chihuahuas should rule the world and prefers their company to people 90% of the time. Her work has most recently been published or is upcoming in *The No Se Habla Espanol Anthology*, *Elephant Journal*, *Drunk Monkeys*, *Rust+Moth*, *Maudlin House*, *Blackheart Magazine*, *Red Fez* and *The Bitchin' Kitsch*. She is Editor/Founder of Yellow Chair Review. These days you can find her kayaking the Brazos in Waco, Texas with her partner. You may reach her at [www.sarahfrancesmoran.com](http://www.sarahfrancesmoran.com)

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**“Congraduations”**

I don't know who's more productive  
In this season; put your back into it.

Attach soft blinders to the face;  
Cover unsure future plans.

The way the gown crawls along  
The forearms and swishing yawls

Of your body like a beat-flat boa,  
Chastened by extraneous newfound

Love that envelops you in the same wake,  
Knows you like a vision, sees you like a prayer.

You're one hundred percent sober  
Except when he's around which is often.

So you get ready, liquor up for a party  
You don't feel ready for (in any case).

But darling think of all the fun you'll have  
With any members who remember

Your tired body like a chant sung  
By Tibetan monks outside your cold window.

And their near-frozen faces looking  
At your gauche twenties outfit with the tassels

Until one of the tassels hits you just right—  
You awaken into something new.

\*

**Blake Wallin** is a senior English Literature major at Wheaton College. He's on twitter.

\*

**Hello**

It's me again, your ex girlfriend- sike,  
it is an inbox full of missed calls- sike,  
it is a Google maps street view of your house- sike—

it is the soft roar of rain on my dorm room window  
You don't see or hear these things  
Your twitter says you're at her house

They say cell service is shit in southern Jersey

We were a four chord pop punk atrocity,  
the fresh smell of body and desperation  
bloomed out of basement concerts and empty promises,  
stale and inevitable

The Front Bottoms prophesied our disaster  
you switched out our love for your want-to-be-something  
I don't blame you  
for becoming the sin

I said I reveled in this  
Bedsheets cradled our toxic waste  
till we swam in it

I recently inquired about the possibility of a Q&A with your bedroom walls

Have been wondering if they saw something I missed

\*

**Erin Conroy** is a nineteen year old writer currently attempting to survive in limbo between the intricate world of college studies and the existential trap that is listening to sad music on her dorm room floor while unironically eating Pez from a Minion Pez dispenser. She attends Arcadia University in Glenside, Pennsylvania. Find her on twitter at @erinzilla.

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**Later Works**

At fifty you will have forgotten  
the specifics of your sadness.

You will be invited backstage  
to meet the cast  
of an off-Broadway play  
about gorillas.

It will always be

about gorillas.  
You'll feel vindicated

when your colleagues speak  
of horizons,  
and the young girls roll  
their eyes.

The word "horizons"  
will register

as "black honey."

Your need for guns,  
high-pitched voices  
and gourmet meals  
will sharply decrease.

You'll increasingly like  
the idea of opera,  
but actually attending one

will leave you angry  
and confused.

**On Being a Finch**

The wild finches don't so much  
disappear as succumb  
to severe depression.

Everything good

about being a finch  
has been compromised.

If I could shrink down the Renaissance Fair,  
(and I have always  
avoided the Renaissance Fair,)  
it would appear to explode

midair, its overconfident jousters

becoming little wings,  
its anachronistic beer gardens  
an effort to dislodge

grains of sand  
from the throat.

**The Bedside Book of Vampire Fiction**

The moon bellows and shakes  
like jelly.

My fictive kin flavor the sky.  
No apologies.

No glowing white  
surface would have them.

There is no longer such a thing  
as slow or forbidden.

They bump fists.  
Each head is a fist.

Each fang a finger.  
We stand on the corner

throwing gang signs  
to other catatonics.

Still waters and flatter affects  
flatter my figure.

That's me looking up  
from a passage

on Lilith's ambivalence  
about her own beating heart.

\*

**Glen Armstrong** holds an MFA in English from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and teaches writing at Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan. He edits a poetry journal called *Cruel Garters* and has three new chapbooks: *Set List* (Bitchin Kitsch,) *In Stone* and *The Most Awkward Silence of All* (both Cruel Garters Press.) His work has appeared in *Poetry Northwest*, *Conduit* and *Cloudbank*.

\*



**Untitled**

yes, you are here  
and I recognize your importance  
but I reject your extravagance

**I heard a saxophone today**

I heard a saxophone today  
*wah-wah oooh*  
*wah-wah squeak*  
among the rustling of branches and the chirping of birds

I heard a saxophone today  
down Edsam, up Lincoln  
bouncing off of houses and chimneys

*wah-wah oooh*  
*wah-wah squeak*  
as I nap in my bed  
in my house all alone  
I can hear the sound of everything  
and nothing else

the buzzing of motors  
cars as giant insects  
the echo-echo  
of birds and airplanes  
and a saxophone  
far away  
*wah-wah oooh*  
*wah-wah squeak*

the sound of someone learning  
a truly wonderful noise

among the sound of everything  
and nothing else

\*

**Sean Wofford** is no one. He lives where nothing happens and sometimes writes. Read more of his writing on [his blog](#).

\*

**Conversations with the Moon**

When you wink, I smile  
Rush to open a window  
Or two, to let your waning  
Jokes in. Never before had I realized  
What a sense of humor the moon had.  
You make me giggle with hyperbole,  
Your pledges of “forever”  
Of “always.”

Because even you, with your calendar-  
Dependent temperament,  
Have no concept of time.

**Scratches**

Four score and seven iced coffees ago,  
You told me, “We want different things.”

Why choose an amusement park?  
Not amused.

My wide-eyed cat sprawls upon a table,  
Begging to be ignored.

Yes, you want what that cat wants—  
Space. Room to roam, but

I was never too great at stifling love,  
Which explains all the claw marks.

### **Between Us**

His favorite is the Lady's-slipper,  
A rarity testament to his quirks.  
Men partial to orchids can be trusted  
To pleasure you down to your roots.

He changes by the side of a road,  
Unabashedly mooning the sun.

Budding relationship with independence,  
Scars stemming from run-ins with romance—  
He's in need of an Italy Street equivalent,  
Walls to hang memories and string lights.

You'll say, "Takes you a while to come through,"  
He eventually answers, "But I always do."

### **Aurelia's Anthem**

Speeding by old haunts with new Her,  
Passenger seat apathy.

Ever since they demolished our pathway  
Without consulting us, we have been unable  
To find the way back to one another's lower backs.

There's a sunflower field in Newburyport  
I'll never take Her to,  
There's a song in my ugly heart  
Beating just for you.

\*

**Sarah A. O'Brien** enjoys dark chocolate, alternative rock, and wordplay. Sarah's work has previously published by *The Alembic*, *Every Writer*, *The Screech Owl*, *Snapping Twig*, *Ampersand Literary*, and *Unbroken Journal*, and is forthcoming in *Third Point Press*. Follow her adventures: @fluent\_SARAcasm.

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**Portrait**

*in response to free verse and formal verse versions of a poem  
by j.lewis titled "and if i dream" and "And If I Dream – II"*

I look at ancient, formal portraits  
and I think: if I had been  
the painter, I too would have  
worked diligently, earned my pay:

painted the captain in his uniform,  
his hand upon the blade, his  
lady in her flowing skirt, hands  
folded not to fidget in her lap.

But then, the work complete  
and coin in hand, I would have  
gone down to the market,  
purchased parchment and coal—

I'd take these home and draw them  
both again, in secret, draw them  
in a private moment in the kitchen,  
the lady standing with a spoon

dipped in a bowl of batter, captain  
sitting in a wooden chair, tilted back  
and leaning to scratch the upturned  
belly of his favorite hound.

**all the way from Benin**

*after "Provision" by Ehizogie Iyeomoan, in which he wonders why a grasshopper has traveled from Benin to Kano on the windshield wiper without dismounting*

there was a hunger in Kano, an appetite  
only to be satisfied by a grasshopper

an ordinary lizard, mostly below the level  
of our notice, forced to crawl on its belly

is hungry: who are we to say the beloved  
is too mighty or too busy to listen to its

prayer it writes upon the air with quick  
flicks of its tongue? who are we to say

the beloved has not knelt in the dust  
of some car park in Kano to read

the invisible prayer this creature has  
inscribed? who are we to put limitations

on the beloved, say he will not work  
miracles, even for mere redneck lizards?

who are we to underestimate powers  
of mercy and of grace, who are we to say

the lizard's prayer has not been heard  
and his requested miracle delivered?

\*

**Laura M Kaminski** grew up in northern Nigeria, went to school in New Orleans, and currently lives in rural Missouri. She is an Associate Editor at *Right Hand Pointing*. Her most recent poetry collection is *Considering Luminescence* (2015). Her poetry practice blog is at [arkofidentity.wordpress.com](http://arkofidentity.wordpress.com)

Both of these poems appear in Laura's forthcoming collection *Dance Here*.

\*

**My phone keeps dying but the world does not**

11:53 pm-

text messages. Facebook. Reddit. spoiler alert: i am probably going to die with my cellphone in my hand. my cellphone is in my hand and i think about how I am going to die. i drown myself in sleep and dream about losing my teeth. I scramble to shove them one by one back into my mouth like words that I vomited up and now must swallow.

2:23 am-

i wake up and stretch the days like a fine rubberband and feel like I'm no longer alive. allnighters turned into weeks into months into years and I still haven't slept, though i am the dead maggot burrowing deep within your skin.

2:43am-

i still can't shake the fear of losing life. if you widen your eyes just enough you can see anything. and as i stretch mine, the iPhone display turns to little scratches of light resembling a finger-painting of space i once did as a kid. through the haze i read buzzfeed articles that tell me i need more sleep to be a better person and that i should probably get a cat. but i already have a one and she sits on my belly as my mind fades slowly into the night.

3:13am-

articles online inform me of the fact that the amount of coffee required to properly function as a human being is exponentially proportional to the square root of people spoken to that day and this makes sense to me. and it's probably why i'm still awake. you turn to me in your sleep and ask me who I am but receive no answer. you roll back over and i continue to ponder this question until i am happy. but we both know that can't happen.

4:23am-

i hum listlessly to black veil brides and rise against as my phone beeps. more messages come in, more coherent than your mid sleep ramblings but I never truly 'get' them: ie this game I'm streaming right now would totally be up your alley, ie your so totally hipster, ie dancing girls emoji, ,shrimp emoji, racially offensive emoji, do you think if we died right now anyone would really care emoji.

4:43am-

i slam my iPhone down coldly. both hands are needed to battle with demons and apple makes iphones in sweatshops in china. i wonder aloud whether anyone killed themselves so that they could escape the madness of working on the source of mine, or whether they just landed in nets.

5:23 am-

lay i continue on, searching online petitions. i crusade to stop the tyranny one tweet at a time:  
roses are red/ violets are blue/ jet fuel can't melt steel beams. by now I know i've lost my own  
mind but then "what is a mind to lose?" I tweet

5:43am-

i breathe my last breath. tweet my last tweet. loss is just a concept of imagination. another  
manifestation of my own mind. but still i die my iphone in my hand.

5:54am-

my cat crawls atop my dead carcass and meows long like a diesel engine struggling.

6:33am-

thanks Obama, I am finally asleep.

\*

**Mallory Smart** is a poet/writer from Chicago, Illinois. She runs the publishing company Maudlin House and has a cat. Her book "Im AntiSocial, Coffee Never Lies" comes out September 2015 from Bottlecap Press. Tweet her @malsmart. She's antisocial but likes the attention.

\*



**Familiar Scratch**

My thumb is a battery  
and I like to rub my ankle until my nerves complete the circuit of my digits  
It doesn't feel good,  
but it does.

Once I grew my nail out and scratched my surface  
just to see if I still felt pain  
And boy, did it feel  
good.  
It felt like thumb digit electricity and yellow water balloons, air dried hair and watermelon juice and  
honey in June bugs on leaves and train tracks.

But I'm no conductor, I'm no conductor  
And I don't drive this Train.

My shoes lost traction the first day I got them  
And I wear shoes till I'm just in my own feet  
and then I can feel that scratch,

that familiar scratch  
And I don't have to remind myself  
That I can  
Still  
Make  
Electricity.

**The sidewalk was dirty.**

*A sea of cigarettes and traces of  
stale booze pass by like road signs  
The ambience is free jazz  
My feet are flirting with gravity  
and I have to force them away as each  
crack approaches my toes*

*It's busy for a wednesday.*

I couldn't tell if she was weeping  
But she stood so firm on that  
sidewalk in her deep purple gown  
And she  
was singing

She was singing and my feet married the ground  
so I watched.

"it's gonna be alright, you know it's gonna be alright!"

Echoing over the free jazz  
She was a nightingale  
She was a hot air balloon  
She was an angel or something

And then a drunk red dress  
Clinging in unflattering places,  
And falling off in others,  
Stumbled down the street in pigeon-toe.

She stopped and laughed.

\*

**Deb Gilmore** is a student at Arcadia University in Glenside, Pennsylvania.

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**EMILY AS THE BUILD BETWEEN TWO FORCES**

If the sky  
would only step  
the fuck back,

Emily said,  
I could be  
in love

without feeling  
like God  
was already

coming for you.  
I said, that  
doesn't matter.

If it mattered  
to you, it  
wouldn't matter,

she smiled.  
We were so close  
& yet

what would happen  
after I couldn't  
love Emily

anymore, after  
I was in pieces  
in the river

gave us a distance  
that felt like  
we needed faith.

**EMILY AS WE SWAM IN CELESTIAL BLOOD**

If we had more moons,  
if we had thirteen moons

I would still count Emily,  
the one Emily, more often

than I would count moons.  
Having thirteen moons

instead of one wouldn't make  
me crash any faster into

the shoreline of where  
I want the ocean to lead me.

I can only imagine the sky  
after I place Emily up there.

**EMILY AS JUST INSIDE THE BOX WHERE THE LIGHT PENETRATED**

*For Oni Buchanan*

I don't need to see  
more of Emily  
to know that warmth

in the darkest corner  
of my own mind  
is coming from her

own energies. I have  
forgotten why I am  
in this box, but I have

learned to love that  
Emily knows exactly  
where to find me.

\*

**Darren C. Demaree's** poems have appeared or are scheduled to appear in numerous journals, including *South Dakota Review*, *Meridian*, *The Louisville Review*, *Diagram*, and *Colorado Review*. He is the author of *As We Refer To Our Bodies* (2013, 8th House), *Temporary Champions* (2014, Main Street Rag), *The Pony Governor* (2015, After the Pause Press), and *Not For Art Nor Prayer* (2015, 8th House). He is the Managing Editor for the Best of the Net Anthology, and lives and writes in Columbus, Ohio with his wife and children.

\*

**The Wicked Witch of the West**

In the middle of summer  
And the tree branches look like veins or shotguns  
Sam is chugging a beer out of this girl's prosthetic leg  
Her laugh sounds like the numbness of pills  
With touches of cabaret.  
"Oh, oh, oh, what a feeling," she says  
As Sam kisses the basilica of her neck.  
Meanwhile I'm lying in the grass  
And being slut-shamed by mosquitoes  
I like being bullied  
And let them play spin the bottle with my ankles  
In the darkness, our dead fathers are laying eggs  
In the back of a Chevy S-10 pickup  
Later in the night, we use our shame like a chainsaw  
To cut down the moon  
Afterwards we're standing on the northern bank  
Of a river I don't remember  
And I'm begging Sam to beat me bloody  
With that girl's prosthetic leg  
When suddenly a hundred billion phantom limbs  
Wash up on the shore  
The spoils of young people dying and old men talking  
"Oh, oh, oh, what a feeling," Sam says  
As he dips his toe in the water  
The girl laughs and it sounds like the fall of Fallujah  
With touches of vaudeville  
I use her prosthetic leg like a broom to sweep up the shore  
The absence courses through my body and lifts me into the air  
Before long I'm cackling like a witch and riding across the sky  
On that girl's magic prosthetic leg, casting a spell on America  
So that we can learn to love again,  
For all the amputees to come together  
To smash the old world and build a better body

**Clutching That Postmortem Mic**

I find myself purgatoried in a karaoke club for the dead  
Where the prophylactic gravity glues you to the barstool  
And the bartender in red shoves shots of cheap formaldehyde  
Down your throat and the suicides of all your friends  
Are singing "Paradise by the Dashboard Light"  
And you suddenly remember every little thing  
As if it happened only yesterday.

\*

**Justin Karcher** is a playwright and poet living in Buffalo, NY. He is the Co-Artistic Director of Theater Jugend as well as its Playwright-in-Residence. His recent works have been published in 3:AM Magazine, The Buffalo News, Plenitude Magazine, Melancholy Hyperbole, and more. He is the recent winner of the 2015 Just Buffalo Literary Center members' writing competition. A book of poems, *Tailgating at the Gates of Hell*, will be released in October from Ghost City Press. He tweets @Justin\_Karcher.

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**Alchemical**

Her hair tints obediently  
to shades of trendy mutations;

these have seen days of  
as if inheriting its colour  
from the black caverns  
of an ancestor's proverb

and days of as if imitating  
a stream breaking out of  
the coldest mountain

and days of shedding  
like the jaundiced rays  
of a dried up summer's sun;

her hair can be frostier  
than the ice she causes,

passing down to generations  
its incapability to hold form

**Quiescence**

Last night the flies lost their wings,

if I had known they were  
the kind of species

that survived the light like an epiphany  
in a grave,

I would never have let  
the dying bulb drop them  
to the floor like nine pins

for, I would know  
what the impassable route  
is not

over slabs of smooth marble

is having originally risen from dust.



**Route**

The train stops swaying,

we cross a makeshift graveyard  
and I think of the ominous  
magnificence of the brambles I saw  
a few short miles ago

the trees on this strip are full  
with leaves

a few children play a skilled game  
of stick and stones

a red cloth fluttering in the wind

mud mosques and *dhabas*  
seated with charpoys

a bison pair keeping loyal  
ly tethered to a nail, protruding from  
a brick wall

and a *madrasah* with broken  
windows that sounds of vacant  
attendances;

I am scrunch foetal  
like, my head buried in  
my knees

eyes pressed to the bones  
fighting nausea

my ears compensating for sight

the wheels begin  
chopping the tracks again

\*

**Sheikha A.** hails from Pakistan and United Arab Emirates. With over 40 publications in various print/online publications such as *Red Fez*, *Ygdrasil*, *A New Ulster*, *The Penmen Review*, *Pyrokinecton*, *Mad Swirl* to name a few, and anthologies by Silver Birch Press and Kind of a Hurricane Press, she has also authored a short poetry collection titled *Spaced* (Hammer and Anvil Books) available on kindle. Her poems have also been recited at two separate poetry reading events held in Greece. She edits poetry for eFiction India. She maintains a (or tries to) blog at [sheikha82.wordpress.com](http://sheikha82.wordpress.com)

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## **Traveling Alone**

I have barely spoken  
For the past five days  
Except to say I'm sorry  
For various inconsequential  
Trespasses  
Understood by all to be  
Inadvertent.

I am a stranger here  
Everywhere  
I tend to keep to myself

I've spent the past five days  
Wandering a city as unfamiliar  
As my own motivations  
Pretending I'm not in a hurry  
Even as I struggle to get to  
Several attractions each day.  
I don't even have to check my email  
But sometimes I do.

Mostly I find myself in public places  
Tuning in on other people's conversations.  
I am a talented eavesdropper  
But a poor conversationalist.  
It's as if I think that every stranger  
Ought to know me already.  
I sound cynical sometimes because  
I just sort of blurt out what I'm thinking  
Without even starting at hello.

I'm not even a very good listener  
Stripmining the conversation  
For the makings of a literary argument.  
(In 15 minutes I could convince you  
That I'm not a good person at all.)

I am barely listening as the tourguide says:  
In the 1830s, there was an epidemic  
Of yellow fever and city was filled  
With above-ground sewers  
Resulting in "premature resurrections"  
Of the dead.

But after five days of doing all the things  
I would never do if I lived here  
I am starting to feel

More culturally evolved  
Like a person who might achieve  
Something  
If I only had the time.

It's so peaceful here, isn't it?  
Nicky! No running in the cemetery.

I did not even intend to write anything here  
Sometimes the transmissions just come  
I am an undercover language spy  
Tenderness exposed to the ravages of the weather.  
Why am I so compelled to steal other people's words  
And write them all down  
To widespread indifference  
And polite applause?

(So what if I collect  
The ephemera of ephemera?  
That's my job, isn't it?)

They say it's the finest restaurant in the city  
\$35 for a steak? I don't think so!

Now that I have escaped the ordinary bedlam  
That I've become accustomed to  
And embraced the congenial decay of this city  
Where amiable spirits take their place at every table  
Without need of invitation  
My mind is filled with profound thoughts  
I mutter to myself.

I want to say something to you now  
About the convergence of time  
How everything I'm doing right now  
Has already been consigned to memory  
And everyone I have ever loved  
Is here with me now.  
And everything I do from now on  
Is an alloy of the present and the past.

I am writing this on a notepad  
Stolen from the hotel in New Orleans.  
(Revised at home on a borrowed laptop)  
And after I win the Nobel Prize  
(For literature)  
I will tell everyone that I have written this  
On a notepad from the hotel in New Orleans  
As if this information had some significance to them

When I'm famous it will.

(And yet I would probably shudder  
At the assumption of such familiarity).

## **Courtly Love**

After dinner, my college friends and I  
Were discussing the death of Courtly Love  
And Annette looked up from the depths  
Of her magazine and said  
“I’m not surprised. It’s like that bitch had nine lives.”

And my friends and I laughed uneasily  
And ignored her for the rest of the conversation.

And in the car on the way home, Annette told me  
That she was in seventh grade when Kurt died.  
She wrote his name on her hand in black ink  
And played nothing but his music for days  
And thought about suicide herself.  
She’d told me that story years ago.  
And several times since.  
We’d been together for four years by then  
An eternity.  
And my pretentious friends from the University had insisted  
They’d love to meet my girlfriend.  
She’d dropped out of college  
Was working as a waitress.  
Theoretically, I respected her.  
Whenever we went out, she paid.

“I knew what Courtly Love was,” she said.  
“So why didn’t you?”  
“I don’t give a shit what those people think  
And you shouldn’t either.”  
And all I wanted to do was get back  
To my college friends  
And speak authoritatively about subjects barely understood  
So I told her I didn’t want to see her anymore.

And she said “Ron, I don’t know what I did wrong.  
Tell me what I did wrong.”  
How could I tell her  
That all the things I loved about her  
I hated now?  
Her straightforwardness. Her eagerness to please.

I was young  
But that’s no excuse  
Is it?

**Your Favorite Avatar**

I'm sorry I couldn't come to the party last night  
I'd desperately wanted to come  
I hope that sometime in the evening  
You sensed a brief disruption in time  
And utilized the occasion to raise a toast to me

I was in transit to an unknown destination  
One breath, and then an interruption  
All my accumulations gone  
Desires and possessions  
Suddenly fallen away

Now I find myself dwelling upon  
The meaninglessness of meaninglessness  
Waiting in this molecular waystation  
Craving life's lively agonies

The dead gather to gossip  
And share petty envies  
Entrusting our existence  
To the vagaries of memory

I'll be your avatar from now on  
Without your careful attention,  
I will wither away.

\*

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