The Weight of One Human on the Shore

Michelle Potgeter
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I am as heavy as a house in the morning,
As heavy as the world as I pad down the hall,
And knock on the bathroom door,
And decide not to take a shower again,
And pour a cup of coffee and feel the steam settle
On my puffed up lips.

I am heavy and not myself and very low to the ground,
As I decide that jeans are too restricting,
And hair is not worth fixing,
And a Mountain Dew will do more for me
And my chalk dry tongue.

It's nine O'clock and I am fifteen pounds from okay,
Clamping along like a horse on a trail,
Feeling like I've never been so earthy,
Feeling like I've never been so tangled,
Feeling like I've never been so mindful,
And my thoughts are a batch of beached whales.

The day stumps along with me, the sun rising and soon sinking,
Because it's too heavy to hold itself up for too long,
And night has been pushing it and pushing it and pushing it,
And winter has rendered it yellow-bellied, and it succumbs,
After a brief attempt at rising forever it sinks itself into an unmade bed
of hills,
And stars, and red-headed houses.

Before it fell, I watched it high up, watched it send out streams,
And richly pour its offerings out; attempting to infuse the world with
warm
Brilliant poetry. I've always thought the sad sun was a poet; the brilliant
day a poet too.

As it bedded itself, I think it stuck something in me:
Something big and fat and lighter than flower petals.

I think it stretched my short fat
And made me thin as a wire.

Gravity let go and I started float
people below,
Singing songs loud and sweet and
stretching lines
All over the atmosphere, out over
high and low,
Lifting them all up in perfect m
tapped with their
Stompy shoes four feet down. I
curly heads,
And they smiled back.

That high off the earth, I wanted
So all his curly grey thoughts ar
entwine into new
Black or brown or green ones.

I wanted to give Carly Simon n
To kick off the memory I smell,
To kick off the bad alcoholic br
And then, salve the paper-cuts i
index finger.

As I drifted overhead, over the
the afternoon,
As I felt my freedom run itself
blood,
As I sung out verse upon verse,
And all the people left and four
And the sun had settled itself a
I came upon a quiet water still :
I drifted right above the shore
By the gentle touch of Moon, a
grandmother hands.

I swam down from the sky and
Staring up at the tree for a while...
an on the Shore

I think it stretched my short fat body seven feet five inches,
And made me thin as a wire.

Gravity let go and I started floating four feet up, and singing to the people below,
Singing songs loud and sweet and ecclesiastical. I was a hymn myself,
stretching lines
All over the atmosphere, out over the sunset, spotting them with notes high and low,
Lifting them all up in perfect measure and time, and the world tap-tapped with their
Stompy shoes four feet down. I smiled at them and they lifted their curly heads,
And they smiled back.

That high off the earth, I wanted to wear a hat of Walt Whitman,
So all his curly grey thoughts and all my curly red thoughts would entwine into new
Black or brown or green ones.

I wanted to give Carly Simon my hand for a dance to kick off the men,
To kick off the memory I smelled in the elevator the day before,
To kick off the bad alcoholic breath, and the reek of minty fresh gum,
And then, salve the paper-cuts looking like ladder rungs up my right index finger.

As I drifted overhead, over the clock tower singing like a giant bird in the afternoon,
As I felt my freedom run itself through and through and through my blood,
As I sung out verse upon verse, and the world grew quieter and softer,
And all the people left and found their places in their red-headed homes,
And the sun had settled itself almost entirely under covers,
I came upon a quiet water still as the night, and serene as the silence.

I drifted right above the shore and noticed how one stately tree reflected,
By the gentle touch of Moon, as she sprawled her glow with grandmother hands.

I swam down from the sky and settled at the water’s edge,
Staring up at the tree for a while, and then at its silver image.
Smoothed into the softness of the pool.

And I felt at once that this one tree was a column holding down the depths,
And holding up the heights. For a moment I thought of reaching out to meet the hands of
The tree, the hands spread heaven-ward or those dipping toward the abyss, but knew that
None would fold in mine.

I knew that if I rose or fell to feel those realms,
I would end up flying myself like a kite, or sinking me;
I would become for a few moments a great rainbow-ccd silk-winged glider, or a brick.
And I am neither. I am neither.

So I sit at the edge and I watch the tree extend below and above.
I sit at the edge and know how far those places are from my folded legs and folded hands,
And I understand that here in the middle ground I am at last the weight
of one human Body, perfectly still as a reed in the night, left alone by the wind.

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Jason Rederstorf

Minor Distractions

What I notice first are the glasses. Sometimes he has, he is forced to squint to read or see anything. His lenses are for seeing without them.

Normally people with vision worse than blind. What this means is if a person can read or see anything. His lenses are for seeing without them.

I've only known legal blindness for everything else on the body, eyesight to fit this category, he is much too young.

Maybe there was an accident when he got trapped underneath a car, his face as the car kept going. Maybe he has...

And I wonder if it makes things maybe sometimes life is almost too like running away, getting rid of all he ever feels like breaking things, it with a bunch of glass and delicate...

The center where I make my visits is of tourists and shoppers with nothing to see it all: mothers with brats for counts; business men on their cell phones nowhere; old women who plan a dinner lamp shades with their late husbands slabs who are proud and eat and eat more than half of what they buy.

And here I am. Sitting in seclusion, a failing med student with no there is a certain advantage in letting these little, insignificant people ever complaining, hitting and yelling at...