

Three Poems



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Contraceptive

Your body magnetized to mine
the ancient storied ritual
told against the days and nights

when blackbirds called
and owls hooted
and we made love

to bring the rain
you splashed into me
swimmers against the current

upstream like salmon
for the same purpose
had we not blocked the way

but dam we did and today
I have no daughter
but regret



Valentine

This paper begs for pressure from a pen
and longs to be inscribed with secret thoughts,
memories, confessions of a wayward heart,
to witness our being like a seal in hot wax.

The pen will leave behind an indelible mark
for there is no eraser, no undo key,
no way to unsay what we could commit
to writing on this old-fashioned paper heart.

But if we choose to make a valentine,
what does it matter if the words should prove
but transient truth and leave false record
for the attic trunk? Far better if we

disturb the dust and set ephemera
upon the page than leave no trace at all.

First Love

Cotton candy, fresh sawdust,
the caramel of Crackerjacks,
red and yellow spotlights
flashing round and round
kaleidoscope before his eyes,
at their center a slender girl,
lithe, supple as a willow branch,
soaring on the trapeze
high over the middle ring.
Her beauty cracks his heart.

Descended, she smiles, waves,
slips through a fissure in the tent.
Cyclists wheel in to fill her empty spot.
The boy waits, half-watches, hopes
the graceful girl will reappear,
as riders do their tricks,
headstands on whirling wheels,
until they, too, follow her
through the slash of tent
and lights fade--a gritty dawn.

Now cotton candy, clowns,
tigers, tent, and girl are gone.
All morning and all afternoon
the boy practices in the driveway
his own bicycle tricks,
stretching his body
toward the unknown,
the even less understood,
but thinking to join the circus
when it next comes through town.