



QUEER SNAPSHOTS

3 Poems

By Jenna Dobbelsteyn

Esther 4:14 Squandered

My Esther lived across the sea
A westward wake she did not see
I thought that she would set me free
But then instead
She pulled a knife
And sunk her teeth
And ate the very soul of me

An August day I saw her face
A trumpet blast – a rush of grace
I met her with a young embrace
And for a time
She held my hand
And fanned my soul
And in my id she held her place

The colour of our world was bright
A prism – bold and washed with light
The fractals plunging through the night
Her gaze was sun
Her laugh was air
Her arms were ground
Our love a sacred acolyte

Then Xerxes stole her from my side
To be for him his virgin bride
I fell upon my knees and cried
Though she assured
Her heart was mine
And mine was hers
Until I learned that she had lied

A Persian she had posed to be
To stand in place of Queen Vashti
Not Haddasah or myrtle tree
But now a star
To guide herself
Away from death
And everything she was to me

She had the chance to start anew
To speak and to herself be true
But history she threw askew
And so she died
Yet I still live
To look ahead
And find an even brighter hew

Girls Don't

you open your eyes and yawn
the sun gently wavers through the blinds
and falls on your face in subtle warmth
you close your eyes and turn to your
side – a low
pain
in your abdomen

deep breath in
deep breath out

you hug your knees as close
to your chest
as you can
the covers of your bed still pressing their cool
weight upon the side of your body

deep breath in
deep breath out

you extend your legs out long
you roll onto your back and reach your
arms above your head as far as they will go
s t r e t c h
relax

your mind returns to your belly
and the deep pain within it
you place your hands where it hurts
and breathe
in
and out
before a pang
of thunder shudders through
your thighs and
into your lower
back

d e e p b r e a t h i n

it's time to get up

you lift the blankets
swing your legs over the side of your bed
and rise

you reach your arms above your head again and
see your hands extended above
into the totality of your length

you stand and find your slippers
and tiptoe slowly through the kitchen
to the bathroom

you pull down your pants and sit

deep breath in
deep breath out

your bowels empty
easily and completely
from within
relief
a moment of silence for the food of yesterday

a shot of fresh water graces the threshold
in a burst of cold cleanliness
you dry yourself and rise

pull up your pants
wash your hands
and pad delicately back to your bedroom

you remember the pair of jeans
that you've been irrationally avoiding for the last
three months
and decide to try them on
they feel so good against your
still cramping belly

you are ready for the day
now

How Am I Here?

How am I here
now
when then
I was someone else
somewhere else?

How am I here
when then I stood alone
in the kitchen dreaming of the relief found
in the cutlery drawer?
When then I stood alone
in a group of laughing girls
not understanding the ways
I was different but knowing that
I felt it too?

How am I here
when then I stood alone
at the back of the church
with nothing but hate in my heart –
hate for the world
hate for God
hate for myself?
When then I stood alone
on the sidewalk
before the bridge?

How am I here
when then I stood alone
next to her
straddling heaven and hell
and loving the line on which I stood
but never daring to jump from one
side to the other
and then again next to her
or next to her
or next to her?

How am I here
when then I stood alone
on the precipice of
telling someone – freedom
freedom finally found
at the point of no return
but then returning anyway?
When then I stood alone
next to him
through harsh laughs and

tight words and the squirming ache of
inauthenticity everywhere
as the spindly fingers of misery squeezed up
through the floorboards
and tore out my insides?

How am I here
now
standing next to you?

You who comes to me
in all your quiet
strength and gentleness
to pick up one small
fragment at a time
brush it gently off,
hand it to me,
and hold my hand as I
slide it back into place

You whose smile fills
my mind for hours at a time
whose laugh thrums
the rusty strings of my spirit
and teaches me to sing again
whose eyes drip
their amber – honey – burgundy
into the lost greyness of mine
whose voice reaches into
my lungs and traps my breath there

You whose mind caresses
the folds and fabrics
of my awareness and
understanding
whose words wrap me
in gleaming pastel
and flood the darkest
corners with light

You who loves me
You who are my future
How am I here?
