

9 short poems.

Becky Gray

1.

Where is life?
Is it there, behind the shelf?
Does it hide within my closet?
Has it run 'way to that realm
Where missing socks and half-writ' pœms,
Lost jewelry and pens and combs,
Each item which I once owned,
So incorrigibly dwells?
How it hides!
I am playing with a toddler
As he giggles at this game
He won't explain but I must foster.
"Run in circles!" "Move that chair!"
"Look o'er here!" "Look o'er there!"
Kid, keep instruction to yourself -
I'll take life from 'hind the shelf.

2.

I've never heard it said to sky that she should wider be -
Nor have I witnessed words to clouds that they ought float less free -
The grass so little has to do, yet none demands more green -
Perhaps value should not be milked, but cradled - innately.

3.

I plant tulips by the shattered windows, and draw stick figures on the peeled wallpaper.
I paint green onto each dead houseplant, and pour sugar in each empty saltshaker.
Distractions, distractions, distractions... I call it interior design.
What is an antidote but an ailment's cue to hide?

4.

I am afraid of spiders. Nothing else.

I am not afraid of war,

I am not afraid of death,

I am not afraid of invisibility, loneliness, grief..

How lucky am I to live in a world where fear of spiders exists -

Where you can laugh at my yelp and I can say I like your smile.

Only your smile. Nothing else.

Not your eyes, which don't catch the light but procure it on their own and deliver it to the rest of us. Not your hair, dancing around your shoulders in a ritual no more hypnotizing than your hands, which I also don't like, warming the air around them as if to bathe, warming my flesh beside them as if to cook - not your wrists, or your neck or your voice or your teeth - all are below spider level status.

The heavy - the too big to hold - is better contained.

To communicate every fear is much too difficult. Simplicity must be the answer.

I like your smile, and I am afraid of spiders.

5.

I gave up some pride

and became a Giant.

It must've been weighing me down.

It's strange - seems I've lost -

A part of myself -

Yet grown ten feet taller somehow.

6.

There is only "now." It's all that exists.

Future may be lost, and past fictitious.

Should I not flow with the winds of time -

My life be lost dreaming, or worse - left behind.

7.

I want my life to be hotter
than the sun,
which all around it spews out
heat waves because it simply cannot contain all its energy.

I want my life to be broader
than the skies with their
arms stretched
pole
to
pole
embracing us,
and deeper than the ocean
with her spine descending so near Earth's core
we cannot reach
the bottom.

I want my life to be brighter
than the brightest eye when passion floods the retina
and bursts from every pore in a kaleidoscopic
assortment of every color imaginable.

I want my life to be gloomier
than the coldest winter's night when the world is tinted in blue.

I don't want to wake up and find
my life's been lived lukewarm,
at average width and height,
its scenes in
black and white.

If I should feel joy, let it give me wings.

If I should feel pain, let it drown me.

Just don't give me life
that isn't life.

To feel
nothing
is to
be
deceased.

8.

It's nothing but subtle disquiet.
Tire on gravel: a low, rhythmic hum.
Shadows dancing like trees in my headlights,
Engine whispers - what's gone, what's begun.
It's a deep-set and unsettled feeling.
Thoughts fall from my grasp - quick as sand,
Then giggle and scatter like stars -
Out of reach, not meant to understand.
It's the things we no longer can do,
Though I'm not sure what those things should be.
It's the words I don't know but can't say -
The unspoken we now cannot speak.
An end not embraced and not shunned,
Ignored as stealthily as he comes,
I don't weep; I don't dance in the headlights.
I am quiet, a low rhythmic hum.

9.

Life is that chord played too early,
Just a quarter too soon on the keys.
That unexpected, ear-piercing sound
Barely clashing with the melody.
Eyes go wide at the startling sensation,
Sharp breath in at the mixture of notes,
Then ears open to hear the vibration -
As you melt to the floor, the world floats.
It's that longing to play it again
For the first time - to relish in awe -
To suck the marrow from that chord
'Till that ringing could never withdraw -
But life is that chord here too early.
We don't hear sensation 'till it's played.
So we softly mourn every key,
Begging melody to resonate.