

Aberration Labyrinth:

Lost in The Void



Dear Readers.

It has come to our attention that we accepted a number of submissions that were somehow “Lost in The Void”, due in part to our change from Green Submission to E-Mail Submissions and due in part to our own faults. For that, we apologize. But, we’d like to present the poems now in our “Lost in The Void” collection. Thank you, our dear readers, for both your patience and your support.

AL Staff

Chris

Briana Gonzalez

I am an amalgamation of repeated mistakes.

The man

Ayoeridani

He's always the man
macho and even-minded
that taut jaw a bit boastful
bearing vague clues of sadness
that touch the white of his eyes
if you notice, beyond his gentle smirk
a midnight gloom lingers in steady streams
that hover over his statuesque frame.

Often

Martina Reisz Newberry

Often, as I undressed, you said,
“Take your time and hurry.”
I did and your overwhelmingly white smile
sparked and twinkled at me—an invitation to the dance,
a jeté assemblé into the banquet—and, later,
carnage without tears, sacrifice & homage
to a madonna’s brief time on earth.

Retro Heaven

Christopher Barnes

-
Our guru settles differences
In his crotch –
Spandex bellbottoms,
Poisoned-yellow.
These high-wattage, majestic togs
Never pucker.
We broach easy-natured docility,
Crystal-balling this recitation,
Groveling unsuspecting eyes
Under an outshone moon.

Reflection pt. 4

Briana Gonzalez

I scare myself with how
violently these limbs shake
and how midnight these
thoughts can be.

I ask

Who is this monster inside me?

A voice responds
the Truth.

White

B Byron

The no smoking signs confuse the men
they lie in deep trenches
along the river
and
the mountains bread
at the crest of unconquerable wars

Where they perfume the wounded
with bright fragrances
so they might smell like the living
sunlight
wet petals

They whisper to one another
while thinking of their childhoods

In their hands
they grasp at letters
from mothers in a deep sadness

The paper is empty
dark and
relaxes between their fingers

They fear all things white

White to them is the color of death
it is the color of ghost
winter
dead men's eyes

They dig into the soil where all things grow

Dark is the soil
black and heavy
they worship this
the color of black to them
is the color of life
the color that springs food and warmth
and they smear this color all around them

They look wide eyed at the comets coming towards them

They dig further into the blackness of the earth
their fingers hug handfuls of black clay
their faces are covered in black
as they breathe this dirt in
they are reminded of ancient memories
when they were part lizard
half frog
swimming in the oceans
dreaming of creatures
walking upright
full of hate
full of misery

They see images of great men
wearing fantastic robes
painted with white colors
on top their heads
lay crowns of jewels and gold

They swing incense left to right
right to left
they hum the hymns of great books
feed their children the lullabies of prophets and war

They shove the pieces of culture down their throats
send them to the mountains

They proclaim:
Our God is deranged!
Our God is insane!
Our God is white!

It is the color of cleanliness
the color of purity
the color of death

The men dig deeper into the root of the earth
they pray to this color
they are afraid

They fear the color white ...

...it is the color of bones.

Ideas

Briana Gonzalez

I am in want of something bigger than myself,
something bigger than my ambition and my dreams,
something that towers over me, I shiver in its shadow
and watch the sun rise and set on either side of
this unknown magnanimity,
I want to fall beneath the crash of this thing,
to crumble alongside its rubble and let it consume me.
To be in want of anything less is impossible.
To receive that thing seems impossible, too,
yet I stand and stare and crave,
conceptualizing ways and days where it and I
become whole.

Death of a Nation

Willard Franklin

at this point, we're only gonna be old friends;
(the heat that forms from the student section
and travels through sweat and cotton
to enter forearm skin abrasions
for moments at a time)
portrayed by frantic text messages
of non-sequitur obscenities
about the collapse of our great nation.
i can hear worry in their voice,
i can feel kidney stones in their throat
and stress clots in their blood.

if i had a nickel for every time
"future" has been said
in the past three days,
i could afford a college education
or enough to buy the local swim center
so we could debrief more in the kid's pool.
we could listen to water float over the wall
or hold hands and drown in the deep end.

because, in six years,
i'll be alive in New York
or dead in an apartment
and contact lists will be empty,
bookshelves too.

but i still want to hear their voice.
no matter the pitch,
no matter the context,
because there's no need for nihilism
nor faux philosophy,
only support and optimism.

i know i've hated life the past few months
and sat still with hopes of getting out of here,
but love, platonic or not, can break the wall
we're not sure is going to exist.

metaphor-free poetry

Priscilla Becker

you don't give a
fuck; i don't give
a shit

moist marriage

Priscilla Becker

water's running
faster; why
don't we use it
as our coach?
its slurpy never-
ending language --
when I drink vodka
I can talk to it --
my skin, mouth,
ears, nose, asshole,
genitals are open
to water -- my sex
partner, my child

algae runs through me
like froglets: I am
fermentation; water
& I have dedicated
ourselves as I've turned
into what I love:
vodka -- ocean &
spirit combine until
every swimmer swims
faster than ever.
have you ever swum
in drunken water?

oh, fermentation!
how you spin yeast
& bacteria into
invisible substance,
returning my pro-
scribed parent-
hood & callous
sexuality to an old-
fashioned flavour:
agitation-unrest

mortuary 21st

Priscilla Becker

born in a funeral home
full of speechless friends
I walked in the blank,
rubbed each body,
applying make-up to
every gender--
my life was dressing
the dead

I took off my clothes
and put them on them;
some of the dead said
no until the mice
ate off their clothes

You Are Not Neil

Mara Canfield

You are sitting in the dark,
Drinking straight from the whiskey bottle.
The blinking TV flashes across your face;
You are watching The Dead Poets Society.
It's your favorite movie,
Because you are Neil.
Raised in a strict home,
The tight fist of your father
Slowly cutting off your air.
You loosen your tie
After a long day at the law office.
The only difference between the two of you
Is that Neil is dead,
You only wish you were.
You've picked up the gun so many times,
But you are not Niel.
He was always so much more daring than you.
You pick up the gun again now,
But you are still not Neil.
You put it back and finish the bottle and the movie.
You are still not Neil.
You are still not Neil.

Poetry Series

Megan Donofrio

i.

I am talking to the steering wheel of a Jeep I borrowed from my parents' garage
On a Sunday morning when I am supposed to be talking to their god
But he's never around when I visit his home and I made a New Year's Resolution to stop
Being so polite to people acquainted with people I am attempting to divorce

I am sitting in the front seat of a borrowed Jeep in the parking lot of a supermarket you and I call
The Spider Jewel, where we ripped a lemon apart last fall and I relished in my sticky wrist
As juice dribbled down a three-syllable tattoo that gives two syllables to the fruit we tore
Open and smashed against the failing rubber seals of your car's back windows

Laughing at our smearing of lemon flesh, lemon tears sliding down the window glass
Because Google told us that citrus would discourage the entry of any more spiders
Couldn't have any more spiders, we had to reclaim the backseat where you held me for the
First time I felt safe in another's embrace, and your arms have never changed

On Sunday morning I listen to my favorite band in my parents' Jeep, my church hymns
Are violet, the lead singer laments: *It's a terrible love / That I'm walking with spiders*
But you and I haven't met any since September, spider-free for months
And sleeping beside you was easy without help

No nightmares in your bed, I wear a dream on my wrist
Someplace painless, I'm always seeking an escape and you might
Be it, the fruit that resurrects the comfortable kid I thought was dead
Spent years building faith into delicate coordinates on some imagined map

But the world isn't a place
Today I shed the belief that the permanent blueprint I carry compels me
To settle somewhere far away is not the only way to the dream
I wear on my sleeve, promise

I found the world in you
The glimmering landscape, not a place, but a person
You returned from the city with a bottle of lemon juice I'll never open
Do you realize that you are the fruit keeping the spiders away?

ii.

Every time you call me perfect is another incision I have
To will myself not to make, a point out of flesh
How marred do I need to be before you set my feet
Back on solid ground, don't hold me to such height
You'll break my neck when I drop, let me be
Flawed, can't you love an imperfect thing?

Keep calling me perfect and I'll go back to being sick
Not an empty threat, my mind is much too wired to please
Another twelve-month battle with if-then statements that
Get planted in me, parasites they are all too willing
To feed, I can't stomach any more conditional love

Tell me I'm perfect and in a year you'll be
Dating a stranger, you won't believe how much
You won't recognize me, the unforeseen weight of a two-syllable word
Slow poison as it seems, spreads quickly through familiar channels
Neurons conquered before, a course of action this body remembers
Being so tense my foot doesn't brake fast enough at red lights

Please don't place impossible standards on my bad, bad back
I'm not strong enough to lug them around, my acting isn't good
Enough to maintain the tag, I'll start collapsing again if I have to
Be perfect—

Have all the required or desired elements, qualities, or characteristics!

I'll kill myself trying to be your ideal

Be as good as it is possible to be!

I'll rot if this is who you require me to be
Call me perfect and my brain believes it must be-
Coming apart, silently

*Insecure. Anxious. Dishonest. Self-conscious. Apprehensive. Hypocritical. Insincere. Neurotic.
Worried. Compulsive. Paranoid. Self-loathing. Desperate. Phony. Unsettled. Obsessive. Obsessed.*

I'm my own punching bag, I'm so good at hanging myself
Up for another beating, lost count of the rounds, pick
A number, another attempt at perfection

Nobody I know loves a weak thing

Go ahead, tell me I'm perfect and when the fall from
The pedestal leaves me paralyzed, I understand
Any sort of real goodbye is unlikely, some things are
Just implied

iii.

Tell my Genie I am not interested in collecting
Anything that could someday vanish, be seized, quit on me
I'm not looking to profit temporarily
Does that make me a cynic or just anemic?

I don't think in terms of gain, I'm too busy
Avoiding having to face anything unpleasant
Dear Genie, I'd like to wish some things away
Let's start with minimizing pain

I'm not sure how you did it, but babe you stole
Any appeal death once held, the end is now
Altogether unappealing and I'm a little nervous
My self-preservation instincts might be second-rate

Let's you and I just be robots, I feel like
The upkeep would be so much easier
Let's be low-maintenance machines together
And when they call with news of a malfunction
Have my failing parts replaced, make me
So I'm always like new – for you

This wasn't supposed to last, but we outlived
The paper bracelet, Jesus Christ, pessimistic me
Babe, your girlfriend's a freak
But she's invested in living now, she'll make it
So you never have to lift her off the floor

Two of the succulents have perished and I can't stand
The remaining plants now occupy a casket
How can anything continue existing in the home where a brother died
I'm honoring doctor appointments, I'm watering plants, I'm trying
To keep us all alive

You ask, *would you like me more if...*
Shut up, I couldn't possibly like you more than I already do
I'm selfish in love and I know I get you
Sick sometimes, it's confusing
The mixed message I give when I let myself infect you is
No good, stop claiming you care more, I'll be better
With my germs, I resolve to be more mature
I'll stop sharing everything

Thank you for the summer, autumn, and winter
I wrote that line just to give you an Oxford comma
I'll get healthy by spring

