

Issue No. 2

Juste Milieu



*literature + art
of the world*

November 2017

Submit your

poetry

flash fiction

literary critique

illustrations

photography

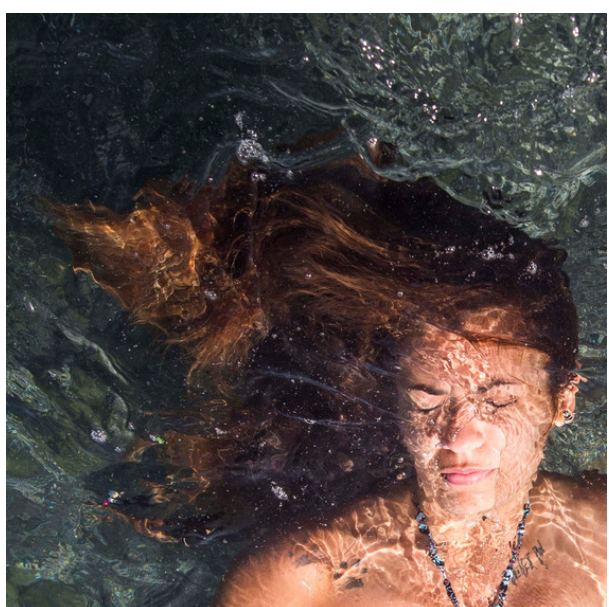
sketches

justemilieu.lit@gmail.com

November
2017



Autumn Issue
No. 1



from **"Fresh II"**
David Rodríguez López
Spain

Flowing	Happiness
Recede	Storm
Hover	Quicker

#1

the best part was pulling down your underwear and watching your face come alive. but it's all gone now and no one is ever alive. and there's no love left, no passion. you're boring, i'm boring and everyone who is great is dead. and the record has stopped playing. and the fire is gone. and my stomach aches. and my head is turning. and the whole world just laughs. not even the best bar on earth could save us.

#2

don't feel discouraged. free the princess.
fight the dragon. sail the seven seas.
circle the galaxy. break the speed of light.
kiss the girl. drink a coke.
dream.

Omar Alexandre
Miami, FL

Deep off in these waters
Let go and let the vibes take over
Feel the waves in motion
For you I am open
Free your mind and let your body rest
Between my thighs lay your head on my
chest

Alicia Evon
Detroit, MI



Dylan Farenger
Portland, OR

The Question

To do, or not to do, Ay,
There's the point. Don't try to be

who you ain't.
'Cos you are
Who you are
Where you are
And when you are,
That you exist is not the question
A point to rest on, a point that's true -
You were here, whatever you do.

So here we are. But not for long,
We get one crack and then we're gone.
A slender awareness of active intent
No time to relent or relax or pretend
We can't come back, our time will end,

Awaken to passion, adventure and fun
Work or play, get things done
Whatever you do, time will run
Time will fly but time won't tell
For time itself will burn in hell.

Christopher Colles
The Canary Islands

I wanted to see the sunrise. For I was tired of the sun setting on my fears,
depression, broken love. I wanted to see the sun rise. So I can start a new day
fresh awaken. Born to survive storms. I was tired of surviving. I wanted to see
the sun rise. As it rays consumes me with life. To be able to finally live. Instead
of letting things control me. Allowing sadness roam freely in the darkness . More
importantly I wanted to see the sunrise. Breathing anew arms stretch open.
Already to be back in the race.

Mardochere Morisset
New York, NY

8-3 2:15 am

expectations shaken with disappointments
engulf the room like a tsunami.
paperwork first per usual
then its off to trial.
question. response. nod. sigh. "why?" and repeat.
towards the end of this inquisition tears pool in defeat.
"what are your strengths?"
how can I answer that when all I've spoken is of hate.

-I never arrive
to a pity party late

alyssa apolloni
Detroit, MI

OUR BELGRADE

The oldest restaurant in Belgrade
We enjoyed goulash and an upgrade
To our usual lifestyle of poverty
Dull chats with bread over tea

I liked the table cloths all in white
We ate, smoked and forgot our diet
The air filled the room with cloud
We laughed deeply not out loud

Jonas Amidu
United Kingdom

3)

This is supposed to be my life,
So why am I finding it so hard
To cut the strings you attached
And continue to pull?

*Becca Hill
England*



*Geffarina Firdaus
Indonesia*

ATLANTA

*What happens to a dream deferred?
—Langston Hughes*

It occurs to me
that tired dreams make their ways south on yearly course
to trade a death congested among the skyscraped cluster,
for green fields to at least stretch and run themselves across
like mishandled sunny-side eggs.

*Cameron Horsey
United States*

SOIL

When asked about my homeland,
The first ground I bless,
I do not answer with
A flag,
Or a plot of soil,
But with your name.

RESERVE

Reserve me a smile,
Find it in a foreign country,
Growing between the
cobblestones.
And bring it back to me,
Pressed between the pages of
The poetry from your
Native tongue.

GARDEN

In my garden,
I grow thoughts of you.
Lemon and flowers and herbs of
you.
But the irises bleeds,
The thyme cries,
For this is the garden of times
past.
Memories held on to selfishly,
Without pure reason.
This is the garden of
Citrus and blood.

*August Grey
West Coast, USA*

My dad's skull is thick. He has built a hard-headedness over time. But only out of necessity - his mother a shrew, step-dad a drunk and a father long-gone. He left home at 18 with a mattress strapped atop the \$400 car he bought himself. My dad played college ball at a D3 school, humbling his D1 talent. He dropped out of school at 21 to get a factory job to provide for my mother.

Single with two kids when he met her, unblinking, he told her he could shoulder the weight. My biological father, the "sperm donor" as my mom calls him, has never laid eyes on me. My step-dad drove me, not once but twice, to Michigan to meet him. Both invitations left unopened. It was the second time my "real dad" stood me up that I realized I already had a real dad.

At 43, my father still wakes up at 4:30AM. He goes to the gym then to work at the same factory where his stubbornness has made him manager. Over two decades of a temporary job so that our family always opened gifts on Christmas morning. I always wondered when he would break - 20 years without a slip and now he was falling off a cliff.

My father was my softball coach and my brother's football coach. A second job that cost him time and money. Both of our teams were always terrible and I can't help but wonder if he felt irony in the losses. My father's number one rule was Don't Lie.

"It is easier to tell the truth and suffer the consequence than to lie and suffer the internal damage," he said.

Is it a wonder his hair began to grey the day started lying to us?

My dad stepped out of his marriage the same way he stepped out of the house every morning, in the dark and alone. He took a younger, fresher version of my mother. In a 23-year-old he saw another chance at the life he could have had if only he'd avoided my mom. Her name is Emma. She was born the same year he graduated high school and the year before my mother gave birth to me.

Cue the mid-life crisis plot line but hold the Porsche. We've all seen the movie: the rich white family with the overworked dad who starts acting out, the housewife who becomes bitter, only driving him further away. The dramatic conclusion where mom finds dad's secret apartment where he takes the newer, updated version of her.

What they don't tell you is what it looks like when your family is poor. How your mom will wake up in cold sweats because she can't support herself on minimum wage. How credit card companies start calling you because mom and dad have ignored too many of their calls. How mom always has a new date buying her flashy gifts to make up for the fact that he is inadequate. How your mom will call you, sobbing because her life is hopeless without your dad. How she'll admit she's thought about killing herself but "you don't have to worry about that now" as if that is enough to cushion the shock. How you will become both of your parents' counselors because neither of them can afford one.

They don't tell you that the secret apartment is actually a receipt your mom found in your dad's car revealing his recent condom purchase. Or how reimagining that scene will churn your stomach, every time. Or that 2 and a half years into the separation, you'll still have hope for them, despite all the damage.

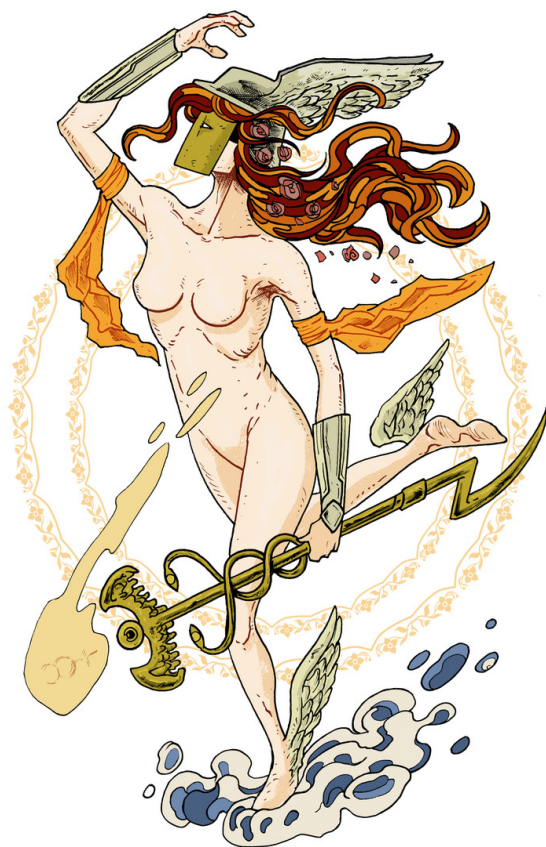
They don't tell you that when you're 23, you'll look at your own life with your two dogs and soon to be husband wondering if you've built yourself a trap when you meant to build a home. My dad now lives in a \$400 a month apartment complex on the other side of town called Poplar Court. He lived there in college before he met my mother. How fitting he returned to these roots when his marriage is postmortem.

I contemplate the extreme action of the waves on the water's edge,
 I forage through the black pebbles to find you.
 I get lost in the synchronous and out of time rhythm of the watery
 foam.
 I lick off the primitive salt from my lips,
 And i kiss your figure made of fine sand.
 I indulge the wind's whispers blowing softly:
 'Search me on the sea's bottom, through the dark abyss, push back
 the fear, i will shine for you'
 I dived.
 Dark.

Lana

As a wild cat,
 A gold and green female cat,
 You smelled with native diffidence
 My body born in a foreign land.
 The Atlantic's length was erased
 When you discovered how much is relative
 The extension of the gigantic ocean,
 And your hands weave together with mine
 Corresponding.
 With cautious step of a European conqueror
 I created a path through your wood of rain
 Reaching your forbidden and rare fruits.
 Plunging my soul into (your) copper hair
 Was equal to the honourable task
 Of finding the right words for you,
 When they slip away between your fingers
 And, as a gold digger does,
 With his sieve aged by experience,
 You grab those words, as golden nuggets
 Holding them steadily,
 In your fist, proud.

Mitch Di Martino
 Turin, Italy



NEW SURREAL COMICS 2017

New Surreal Comics
 Seattle, WA - Argentina

Late Bloom Love

The sun's syrup was dripping through the blinds
Falling on your brows, blinding my eyes
I could sink my back into your chest for life

On your mellow beige couch we laid restfully patient
In cushions that couldn't hold the depth of our conversation
In soft silence we took breaks for breaths and catching each other's gazes

First loves are meant to be fast and climatic
But ours was steady
And they say it should happen young but it happened when I was ready
And I'd trade their perennials to bloom late with you again.

Now, I can't stop laying on top of your love every weekend
As the sun's syrup drips into my mature eyes that keep blinking
To make out if I see your petals blooming to soak up my love's singing...too

You...

Have watered every root they tried to toe into the cement
Purified my seeds by cleansing them with your calm's breathing
Laid love down on my soil patiently waiting for the sprout
That they couldn't wait to see stem before they had to be out

You felt each petal as if it was your very own
And it felt even better that you were good and grown

With stems erected into the blue distance peppered in white cotton
We lick away the sun's syrup that's sprinkling on our petals before dusk
Your tending to our garden makes me never feel forgotten

I'll remember to fall late in love with you...
Next season.
I'll remember to lay next to you each Sunday
For no reason.

Shanel Adams
Detroit, MI

Sometimes my heart beats with sadness. It screams and wails, and I don't always understand why. "What's been laid before us," I call out. "Grandmother, show me your ways, so that I can begin to understand our history, and what creates these thoughts and feelings." It's hard to hear through the blockages in my heart, where all the failure started to build up.

Rock 'n Roll cleanses my soul. Riding upon the cool northwestern breeze. It catches upon my beating heart. I am lulled to submission. "It is time to forgive yourself. Please." In my core I find flaws, I conjure them, and call them to the surface. The world feels cold and confused, a place of disconnection. I dig my toes into the freezing sand. Numbing my soles, my mind lets go. I am Mother Nature.

I call to her, "Release the places cemented with fear. Fill them with love. Vibrate them awake. Follow the wave of your individual intuition. Pause to let your breath wash you away."

The sky is oh so beautiful blue. It's air shivers my deep tissues. "This is a meditation of love. This is a meditation of love." I exhale releasing the ball of pain in my heart, the crow carries it to the grave.

The wind tickles every cell alive. I feel them vibrating as a monarch drops in to say hi. This beauty, the way the monarch dips down upon a breeze proves fear will not rule the earth. For creation rests in the hands of love. The monarch tickles my heart. Reminding me why I'm dedicated to art. The exhale rushes over the brain cells, erasing the pathways; back into the soil, the dead energy rolls to break down, neutralize, and fertilize new growth.

This time I fill the heart like a balloon. It expands in all directions filling with love, a chamber of healing, expanding through the stomach, the gut, winding down through the intestines, the groin, the seat, the hips, releasing the upper thighs, the burning throat, the ankles, the bones in the feet. We are strong and soft. A sweet and subtle balance. Relaxation begins to clarify the noise, like the ocean, like sunshine, like love, like dancing with the moon, like learning to breath again, like riding the wild wind.

Time expands maturity, the truth churns through the spine. Light begins to break through, like beams in a tropical canopy. I see the way I twist myself so tightly, like a washcloth. I think I'm twisting out the pain, but am I twisting it from escaping? We come together because we know the earth can change. We look back and we see how far we've come. Grandmother's struggles have become our triumphs. We will always rise far above the limits of glass ceilings--shattering them into glittering showers, rolling thunder, and electrical patterns shooting like cracks through the sky.

Blessed with life, the clarity of the Milky Way reveals itself. I step away from the cycle, I will not pollute the stream of consciousness. Drawing myself back through the roses. Breathing with their essences. The breath leads, like the path of the journey, I constantly find myself in a dance of expansion and release.

Goddess is rising. She is within me. The sunrise of dreams. The abundance of green. The rainbows dancing on my eyelashes. I draw the ankles in a circle, an expression of relief. My feet buzz with a complete nervous resetting. I'm called to uncross my knees. The wrists, the hips, the jaw all release at once. The shoulders float like angel wings. The spine aligns. Love expands in all directions. It's rippling from my core.

I tap the balls of my feet. Expanding long through center. Love illuminates all in compassion. I witness it transitioning all the waste into space. My wings flutter, expanding like a force, my aura. The electromagnetic field of my heart intercepts the universe and transmits my intentions. I wonder where all this energy goes, as I rest in awe of the invisible.

SEPARATES THE MEN FROM





The Lovely Bones

one else had. She didn't know what she would do with it, but she had grown **unafraid** taking copious notes for the future, but she had grown **unafraid**. The world she saw of dead women and children was **unafraid** real to her as the world in which she lived.

In the library at Penn, Ray read about a study under the bold-face heading "The Conditions of Death." It was a study done in nursing homes in which a large percentage of patients reported to the doctors and nurses that they saw someone standing at the end of their bed at night. Often this person tried to talk to them or call their name. Sometimes the patients were in such a high state of agitation during these delusions that they had to be given a sedative or strapped to their beds.

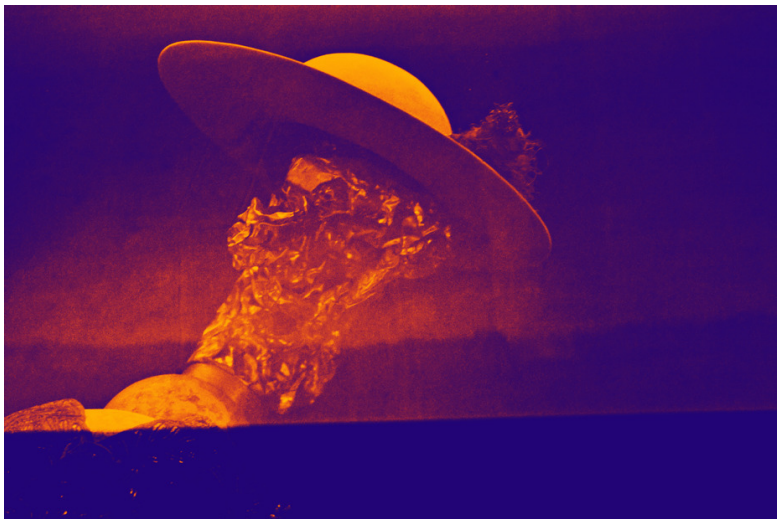
The text went on to explain that these visions were a result of small strokes that often preceded death. "What is commonly thought of by the layman as the Angel of Death, when discussed at all with the patient's family, should be presented to them as a small series of strokes comprising an already precipitous state of decline."

For a moment, with his finger marking the place in the book, Ray imagined what it would be like if, somehow, over the bed of an elderly patient, remaining as open to the possibility, he might feel something brush past him as Ruth had so many years ago in the parking lot.

Mr. Harvey had been in [REDACTED] wild within [REDACTED] the Northeast Corridor from the outlying areas of [REDACTED] the northern tips of the southern states, where he would go to [REDACTED] tier work and fewer questions and make an occasional attempt to reform. He had always liked Pennsylvania and had crisscrossed the long state, camping sometimes behind the 7-Eleven just down the local high-



The Figurative Language of Figueras, reinterpreting Dali



my joint goes out
and there she is
at my door
dripping in sex
I light it back up
she makes her way across the room
to my lap
where I take a hit of her
lips
I exhale what I got left
into her
and she throws her hair over
her shoulders
and gives me
everything

Robert E. Hoxie
Detroit, MI

I long to feel that
spirit shattering,
gut wrenching,
mind numbing insanity,
that evolves in your mind -
forcing your sadistic thoughts to ink,
cradling your demons to sleep

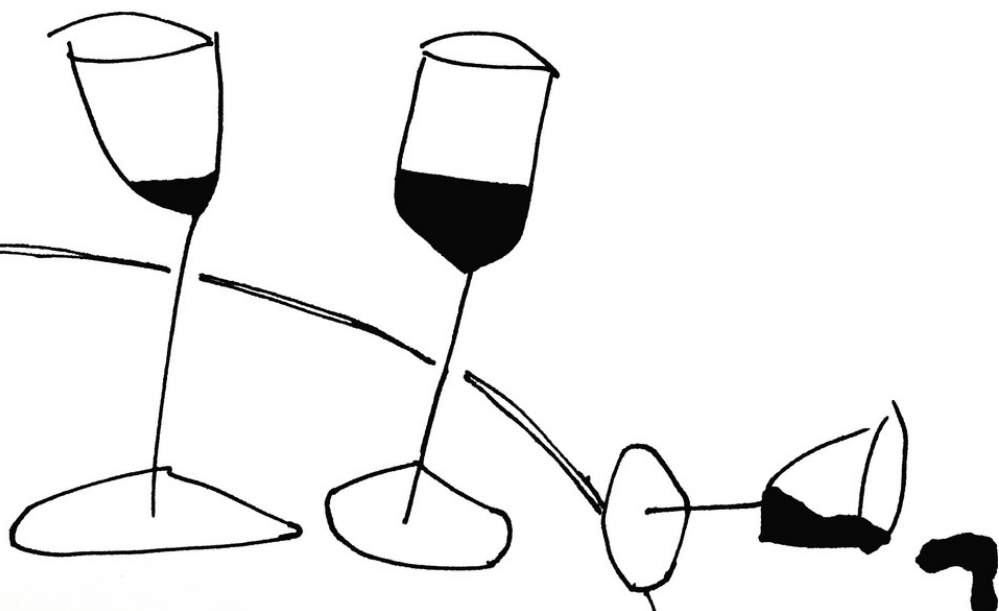
because
through the
beautiful words
of your broken soul,
I find my peace.

- to the broken poet who helps me sleep at night

Perfect Ruin (CW)
London

These fermented thoughts
are bitter -

they cause a scene.



34.

The ringing in my ears suffocated the sounds around me. The solemnity of the chapel walls contained this magnificent sensation, leaving nothing of the outside world untouched—well that's what I assumed. The stained glass splintered before my eyes as if a trail of energy ran its course through its very elemental core; a singular implosive 'pop'. Trillions of pieces plummeted into the pews, gouging the wood with the primitive ferocity and randomness, deep cuts into my very own flesh as well. Oh, God. The calamity ceased, the sun followed, proclaiming serenity. It illuminated the dirt, the tiles, the shrapnel. It brought to light my wife also, incinerated, with a cross in her hand.

It was not just the putrid smell, no. I could taste her, filtered through the sulfurous rank circumscribing me. The curry and goat that we eagerly ate. The lips I used to kiss daily, were there. The waist I used to hold in the evening after prayer, was there. Her eyes, the deepest pools of chestnut, were there. She was here. But now, she is everywhere. Everywhere, Like the absconding whore adrift from her husband along the route. It made me sick. I vomited over the Persian runner below my feet; ceremonial yellow and white blotched with blood, sand, and bile. A calming gust whispered in the chapel.

Everything settled, everything, including myself. My body, not prone onto the ground as the guns began to fire upon the revered land. This, this very building was erected by God! It was an abomination to be kneeling before my master with blood on my hands. I was left without a choice and a heart full of rage. I filled my pockets with as much of my dearest wife's remains as I could before the rebels enclosed. I ran. I ran as far as my feeble legs could take me; atrophied by the stagnant coffin I was bound to perish in. Was this penance? To pay for the expenses of this driveling, autocratic world?

I was free, if but for a fleeting time. Drabbles of blood spotted the blazing asphalt as I continued onward. The sounds of war echoed through the mud-laced walls and the concrete-impregnated obelisks that stood tall as to reach the sun. My head was splitting with the force of a hot iron. I heard wailing of the wounded, nothing from the dead. There was no rhyme or reason, they dropped where the machination seized their soul. The market square obliterated. Hearing the impending sounds of Humvees, I haphazardly danced through the wreckage. I tripped on a beam and smashed into the ground. My ribs seized my breath as a throbbing began. My pockets emptied the ash about, but not all of it. After a brief writhing, I rose to my knees and surveyed a toppled melon stand in front of me. The flies were abuzz with the succulent smells, and so was I, crawling to it. I took a gratuitous bite of one and was immediately quenched; the juices trickling down my snowy beard. I voraciously munched on it, as if it was my last meal on Earth. If only for some salt. It was a moment of complete protectiveness, one that wasn't easily usurped by explosions and violence. It was my instinct, my id rejuvenated. My poor wife wafting in the ether was longing for only a drip, I know, but even she was not worthy of this delicacy. I displaced those maggots asunder until the flesh was devoured. If a militant were to see me in this primal state, they would surely execute my monstrosity. My body pricked to life after some time, in which I stood, dusted off my tunic, and carried onward, carefully this time.

Dusk. After hours of utilizing my cunning and knowledge of the city's layout, I ascended the bluff on the outskirts of town. It was compromised in favor of the rebels. The church, the market square, the ringing in my ears, all gone. The bells of the church were toppled deep into a pit formed by a rocket with astronomical units of power. Ungodly fires burned in the western sector. The entire circumference of the town was capped with a moody haze of smoke. More screams were drowned out in exchange for rifle bursts. I could hear their chants, their heresy. Their bullets lit the sky like ascending stars. Those are the savages among us; shooting at the gods as if they were too, under fire. I was correct. The explosion is what ended the day, not the unbiased sun. A shame now. Now they have their whores and their cows and their fires strung around the alleys and crevices they crafted. I wanted no part in their blood feud, despite all the blood I lost.

She had no blood within me. Not a drop. The wind was mighty upon the precipice that night. So, on one knee, I scooped her from my sandy prison. From my outstretched hand, she caught the wind like a sail. Gales blew her remains kilometers away. I could not see her anymore, but I was assured she was intermingling with the scores of others. She just needed to catch up.

Oh, what a revelation that night was! I wished with my last remaining breath of the evening, wished that I could finally catch my breath from the spasms. I choked on blood periodically while my head rested on a sparse patch of weeds. By the time dawn arrived, the monstrous men departed with their whores and cows and guns and violence. My tattered corpse breathed again, with the gales inverted to a vacuum, filling my collapsed lungs with the air of God.

With the air of her.

O' Terrible Beauty. When the words come.

Take the gifts I gave you,
And burn them all to ashes,
Then smear them like shadow,
All over your wet lashes.

Take my blood from beneath your nails,
From the wounds you tore from me in strips,
Your smile white like the scars you left,
As you paint the crimson on your lips.

Take all the rage, the anger and vicious hate,
And wear it below your surface to play the part,
A warrior, a vixen, a gorgeous fiend,
An elegant demon that will break my heart.

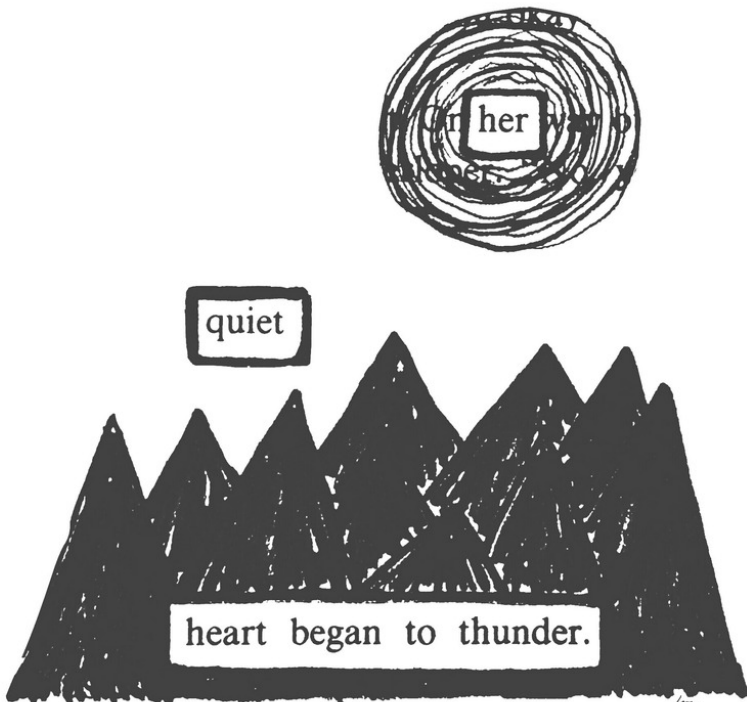
Take my love and do what you will,
Nourish it, nurture it as best you can,
Or twist and ruin it, have your fill,
It belongs to you, you demon woman.

The best words seem to come at night
In the dark like echoing replies
To the sound of your breath
As though they heard
The loneliness of your hearts beat
And came to offer company

Like monsters from beneath the bed
Imagined faces at the window
Every creak and groan
Every misheard footstep
Every mislaid friends grope
Every wanted rape
Every slurred slur from drunken lips
And fathers fist.

Until the night,
Where you aren't scared of them anymore.
That's when you write.

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"The juste milieu,
the happy medium,
between reality and art."

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