

YOU  
/ VS ME  
PART 4

behind

# YOU vs. ME

Part IV: Behind

Eva Moe

## **Student**

The door of your mind  
eeks open, agape like a  
jaw full of sweet yams.

## 5th Grade

According to local legend  
There was a clown in the town square  
Who could punch like bullies in the schoolyard.  
Happy, take that blonde boy  
Who chucked a kickball  
At my open face  
Ten points ten  
Tread marks  
Press the swing set  
Chains  
To his face  
Happy take him twelve years back  
Happy he forgot  
Happy seek revenge  
Yank it from the grave  
My pre-soaked jasmine roots  
Twelve years back  
I had the kettle on  
Now I'm hot stove hot skin  
Sizzling sweet aroma  
That dizzy breeze  
Happy, take that blonde boy  
Who took a swing from me.

## A Dollar Twenty

it's 2017 and I owe the library a dollar twenty.  
I forgot four books at once  
but they don't talk about it at the checkout.  
no "hey look it happens but if you don't pay us back  
you'll never read Stephen King in this town again."  
Consider me a villain.  
Give me a franchise.

Miss Sayonara and the Book of No Return  
and the reVIEWS, darling!  
Box Office Anti Hero Stuffs Two Dollars in Envelope  
Bloody Insignia Indicates Unstable Temperament  
Non-Returner Repents  
Book Bandit at it Again  
Library Seeks Revenge  
she owes a dollar fifty

That's it? I'll give you three.  
Take my dreams to the laundromat  
show me the muscles of your forearms        dry  
here's the chipped yellow grass you can water with sepia tone  
dye this landscape burnt orange like those teeth in that Western  
read me the trash about galloping abs  
you want a dollar fifty?  
I raise you my space ship  
pirate ship        indigo baby dragon  
majestic brown horse        washboard nihilists  
will they won't they modern friendship  
psycho brawler        dream thieves  
bank bullets        shooter boots  
a black cat        a salt circle  
a weather woman shoots rain from her eyes  
into the neck of a hipster  
and I return to you with these stories.

## College

The buttons on my blender told me  
Crush. Grind. Pulverize.  
I stuck my mind in and pressed all three.

I left the lid off, can you imagine  
the kitchen ceiling?  
My clothes splattered with essays

Essays splattered with me  
My roommates gave me the short straw  
and told me to suck it up.

Remember in elementary when health teachers  
stuck coffee straws in your lips and said  
“that’s what it’s like to be a smoker”?

Then you went to recess for the black lungs  
and mourned the loss of their monkey bar callouses.  
You hoped they could make it up the stairs.

Then you went to college and wished you were still  
the swinging champion of your grade school  
but every time you test it, voltage shakes your ankles

When you die they’re gonna put you on a big ole sling shot  
they’re gonna pull you back, aim  
and shoot your body into quicksand

where you will sink and drown. It will be so shitty  
that the lightning buildup in your legs will flip the switch to your brain.  
You’ll open your eyes (you dummy!) and kick your feet

like a dolphin you’ll shoot straight up from the surface.  
Summer air will suck the sand from your nostrils like sugar,  
and a classmate will ask for an extra pencil.

## **Drumbeat Slumber**

When you put your head to the pillow  
and hear the sound of your pulse,  
that's a hoard of wolf people dancing round a fire  
splashing blood through your boom box canals

when you wake with fright and can't blink  
cuz your eyes are so dry it feels like  
all the water's been wrung from your body,  
that's the witches peeling you  
like veggies for a brew.

when you put a big kid knife in your sandwich hand  
but you slip and sink it,  
a vampire is sexually attracted to you

when you're at the beach with your friends but they're  
so far ahead you can't see their shadows in the sand,  
that's the whole supernatural community  
coming together for the parade of your death.  
You will recognize the drumbeat, its crescendo.

## Oxford, England

It smells like a cedar wood sauna  
on the steps of an Oxford library.  
Weston library.

The sun came out to better throttle my jean jacket  
shaking into me “everywhere you look is Europe”

I heard

you came through bus lanes to reach me I heard

I was fun and once a long time ago

I thought my big sister called me brave

but next to the fortress of old stones

how could any sun waste its time

burning old age into me?

This corner was built hundreds of years ago.

Did the people of the time conjure us

while shivered up against the brick

or passing church on their way to the bakery?

Perhaps we were unimaginable

Never coming true.

But today in this sauna

the sizzling rocks of the city

sip us slowly through.

## **King Arthur was a Tragedy**

In the age of romance and chivalry  
steam seeped through open hearts  
now it's a gas leak.  
Up the nose.  
On fire.

Love is now combustible.  
Love is now the library.  
Love is now the golden  
gilded spine of mildewed books  
that bury in your head  
songs and hatchets alike.

## In a Bar at Night

i killed my dinner with a rock  
and with bones from its back lacerated  
every square inch it took to swallow.  
but listen, we tangoed first  
in her swirling smoke,  
glass slipper tap shoes the whole deal  
open palms side to side  
and now my skin is taser skin.  
shock arms, pillow eyes  
right of passage drinking game.

i'm neck and neck with her, this  
new girl, this  
fawn  
on a rebound mission to facebook  
tinder instagram  
other apps i've never seen before  
checking how she looks in a single square inch  
so *sunk*, the poor girl  
doesn't notice  
me. my dear  
young lady.  
iiiiiiiiii  
am the rebound kill.  
tomorrow i dig my snakeskin's grave  
but tonight, no blonde eyed snitch  
will ruin my self sacrifice.

## Some Things I Recall

I.

I thought the remnants of you had shrunk in my stomach  
but they crawled from the pit like the pale girl in your horror movie.  
Those frail edges pinned me drinking from the wishing well,  
and in your town the water was sacred.  
I was always into magic, and like every risk gone wrong  
you came back. Of all people, I should have remembered  
what's dead should stay dead.

Let me prove I'm better at bygones than you think.  
I've read my words from last year's pages, so swollen  
and blotchy like the lumpy figure next to me.  
I don't remember feeling  
like I swallowed the new cancer.  
But it's written, so I must have.

II.

When you capture my journal, Detective, mind the chicken-scratch.  
It was hard to quit the motion. I don't remember my fingers  
unzipping her neck, her back  
her corpus collosum.  
But there it is, dried  
and stuck to the hardwood floor,  
so I must have.

## Yeah, Well

In the dark they called me Moonshine.  
That liquor in a glass jar.  
Holy water.

They baptized me in hogwash  
made in someone's  
basement's  
rusty sink.

Moonshine they say.  
Not the boozy white reflection  
of a crescent  
on a wrinkled black lake.

Moonshine.  
Back alleys.  
The kind you shout mistakes at  
Your footsteps echo in the rain  
Someone pees in the corner.

I could be the summer sunrise  
The painted lake  
Gulls in the sky.  
My own name, even.  
But I'm stuck as the hooch.

## Wensleydale

A.

you are warmer than fever in  
me that is  
the wing-ed beast  
of legend in  
me for  
a moment that soft  
pressing  
every where I feel  
light  
sun  
it is how light  
is so fast and  
blind to itself.

B.

Holy shit. My body is made from cheese. I'm cheesy. So much so that the Earth's kicking me out. It's happening tomorrow. The moon will take me. I'll stick to craters like wet hair on the back of your neck.

The Moon. The Mothership. A whole giant rock made of Me. I'll throw the Man on the Moon a retirement party. He'll ask about the final straw that made the Earth eject me. I'll show him part 1 of this poem and he'll say *that's nothing. Watch this.*

**#lynel**

**gung ho – hung tho**

I missed the lilacs bloom this year  
their sweetness and purple color.  
Dumbass Me. Can't believe it.  
hooked into a jack ass with  
ass for days  
(centaur)  
nothing near as sweet as spring  
so I passed the lilacs a dozen times I bet  
one night I go outside just me  
I drop everything I can let go  
in the grass  
no phone keys wallet  
it's just me out there with restless crickets  
so I missed the flowers and became a kid  
hosed out my stamina wheel  
left the block breathless

I sat in a cemetery before work  
on a bench by the service berries  
white petal perfume  
pure and delicate.  
Birds chatting.



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-Eva Moe