

"Her Life"

It left her skin like oil from old cars
That drip their blood away. She sang, voice shook.
Her flesh was round and she rode horses, hooked
In saddle. Eyes like water falling over sapphires.

The makeup brushed under her eyes made
Red hues into sunrises. She was fresh
And happy. Then she found my father.
He took her to restaurants with names

That they only talk about in suits.
She loved him, he was kind. It lasted a few years.
I was born to a woman ripe like a pear
That squishes with a fall. And my father dropped her.

The freshness dripped out slowly afterward.
Creases and eye bags, she spoke in soft words.

Subject: Poem for Class on Monday - [REDACTED]
Date: Thursday, October 13, 2011 9:37:07 PM MT
From: [REDACTED]
To: stephen.gibson

Hunters of the night
Silent shadows
Stalkers of the lamb
Creeping through the darkness
One of their own
Wolfbrother
Youngblood
Reflection of beauty
Kiss of death

Subject: Engl 225H 001 [REDACTED]
Date: Thursday, October 13, 2011 3:29:18 PM MT
From: [REDACTED]
To: stephen.gibson@uvu.edu

I can't break these cuffs that are in my mind.
Rusted closed yet fresh steel lies underneath
these dimensional shackles that bind
my thoughts. I wish I had a blade to unsheathe
and break these chains that keep me from you
and your pink rose lips that taste of cherries.
A sick tar sticks to me and I fear to
touch you and ruin your essence of fairies.
A fey love keeps me from total despair
but a primal desire lets me down
into a misty darkness. I can't bare
to lose your honey voice while I drown.
So I claw towards the light of your eyes
and hope that your spirit, unlike mine, won't die.

Subject: 225H.001 [REDACTED]

Date: Thursday, October 13, 2011 5:00:25 PM MT

From: [REDACTED]

To: stephen.gibson@uvu.edu

CC: ebryce17@comcast.net

Father

I wait for my father's return
home, yet still here I churn.

Sweeping hugs and cherub faces
all await his warm, embracing graces.

Distant memories of picnics in
the kitchen. And silent talks herein

the *family* room's pale, quiet walls. Ageless.
I strain past the window pane as darkness

falls. Embers of burning coal sere my nose
while fall's last, neglected leaves repose

against its approach. I hear his foot's faint
steps under worn, black stained boots. Restraint,

I show none. Bounding for the door,
unlocking its fearful rusted hinges, there before

my eyes, is *nothing*. Darkness has stolen the sun.
Again father, you lie. Father, I have not one.

Subject: Engl 225H.001 [REDACTED]
Date: Thursday, October 13, 2011 5:51:50 PM MT
From: [REDACTED]
To: Stephen Gibson

A Dull Day

Heavy footsteps scrape, yellow leaves crunch.
The day has lingered, full of emptiness.

I am a far off echo, emerging from the quiet,
A lonely train calling across the distance.

A dash of white has come to answer me,
A flag of surrender in the stifled debris

The air is filled with my crashing steps,
I spot the rabbit disappear behind a tree.

I am haunted with familiarity, I've been here,
I think I must follow, must make it for tea.

The cup spreads warmth through my chilled fingers,
As I settle in to turn the page, I can't wait to be

In a world full of wonder,
A place of intrigue.

The Division of Time in the Suburbs

The seconds, first,
are kept with clicks
from the old square clock
propped on the window sill.

The minutes pass
—if husband's had them fixed—
from appliance to appliance

(...At 9:01 the freezer clears its throat
At 9:02 an ice cube falls
At 9:03 the furnace takes a breath...)

Hours move
with TV shows,
sprinkler cycles,
and laundry loads.

Single days
are measured by the postman's steps—
Every third
by an empty gas tank.

New weeks are marked
(and old ones removed)
by curbside garbage cans,
filled with the remains
of 20-minute meals
and two-hour shopping trips.

And the months
are split
by two payday checks,
which buy the smaller bits of time
and ensure that everything stays
divided.

Subject: English 225H.001 [REDACTED] poem for Monday
Date: Thursday, October 13, 2011 2:46:22 PM MT
From: [REDACTED]
To: stephen.gibson@uvu.edu

Earn Your Skin

Introduce me to your moment, 4 P.M.,
Five days into the year 2007.

"Let me go," you whimper to the bicep
Currently pressing you into the office wall.

The iron curtain of silence is saturated by
The awkward slurping sounds of your ransacked mouth,

His trespassing tongue storms your lips,
Trailing over your teeth with his venom.

Your stomach clenches, curdling with each inhale
Of his cheap cologne and unwashed skin

A minute earlier, you gently sorted his contracts into manila folders,
Which are now sprayed in continents across the tile,

Along with your brand new sweater,
The designer cable-knits ripped into pumpkin shreds.

You are flopped onto the floor, his hair gel flaking onto your belly.
You float above your own body. From the ceiling

You are a bald chicken, plucked and face down
In a roasting pan.

Then the moment--a pierce, a boil, a dive,
Ripples in the water, the sting, darted kicks.

You sing a hymn to any listening god, then the chill
Of a knife kisses your voice box: "Shut up."

You are sliced like the dinner potato, a lifetime
Of sunscreen protection rendered useless as

The carver digs in with his sharp little knife,
Making star-like scars across the sky of your porcelain skin.

He drills like a chainsaw, splitting through you,
In a dumpster dive, the smell of metallic blood.

"I must not be human," you realize. You hear yourself

Begging to be killed. (But what about New York?)

What about spring rain? What about mums,
And your next paycheck? What will happen to your guitar?)

You cannot escape the wrenching sounds,
The breathing, panting, muffled groans, all falsely intimate.

If this was a hotel, the maid would pass in the hall
And roll her eyes at your shamelessness.

He shifts his heaving weight on you, adjusting himself
For comfort while you claw into his back, removing

Enemy flesh which gathers under your nails like lint.
His eyes are machines for staring, reflecting the

Assemblage of Christmas lights on the desk.
"I should take those down," you think, "holidays are over."

Your calves, bare, are white flames against the beige rug.
His gums curl forward, his briny musk hanging

In your lungs in a sickly invasion. Your image
In his blade is fogged, your expression erased.

In slow motion, he releases you like a rehabilitated
Creature gasping for the unchoking wild.

You seize your spilling body in a urine trail,
Which is your fear manifested.

You fly out the front door, pantsless and snowbound.
Car tires squeak against the ice, crying for you.

Your hands are paralyzed, yet somehow you
Navigate past the birdhouse neighborhood,

The patches of gray unmelting snow, and the
Unruffled world skips on. It's Friday night still,

And you only lost an hour to your swollen
Undercarriage. Though you could have killed

Him and tucked his remains into the basement window well,
The thing you learned most that day was

Mercy. His alcohol drips down your thigh,
Soaking into the plush of your car seat--

Your souvenir of the day you spent in the

Hell you don't believe exist. Oh, and don't forget,

The first thing you did when you arrived
To your empty house was pull on socks

(Your feet were cold), then lay in the pulsing shower,
Counting your heartbeats, making sure they echoed.

The second thing you did was call the police.

Subject: Poem for Monday

Date: Thursday, October 13, 2011 5:04:15 PM MT

From: [REDACTED]

To: stephen.gibson@uvu.edu

Leave It Behind

The moistness of the morning dew finds me

As I leave my love behind the locked doors of his apartment These decisions rip right through the rigidity of my heart

I just want to jump into his jaded perception of love

Even when he whispers that I am not welcome