

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Marty McConnell: Three Poems

Marty McConnell · Wednesday, May 13th, 2015

Marty McConnell lives in Chicago, Illinois, and received her MFA from Sarah Lawrence College. Her work has recently appeared in *Best American Poetry 2014*, *Southern Humanities Review*, *Gulf Coast*, and *Indiana Review*, and is forthcoming in *Tahoma Literary Review*, *Court Green*, and *Columbia Poetry Review*. Her first full-length collection, “wine for a shotgun,” was published in 2012 by EM Press. “Frida Kahlo to Marty McConnell” was published in *Salt Hill Review*; “Fuse” was published in *For Some Time Now: Performance Poets of New York City*; “still life with tattoo gun and umbrella” is a *Cultural Weekly* premiere.

Frida Kahlo to Marty McConnell

Leaving is not enough; you must
 stay gone. Train your heart
 like a dog. Change the locks
 even on the house he’s never
 visited. You lucky, lucky girl.
 You have an apartment
 just your size. A bathtub
 full of tea. A heart the size
 of Arizona, but not nearly
 so arid. Don’t wish away
 your cracked past, your crooked
 toes; your problems
 are papier mache puppets
 you made or bought
 because the vendor was so
 compelling you just
 had to have them. You had
 to have him. And you did.
 And now you pull down
 the bridge between your houses.
 You make him call before
 he visits. You take a lover
 for granted, you take

a lover who looks at you
 like maybe you are magic. Make
 the first bottle you consume
 in this place a relic. Place it
 on whatever altar you fashion
 with a knife and five cranberries.
 Don't lose too much weight.
 Stupid girls are always trying
 to disappear as revenge. And you
 are not stupid. You loved a man
 with more hands than a parade
 of beggars, and here you stand. Heart
 like a four-poster bed. Heart like a canvas.
 Heart leaking something so strong
 they can smell it in the street.

fuse

In the photograph I do not have of us
 we are lying on a mattress in an otherwise

 vacant apartment. It's clear from the angle
 that one of us has taken it, the way lovers do

 in moments of happiness, to preserve
 something of it or to show off to their friends

 or just to know what they look like, lying there,
 before anything's exploded.

still life with tattoo gun and umbrella

I tell Emily a negative spell
 is impossible. That magic

 can only make, not un-make,
 not prevent. I walk to the store
 in the cold February haze, the drizzle

 making everything faintly shine. I've never
 before been wise. But here, in the middle
 of my third real suffering, the body

 has learned to tell me things. The sky
 is a fabulous, relentless grey, a slate

some unseen dog's tongue licked clean.
I owe my life to this expanse
of city, the clocks and unbuttoned

mannequins, the long
tinselled lake, its steady invitation.
Every morning I am remade. Emily

had the crooked heart
I drew on her arm

made permanent. Magic
is like this. Imperfect. I thought
I would be someone else

by now. The rain starts flinging itself
against the pavement. My face
is a lost glove, missing

for days. My face
is on vacation, call back

another time. My face
does not have the time,
or change, or the patience

for any more pretty lies.
Put your mouth on mine.
This is how we stop the rain.

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