

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Three Women Poets Bare Their Souls

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For Valentine's Day, Cultural Weekly has chosen three women poets in different stages of their lives to write about love: Mary Fae Smith, Alicia Young, and Loretta Oleck.

Mary Fae Smith

WHY WON'T HE CALL?

"I like him because he's witty and knows just how to treat me like trash the way I want. I like him in that you-treat-me-like-shit-and-I-want-more-sorta-way. I like him for the slaps he sends up and down my face, my back, my body, my soul. I like him because with him I don't have to hate myself. I like him because his cuts rival mine. I like him because my swords don't match his and can be put away in my closet until he is done fucking [with] me."

*

A SYLLABUS ON LOVE

I learn to unlearn
to love him. Everyday.
The lesson: Unfeel.

*

EDITING OUR WEDDING VOWS

For you, my love, I will do nothing. I'll sit here in a coffee shop and type up odes to myself because I'm ashamed to admit that I love you. Or anyone else. Or any part of this dull life. I'm sad. So just let me be sad. Confessing my love might scare me into happiness...and I'm not ready for that. I live in fear of joy. The darkness is my home and I don't have the fortitude to climb into your light.

But I'd sure love someone to hold me right now.



Mary Fae Smith

Once, a long time ago, a friend called Mary Fae Smith a writer. She laughed and scoffed in disbelief at the hilarity of such a notion. A few years later, she found her self signed up for Jack Grapes's Method Writing class. And now she knows what she wants to do for the rest of her life.

Mary Fae is writing her autobiography in real-time via her Facebook status updates. She loves social media for the way it is shaping the evolution of language. #FerRealz

Alicia Young

the problem with dick

i am of no real use
to him
or anyone else for that matter
as this poetry had taken hold
in my 30?s
now
i'm a traveling saleswoman

save my sons
but they came before
motherhood is my
pre-existing condition

what he fails to understand
is that i've seen the riggings and ropes
behind the curtain
i have torn the veil away from this life
and i have no need for the other side of the bed
to be warm

i'm a solitary creature
i prefer to be alone
i never pick up the phone
and i'm tired of fucking

because
the problem with dick
is that they usually have a needy man attached

no i won't wear white
didn't care for it the first two times

nor do i wish to incubate
his

never had a child
inside my womb
so his life will feel more complete
at the cost of my insides and mind
strung out bloody across a birthing table

do i have a sign on my head
that announces me the virgin mary

it must be the tits
and the hips suggesting
this woman is a baby factory

yeah, so what
i can hammer em out two at a time
in matching sets
but

i will never purchase another cookie jar
or have a chubby fingered baby
to break it despite being told no
a thousand times

no i prefer this near feeling
of single-mother-at-the-finish-line
completion

this coffee
this bourbon
the book i'm reading
and where my boys plan to go to college
it's all i need

*

leave me be

so he cancels his travel plans
and concedes
i am no longer worth the drive

and i am relieved

as i sit waiting
for my old cat to die



Alicia Young

Alicia Young wears her electra complex as a little black dress. A woman who has chosen through her life experiences to dance, rather than die. Very much a flawed human, she is a lover of the imperfect, believing it is our scars that make us beautiful, what creates poetry within our somatic forms. She is a latter day Southern belle with a penchant for early afternoon Manhattans and late evening cigars, born on Kentucky's Bourbon Trail. Raised in Cincinnati from the age of 7, she has spent her life trying to make her way back home to her family, the memory of her young father, and cultural richness left behind. She is the seventh great-granddaughter of Matoaka, more commonly referred to as Pocahontas.

Loretta Oleck

Divorce

I am divorced from a red-maned Irish prince-
 a man with a way of sinking and puffing
 shrinking and huffing
 stinking
 blinking
 bluffing and nod

when I laughed too loudly- sinking

a suit and tie- puffing

sex- shrinking

divorce negotiations- bluffing

my sinking, puffing, shrinking husband
 of twenty stinking years-

twenty years

I say that slowly and quickly rolling it
 over my tongue like a sour gumball
 bouncing through memories
 rounding up reasons
 becoming a season
 a number
 a sound

twenty years
 wound our hearts and heads
 as we raised two kids
 shared a bed

what is left but one bottle of vinho do porto
 bought before we married

to be opened on a special day-

but instead, left untouched on a shelf
 over the rumble of the washing machine
 where our shirts, slacks and socks
 tangled in a tumble before drowning.

*

Dry Cookies

Now, you sit across the field on a quilt with your girlfriend.
 Now, I lie sprawled in my lover's arms listening to the band
 play music not quite loud enough to cover the awkwardness.

You nod. I nod. You wave. I wave.
 Nonchalance has become our new language-
 it's all about making believe we don't care.

We used to share cookies in a restaurant alongside truckers
 dipping biscuits into gravy. The cookies were so dry
 they stuck to the roof of our mouths like a thick cement.
 That was okay. There was nothing to say.

Your girlfriend wears ohm charms dangling from a bracelet.
 She has thick hair and shiny skin. She imagines she is lucky
 while I imagine what you do together. To each other.
 What kind of air do you breathe?

My lover moves to the beat. I know you are watching
 as he kisses me. Hard. I know you wonder- why.
 Why! Facts are meaningless, this late in the game.

I used to sleep spooned to my shame, waking to its pulse
 against my thigh. Swallowing our truths shrouded in lies.
 Spitting them out like dry cookies.



Loretta Oleck

Loretta Oleck's poetry has been published or is forthcoming in Wordriot, Feminist Studies, High Coupe, Black Lawrence Press, Right Hand Pointing, The Westchester Review, Commonline Journal, among numerous others. She has performed her work at The Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art, co-created a feature length documentary, has published books in the field of mental health, and has a contemporary haiku chapbook to be published by A Hurricane Press. She holds a M.A degree in Creative Writing from New York University.

Image of Mary Fae Smith by Alexis Rhone Fancher

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