

Dilemmas of Art

22 Poems

Ry Southard

a spot

i am that spot
a nowhere place
solemn
pause

i turn my face
harvesting glee
as you smiled at me

if only for an instant

you have seen me in the grocery store
as i have watched you with your key at the post office
i don't know where anything is going
just attraction
but not random
awaiting certain things

it's magnets and morse
my heart's current
a terminal to reach you
relay to every lighthouse

bounce across the bay
hurdle the hudson
pirouette over the tanker's waves
crayons as ballast

hoist a marker
and find a canvass
point and tap
and tap again
tip top hat

drawing dots
I am your spots

About Art

Art is the humanness that binds us
Clouds of souls fill an endless sky
A chorus of gospels we cherish

To see a soul
Brave is the message to self-proclaim
Joy or anguish, love or abandon
Creating unity with creative voice
Growing with another's soul as discord melts

A vast poetic palette of dabbling hues
Flatters and flattens the universe
The ability to soar when we can't fly

Acceptance of your world is so much easier
Knowing our fields of vision are different
Entwined with humanity's trust

Concentric circles of color expand healing
Murals, plays, street dance, song and choir
Bring our community together in kindness
I pray for this

albums

why bother picking them up
laying in the tide as memories
footprints and sand dollars are equally fleeting
trusting tonight to wash away faded history

dreams to be shared
on a bench along the river front
on blankets in a park's reprieve
in any city in any world
visions and hope

remorse is for the poor of thought
standing water with buzzing insects
blaming the humidity

i embrace my heritage
sienna albums stacked in the library
curled photos of not smiling people I don't know
expressing somber faithful genetic pride

i wonder about my dead relatives
at a family reunion in some other universe
are they happy with their legacy
do they dream
is there joy in their future
i hope so

To Draw

Before I knew how to draw
I learned how to travel
rooms with just a bed, old paint and broken appliances
then to houses without love that were not homes
I wrote about failure and
Joyous adventure and newness

Of sumptuous lands and mysteries and chaos
Chasms and poppy strewn fields
Where we lay in clover staring skyward in wonder
Patient waiting for the stars

Before I knew how to travel
I learned how to fall
From lofty corrals of bronco busting cowboys
From nightmares of dungeons and torture
Dream travel was delusional and flawed

Able to rise from a crawl and draw

I like to write on airplanes
The sky frees me like Amelia
Without motion there is no virtue

I shall not sully those stagnant souls
I care not for apathy
Sudden departures I know
Before I learned how to draw

Chanting

Memories of Gregorian chant
echoing through the cathedral
Up in the choir loft, high above the congregation
I sang

We sang without thought, with joy in the moment
The only anticipation was the next stanza
The next breath and exhale

In one continuous voice the vessel was filled
with love and Latin and God
From nave to chapel to tower and crypt
Singing in practiced perfection
So many, many hours each week we lived at
the school and cathedral and its practice room

The Choir Master and organist
impatient with just a quarter tone off
perfection in Sunday song
A choir that soared beyond the Rose window

As president and librarian, I led the boys to concert excellence
I was in eighth grade

And still riding home on the Sacramento line
Surfing the hills without grabbing the poles
Being an obnoxious me
I managed to act my age

color theory 1

rouge velvet space verdant smiles summer

ferns skyward cumulus blush marmalade still

daffodils cantaloupe petals swirling skyward noir

leafy sun streaks melt anger oblivion

love opens infinity gushing clarity fenceless

listening seaward vast hope peach horizons

color theory 2

desert mirage wondering abandon solar return

leaves fronds space move evolve NOW

kissing clementines snow caves ever-blue questions

unknown forests caverns revelation gelato peace

flamboyant flavors quiet gullies surging green

abundance mustard snow surrender rain prince

color theory 3

history remorse delusion denial justify

acceptance fresh figs sea pelicans always

Another conspiracy irrelevant deaf lies

Wonder science painting your letters joy

Dissonance dissolved hearts a 'pounding love

Water cleanse belief truth you us

fresco

listening
to a meliferous troubadour
long song stories of our time
each deeper than the tale before
stanzas i will
to my daughter

why can't
i sing or talk that way
grabbing joy
plucking melody's treble notes
in all the right order
without punctuation or glue
or any percussion section mucking up my song

linear echoes
you
bouncing knee
to neck
glancing to nick time
cavity
your parts
not being here
i feel asunder

remnants of ancient fabric
runners of silk
slivers of us fresco
awaiting paste

i slice mango
dovetail wonder
and passion

vibrating
a pastel primary blender

adherence
painting me to you

Ginny's Pithos

A canvas of her pithos hangs on our bedroom wall
We drink from it each day
Replenishing hope

A slash of turquoise suspended in your dreams
Concertos simmering
Swirling gauzy universes of rouge
Eddies deep into time
Amorphous windows to your ancestry
The true Pandora

Mesmerized, I memorize your vision
Yet still don't know what to say

Push to justice, punch misogyny
Give it another slug
Pow! Zammo Woman!

Pour joy over wonder
Spin dreams to dance
Twirls and blurs of vibrant intent
Life's jug of clear water spilling
With frothy abundance

How do I become me

How do I become me
after so many years of trying

But not too hard as I was living, really truly
according to some book about me
Which I never knew about
and then I heard there were questions
about the author who lived on a remote shore
and thus had spurious credentials

I check on myself with a wink here and
balancing poses and pelvic thrusts too
Fobbing off age as another memoir
alluding to illusion of a different history
Born to become me despite my best intentions

Nothing is my House is Level

Nothing in my house is level
Every notion askew
Round things too
Bad Escher dreams
More undecipherable, it seems

My chair arms are akimbo
Legs a creaky wobbly perched on squeaky wheels
The seat is unyielding and painfully boring
Shutters are off kilter
Windows are cloudy and lousy for clairvoyance

Say... "In My Imagination" ...slowly
A plainsong chant of images rises
Paintings from every museum, holy earthen shrines
My not so holy writings swirling dervishes absolve
Songs of vision cascade from the organ's five manuals
Cathedrals revel, a glorious chorus of temples

Cacophony of peace creating new birth
Boundless imaginations of hope and love
Peaceful dialogue about most everything
Using sanguine words to define the truth of now
We are linguists of resolve

Searching for an axis to launch our gyroscope
Across the quadrants and blessed by a trope
A most abnormal dimension in our galaxy of hope
I yearn for a meteor to elope

Re-imagining our equilibrium
Parallelograms appear to level and square
Our roof beam beams elation
With all the right angles now, we have nary a care

Our Palette

Festooned with plants
the drama of Croton's ochre
imagine a palette of daily dreams

The distance from here to there
explodes with color

We walk our country lanes
sharing points of hue
Dog walkers and unknown evergreens silhouette
Camellias, weeping cherries, and native pear

It is good to live in a botanic garden or is it an arboretum
A conversation of wonder
Please visit our color and judge

The strum of silence at 3am
A patient repose for
The choir that erupts at 6
An aviary's repertoire just for us

Note to palette: smiles happens when choirs erupt
in joy

Poetry detritus

I sit in a pool of words
Scraps and flotsam do a slow foamy swirl in the eddies
I splash about making waves
Spilling over the forest floor

Welcoming ferns and moss and new rivulets
Puddles with participles bonding
Moisture is so fine for nuance
The power of watery particulates
Percolate our soil
Our memories

Leafy dreams of random verse
The meanings of which are hardly random
Pulling wisdom from a mirage of compost

The trunk of our tree is well attended
And ready to discuss the poetry spores
Vibrant in our soil

push pull paint

Poseidon thundering
no question
of possession

enduring love's promise
Odysseus and Penelope
a journey seeking home
salvation is our daily bread

All Giver Pandora
from the urn
no boundaries

Painting the record straight
Arrows fly true through every ring

Reckoning for April 2020 with respect
to injecting disinfectant

Where is the reason for today
and balm for its injustice

The clamor for justice and blame
A blast of tremors
 Crash, a life threatening now
 a caress, a loss and more

I'm glad I'm not suicidal or an unconvincing fool
to believe a leader in a crisis
that replicates a colossal history of disaster

More folks died today
Morgues are overwhelmed
Ribbons drape our angst
 above love and prayers that don't expire

Poems beckon but they won't be enough
 to triage today or tomorrow
We write journals of our predicaments
 and freedoms and wondering, essays of
 hope and possibilities

My brushes await your canvasses that illustrate dreams

The possum crawling across the back woods pile
I want more of that trust with nature
 We've messed with our destiny
More than our children
 would have dreamed

Directions to work in the ether
 and for our new compost tumbler
Will suffice for now

Research says (an unromantic title)

I am why some researchers say we
are connected with art and science
And life and romance
And survival

I will die but romance will not
A flavor of art, a texture of science
The pleasure of tongue and taste
The wisdom of you mixes all into a tonic
We drink and breathe and love

As if love is the most perfect
Sustaining beyond tragedy and triumph
Melding molding accepting forgiving
Caressing the beach for more

Cherish the turtles birthing
as centuries are tides
I paint sandy poems with you

Walk with me please
Waves translucent
froth always remembers peace

tell me

i type in wonder
how this happened

thought I should know
after all

the figure you present
not a drawing I have ever known

tell me my love
we are not just a tryst

we launch the moon
so happy to bend the oars
and tantalize souls

an island awaits
if we believe

is there a want to explore
a conundrum of most concern
your image of Hanbury Garden's centaurs seducing
love on the wall
seducing me to you

we are so fortunate
there is no game on the line
the wizard guides me to you

so i guess that explains it

the poem

the poem
lay reposed
ready and available
and then a reading

thank god
it was not a stuffy affair

but it was well received
and truly admired by some
crumbs to follow

Today is forever

Bubbles of static
staccato my ears
I can't imagine what
I should hear
vespers or fugues
I need you here

Rorschach impressions
kaleidoscope my eyes
waves of orphaned images
mesmerize
Do you realize
you have me hypnotized?

When you had just spoken
my tongue became tied
such a perilous state for
a wordy man's sighs

Tantalizing syllables
or a clever clause
waiting for you
to finish your pause

Do you know
your hands fit mine?
like today is forever
a circuit connected
embrace of our skin
sparkling and sparkling
all our within

Were I to be Frida

I am my palette, garland frames of beauty and death
allergic to tradition
festooned with vibrancy
My portraits drip exposure
Symbols float in watery clouds, placating my tears

Bracing for life
I am not a decoration for your exhibition
or your politics
I paint

a Siamese spine of flowers
a bed ridden model
a not-so-still life
upon a gurney painting me
cutting the blossoms from my hair
revealing an axis
My body has been cleaved into color and exhaustion

Bring me to your gallery
we will be lively and celebrate my reincarnation

My longing will never be compromised
My heart will always remember
with moist brushes

were i to be michel

lying on my back
tracing angels with my fingertips
drawing from reflections
the weight of heaven pressing judgment
my chest heaves

impressed to a vision
my hand looks like God's
my face is the ages
years without sun
but not without light

possessed with seraphic motion
over so many domes

a cold marble ache on the scaffold
pain dulled by permanence
hearth memories forgotten

tears fall from the ceiling
blending upon my palette brushes bristling
frothy divine glows of all that we aspire
succumbing to rapture