

BLUEST GREY



K WEBER

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Springtime, Easily

These are the nights
with clearest eyes:
the bright cricketing
from dew-stained grass;
their bodies breathe in
with high-pitched sighing,
small voices travelling
an echo alongside late trains

Inside the dark, the moon
remains a bulb
by which a cardinal,
on its red perch, can read
the outcome of tomorrow
while cats fight and feast
with fleas then flop their bellies
on quiet asphalt

Spring trees flower sweetly
and sway their sex
like a dancer's hips to a lone
saxophone: limbs dangle
like tired hair and arms
just before the bar closes
and the sleep-drenched kiss
tastes like honeysuckle

In the Used Section

The man with the brown leather
face told the woman
with the men's haircut
she looked like Bob
Geldof

and they laughed
like lovers
between aisles
and cigarette
coughs

He kept waving
her lookalike's picture
over her head; like a frantic
out-of-towner showing off
his first winnings on his first
casino vacation

She grabbed
the Boomtown
Rats CD from his grip
then pulled down
her hair

She looked like she felt
diseased: her face
turned the sky's
pale yellow sick
that comes after a storm

A Poem Going in the Direction of Pittsburgh

When the summer's thunder
rolls us under our beds
will we simmer in the cinders
of fireplace winters, trapped
in our own skulls, never leaving
the house to see the world
by foot or by phone

long-distance you wonder
while I wander, keeping good
and drunk at random
intervals, arrhythmia
in the best hearts, off-time
on the wrong latitude

you keep kind and swallow time
like I do, our rest comes
easy with the stamp of nicotine
approval at 3am shared because
of time zones and addiction

follow the ground and take
the sun down with your pen
and your graveyard eyes, alive
in hometowns of rust where
we don't keep odd hours, alone

In the afternoon

In the afternoon
of open doors
I can't find my keys
and I am sweating
and halfway
frazzled
because money
doesn't grow
anywhere near
this planet
and I realize
that being without
toilet paper
is okay
because free napkins
hang around
quietly everywhere—
an endless supply
for hands
and the occasional
asshole
but I really miss
shampoo and I wonder
when the boy
in the green shirt
is gonna take me
to a hotel
where I can steal
his heart
and free samples
of Pantene

Again Within

Opens
like a tin can
slowly
then words
fly out
and scream
and pierce
while I scratch
at the skin
of this ache

Here come the warm
and gentle beats
and it's a day
when I don't worry
and I might follow you
into a field of flowers
and I am tempted
by the piano
on the hill

The ghostly voices
say it is okay
to tumble down
but I decide
to drift instead
where the lake
meets my toes
and then I hold you
close and closer
so I know you
are most real

I love the heaviness
of guitars and drums
and how this soundtrack
foreshadows
all the butterflies
and every quiver
and the quickening pulse
of our first meeting

Friday on top of a quilt

Here is where
the sound
of dust takes a nap
on the quietest
books on a broken
shelf

A heart
falls asleep
in an ashtray
but still beats
smoke signals

99 cent pot
pie and ginger
beer on an after-
noon as lazy
as a cat
on a lap

we are still
electricity
and water
even when we
are heavy
eyelids
and slow
breaths

Christmas Shopping

I leave the house
with my underwear on
inside-out

5 winter miles
later, I want to scream
the aisles

Hands grasp, gnarled
Yule faces seethe; a doll
loses its head

I long for home, a child
who's writhed in a shopping
cart too long

All that is left
in the aftermath is the solace
of my bedroom

I wrap myself
from spools: the ribbons
of anxiety, the tape

I fasten breath
and bones together and prepare
to give myself away

Scraping by

Never saw
a blue sky
I didn't want
to climb inside
and you want to hitch-
hike through
the clouds
and into
the sun
to find a love
that burns

I am knees
buckled
to the earth
but your words
drag me down
alleyways and we
find ourselves
on freeways

you were here
and then you were
vapor and I am one
sheet to the wind
and the bottle
is half-drunk
and I am harmonizing
to the songs
you sang that I
can't listen to
anymore

little arrows

just when i find myself
free and running
alongside the wind
and everything inside
myself that carries me
something stops me
like a damned deer
in the headlights
and i realize the sky
is on fire, broken
and i am full of holes

Just stand still

another magnetic
night without the personality
of the poles; we are north
and north, unattractive

I wish I could stick
myself to your warm
skin but I pull
just as your breath
hits my hair

your hands try blindly
to wander the forest
of thoughts I keep
behind the eyes

sometimes I wonder
what is on the other
side of the map
and how far
I have come
just to land stranded
somewhere
far from Antarctica

when the cold
is my comfort
you are right
next to me
but we are hot
and a long way
from home

November 12, 2008

this moment
is an ocean:
sprawling
fluidly

you are wide
sky and arms
tonight, leading
me like a beacon

i am waiting
to wade
but hold my breath
instead; throw
myself under
like a stone

you rescue
a skewed me,
and untangle
the algae
and all that
holds me
in a current
of worry

we linger
like liquid
and float
this clumsy
bubble

baby, it's warm outside

tonight the trains
howl out
in a language
of rust
and somewhere
a picnic
is sleeping

tomorrow
with the grass
sweating and the ease
of skin
and skin: you
will unfold
like blankets
for overnight
guests

we are tricky
and slippery
and reborn
in dew-drenched
august

the heat screams
with a tea-
kettle whistle
and the parts
underneath
my skin
burn
with an engine's
precision

and i am
and you are
some kind
of conductor

and i am bound
for somewhere
whenever
we get off
this ride

Null and Void

When I am alone, I imagine everyone else has simply disappeared. They become extras in my most mundane or exhilarating moments; cameo at my best and worst.

They have bit parts: the occasional walk-on role; emerge from behind curtains and walls, beneath floorboards and thick fog for a few memorable lines. Some stay awhile, linger longer.

Even as someone is close enough to lie beside me, I drift thinking about where they go when I sleep. Maybe they remain on standby like someone nursing power or rationing time. Perhaps they travel to an undisclosed location.

It's possible they evaporate completely during those most stone hours; become the blank space that surrounds me until I wake.

Here is no there or why

There is no one left here except me and the naughty boy in the charcoal coat. And he's

waving his fistful of pennies into the cold air and waiting to accidentally jostle my teeth out. Where

did his head go since he was strapped in his mother's inches? He

snarls now and doesn't make breathy sighs. He's hardly frozen in the bitter cold. Shifty eyes, shifty little hands under thin fleece. No shiver through

his tiny bones; his eyes are red as always. I just wait for the point where it all hits at once.

Nosebleed.

Steal red Kisses right back from your mouth

and nuzzle my head
between your shoulders
while I knead above your hips.

The back of your neck
is a mystery
so I taste it.

I am climbing
your hair
with my fingers.

You let my legs
wrap you from behind
and then you rub my thigh.

There is electricity
and I make
sounds for you.

So this is music
or this is noise:
there is rhythm.

And this is a dance.
And this is what happens.
And this is inside my knees.

When you send me
smoke signals
from your mountains of song,

I want that pulse,
wrist against wrist,
and you and I, inspiring.

the wrong way, the long way

this stain: disdain
rubs red-raw
across the sleep
inside sweet skin

skim these pink
walls and places
where dry eye-
lids wink wild

there are days
and miles, months
without lips; boundless
in dismissing passion

a heart-starved
leaky faucet, reduced
to a shapeless
mass, stapled down

cry once more
for old times
and press warm
kiss against glass

suburban ditty

someone's got the clap-
board siding
and an itch
to preen the lawn

little bugs crawl out
of sidewalk cracks
while the yellow ooze
of sun pours down

she is bending over
the laundry; the window
hollers an orgasm,
the breath of day

the bushes are unkempt
and porch swings wince
while children play doctor
doolittle on dvd

she is seeping
tears from cutting onions
and rubbing her butt
of pork with spice

neighbors are hard
at work, home or away,
as they grind
their teeth while smiling

a simple, down-home poem

remember
the hatching, the hay-
stacks

the enormous pile
of smells; the feed
and the feces

i am my own
tractor
now

hauling
all of this
away

quiet, unrequited

I can't look at you
across the table
of Thai food

At turns, I want
to bite your red
curry mouth
or slide
out of the booth
and never get
through to you
again

I can't force-
feed you
any more of me

I am never
what you want
and can't seem
to find you
among the flavors
of distraction

You leave me
cold; the leftovers
that inevitably wind up
in the trash

how do you get here

there is a cat-
scratched
right hand
from where
the ice
licked
my wrists
then missed

i have been
here before
and frozen
with guilt
and i miss
those nights
alone by myself
when the chapped
air stops time
and i skate slippery
parking lots
in shoes
and don't fall

it just takes
that one time
alone with some-
one else and i
become all limbs, a mess
and i'm cracked
like a wintry
tree; arthritis, bruised
skin

The Problem With Ohio

It seems
we've become
winded: trees
lean and stretch
through chill
until breaking; hit
houses with a cold
snap.

I remember growing
up in parking lots
and wearing my hair
past the shoulders; the sun
turned on for weeks. There
was endless spring
dew, thick coats
of snow in winter. Summer
was never without straw-
berries and scraped
knees. Autumn roads
were paved
with after-dinner
walks.

Today, intermittent
rain falls metronome
on deaf ears. Grey, wet
afternoons are common-
place. My hair soaks
my cheek; the frozen
lapping of a breeze.

Last night, a storm
shook the balcony. Newly

bloomed trees fell
bare. Tomorrow, a golden
day like the onset
of July. This past winter
I saw half of a rainbow.
Fall lasted 15 minutes.
There were 7 inches
of sweat last summer.

We live in a state
of constant confusion.
How fitting, my home.

The Clean Break

*Gentle lady, do not sing
Sad songs about the end of love;
Lay aside sadness and sing
How love that passes is enough.*
-- from James Joyce's *Chamber Music*, "XXVIII"

And the room becomes bare
after the door slams shut
and our words run quietly
through curtains; plunge
to their deaths on concrete
two floors down. Two stories
with many sides. I won't
listen to yours and you
won't come back
or call to listen to mine.

Months later after I have
choked on tears, overdosed
on memories and stained
myself with anger, I will
try and remember what you said
about impermanence. "Nothing
is sacred" you said with a flat
smile, emphasizing what IS is
or isn't.

Oh, I wish I was one
of those girls who shrugs
her love off with ease
when it falls out of place. Instead
I am the one who decides
that "impermanence" is just
another big word you used
to cover your ass

and make a clean break; a long-
gone forget-away.

I try not to make a retro-
spectacle of myself
when I see you drunk
in public; waxing nostalgic
about how then was something
greater than now. My love
goes on with patient
eyes while I smoke
without anyone blowing
smoke up my backside
or feeding me
grand abstractions.

I will forever fold
into the arms of trust
but refuse to hold
your hand again, my friend.
We are fooling ourselves
when we say we will be
or could be friends. I do not
trust illusions. And so this is
the end of that, again,
and also, this.

i sit in the shade to write about the sun

arched on the back
of summer
i am arms
stretched through
blue, blue
fescue and asleep
near hostas, breathing
their green
as the lettuce
blooms

these are the days
of lazy
hair and girls
dangling
in the sun
and books
read themselves
one sunburned
page at a time

the grass waits
for bare
feet but the lawn-
mower snores
instead and two
cats cool
themselves
on concrete

you came
to me on a day
like this, soothing

as aloe
and idling
in the shade
beside me
until you opened
your mouth
and your words
froze over

arise

climb up
and spread
yourself: a trellis
of morning
glories

the blue
blanket
wrestles
with coarse
green stems

like fingers
through
showered hair
the vines
tug and tangle

twist
on all sides
with silk
and hum
wind

perch coyly
and wink
white edges
while craving
rain

retract at night
into tired wilting, returning
to grope at sunrise

educational field trip

without kids
we roamed
the children's
museum
like the bell
for recess
had just sounded
and we were
finally free
but in
the fake cave
in the science
wing we are
alone and full
on biology
and i wanted
you to bend
me over
somewhere
beside stalagmites
while we
breathlessly
recited
the periodic
table of elements

A Number of Things Contributed

Her fallen apple
now rests in tableau
among spilled milk, cracked
pelvis, an ill-
tempered mirror.

She utters burning
words about her mother
and her mother's mother
and how it came to be
that the stability
ran dry. Wants
a plastic face. Has to lose
herself in weight loss. Cuts
coupons and her inner thighs.

This is just the way it is.
This is normal.

But who were the first
to feel the surge? The urge
to tangle hair with fists?
Did they blame a rough
day? Broken wings? An unclean
cave? Tarnished silver
or a hormone, misplaced?

She throws up
her hands and lets
loathing win again
and maybe another time
until she is too tired
to fight herself.

Somewhere, there are daughters
clawing at their
own souls, giving in.

Who carved that initial
tunnel? The one filled
with a rage so tall
it overcame their entire
being? And when the feeling
passed, was there
breath and pause? And how
did it keep going
this long?

New Year

There are strangers
winking Shakespeare
and thick-coated drinkers
wading through a long line:
all these people eating
the same late-
night air

Downtown is sturdy
buildings, like the laced
ankles of the ice skaters
on the barely-lit square;
little, red noses
and sweated fingers
laugh beneath a drunken moon

Somewhere a chiminea
burns, beckoning
dark orange, in plain
view from a side-
walk and no one
warms themselves
beside it

We are warmed
by the glow
of a tepid winter
and the wine that stains
our faces and the hand
our hand is in
as we wander

pour les gens qui ne savent pas le français

c'est terrible,
cette terre

avec le vert
et les choses

que vous ne pouvez
pas voir

chaque jour
le temps:

gris ou rose
dans le ciel

un peu
de feu

et les mains
dans les bains

de la pluie

this blue pool

cover caught rain
from autumn to spring
and in between
froze dirty
leaves and now
the thawed
puddle
is a pond
on top: keeps
reflections
of power
lines, a wavy
sky and tree
limbs
that grope
and fumble
as aged
fingers

the world
is upside-down
from the watery
mirror
as a perched
bird warbles
the word
"cheerful"
again and again
as the branches
ooze
in grey-
brown spirals

everything
from above
slithers wet
and distorted
like tendrils
of hair
in a murky
bath and only
in rare, breathless
moments
does anything
truly resemble
or remember
its own
self

a soft, still
hand
stretches over
the tarp; the right
hand begins
to look
like a crippled
version
of its left's
shadow
and appears
to wave
goodbye

to the dregs

you were the beard
with balloons: idling
in the background
of other people's
wedding photos

the sweetest
river city
monger, the mayor
of another night
on the town

senses on fire
and a heart
that burns
with grit
and velvet

on midday trips
to the grocery
you are fluorescent
and steal words
for poems

always a story
and a cure
for the self-
same blues
and bullshit

the quiet
observer, loud
with living

where i am will always be

the city is simple:
a freckle
on a heart-
shaped state

anytown, usa
with a twist:
emilio estevez
once lived here

the litter of broken
glass sleeps
beside a dumpster
at night

and daytime
is a forecast
of grey and a 50%
chance of happiness

would we be
any different
if we wandered
anywhere else?

no matter where
my chair sits,
home is still
that little river

city on a midwestern
map

More Than This

*What is love made of?
Nobody knows
What are you afraid of?
Everyone knows
It's love
It's love*

-- Robyn Hitchcock, "So You Think You're In Love"

I want someone
who wants me,
reciprocally

Sliding fingers
between
fingers

Making a mess
of our lives
and our kitchen, together

I barely remember
life inside
the two-person bubble

Because it once
or twice burst, soapy,
and stung my eye

I want blood
rushing
to the tip

Fluttering
 chests and sweat
on a bed

Walking ridiculous
around the park
with nervous knees

Sitting too close
and talking
too much

Someone with stories,
a giant heart: I would
soak you up like a sponge

Someone who relieves
every apology
of my past

I want something
that is only ours; much better
than this

the sky was hanging

while roamers
roamed with bed-
sheets clinging
from their clothes
at the knees
or danced
indoors, screaming
in sunglasses

we watched
a bag of popcorn—
once held as tightly
as a balloon—
spill onto the side-
walk, orange
as the birds
fell down
and a man
strung the perfect
kernels
for a necklace

in the wide
open light
the bus dragged
by and i stood
for a smoke
in the parking
lot and someone
i used to know
said i was platinum
and made up
a song for me

and said i should
never swirl
my hips
in front of men

all day
the noise
of life
cried out
from the throats
of children
and helpless
sirens and lost
dogs and souls
and there
is never enough
aspirin
in a day

sometimes i sit
quiet and find
lines to rhyme
and just keep
finding we are all
one and all
undone
and trying to fit
ourselves
back inside
ourselves
and stretching
our arms
out for the rare
and bare blue
day

little drummer girl

let's go back
to the telephone
or the time
you were coaxed,
sick, to spend a day
at the community
pool or how we'd
listen to your father's
wisdom over summer
break

friends are hard
to hold on to
when the line
on the map's too
long and your
new climate
is much more
slippery and cool

the cord
only stretches
so far but, my dear,
do you remember
when we put ginger
in scrambled
eggs? how i clamored
for a twin? how you
harbored a seasick
heart for the same boy
even after years, when
we begin to forget
what a face looked
like?

the oregon
trail, our ups
and downs—
what seemed like
little dramas
back then are
the incapacitating
migraines of now

we ache, but we
go on; have loved
and lost
touch
but you are still
two solid
platinum
decades of someone
i am very
glad to know

i'm set free

come to me
with your red
gape; a mouth
ripe with flowers

sting me kiss-
ward and bend
music, your heart
in full staccato

no angry breath
bleeds here—
time shivers sweetly
as ice on flesh

lend me your throat
and open me
as petals
and poems

ABOUT THE POET AND THE POEMS

Kristi really doesn't like writing this sort of stuff in third-person... I am a simple gal who appreciates pleasures of the minimal sort: walking, collecting LPs, listening to music, making sound collages, recording strange noises created with unconventional objects, writing poems, reading poetry and music biographies, watching documentaries and artsy films as well as schlocky, ridiculous ones. I still love thrift stores and one day I will own a lovely, massive xylophone that spans an entire living room. I recently had a weekly, live, variety music show online called *My Little Darlin' Radio Hour* and look forward to doing a new podcast series soon.

Bluest Grey is a compilation of poems I selected from heaps of poetry I wrote between 2004 and 2012. This collection is being offered as an e-book in PDF format that can be downloaded or viewed in Adobe Reader or other preferred PDF-reading tools. Also planned is a companion MP3 of this book as well where I read the poems. You can visit my Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/midwesternskirt> or my always-under-construction website at <http://www.midwesternskirt.com> for more info. If all goes well, you may see a print version of *Bluest Grey* someday. For now, enjoy the digital experience! This collection is actually my second little book of words since I self-published my first, *Midwestern Skirt*, in print in 2003. I did the cover art for this book using GIMP (<http://www.gimp.org>) which is free, too!

I graduated in 1999 with a BA in Poetry from Miami University. I have had a career in software testing since 1997 with a nice 3-year "break" working in a colorful record store. I live in Dayton, Ohio, with lots of records and mostly no interest in leaving the apartment. I could eat Indian food exclusively. I have an extensive collection of vintage nightgowns. I still like cassette tapes and mixtapes very much. Email midwesternskirt@gmail.com if you wanna.

OH, YOU!

Celine Smith, Misty Hudson, Carla Marchal, Brad Wright, Rob Butler, Jeffrey Ballou, Patrick Whited, Allen Lee Scott, Leslie Jones, Abiyah, Kate Banta, Greg Lawhun, Chris Griffith, Tim Pop, Beth Amber, Dave Holt, Dan Ellcey, Kelly Eitniear, Joe Syph, Carly Fleming, Cheryl Paquay, Stephanie Benton, Patrick Dorsey, Wil Rhyne & Everybody at Everybody's Records, Caryn Lavender, Brandy Curran, Nate Southard, Cassie Coletta, Beka Bushor, Barry Funkhouser, Matt Cooper, Robert Moss, Robert Lee Brewer, Tammy Foster Brewer, Melinda Farrar, Tim Flanagan, Jay Madewell, Joshua Egeland, William Davidson, Mark Shafer, Dave Scott, Drazzle, Tim McAllister, Jamie Way, Jason O'Mara, Greg Schultz, Jenna Strauchen, Natalie Kocsis, Nicole Pacifico, Dawn Bockock, Andy Molloy, Lucy Molloy, Andrea Collins, Tina Sullivan, Craig Hawkins, Stevie Asher and Family, Edward Calvert, Diane Sparks, Aaron Phillips, Tim Krug, Ian Kaplan, Marc Betts, Becky Druley, Gretchen Henrich, podunkradio.com, errorfm.com, Jean Cocteau, Strangers With Candy, moderate doses of post-rock, Howlin' Wolf, Sebadoh, Nina Simone, Songs:Ohia, Can, Magma, Will Oldham, living and learning, actually applying what I learned this time, my humidifier, our lost Ohio winter, quitting smoking in 2010, pizza nights, second back surgery (still not bionic though ☺), getting out to see decent shows, hanging out in record shops, listening to a wider range of music (prog, hip-hop, insane jazz, krautrock...), independence of the isolationist kind, belly dancing attempts, holding hands, rental cars, being mostly sober most of the time, playing the tambourine, learning all the buttons on this synthesizer I have now that is like mission control, my family, my willingness to never ever ever give up, lemonade, old mixtapes, comfortable yet cute shoes, summer dresses, more mistakes than I could have ever imagined the last time I wrote a thank you list, research and information science and the curiosity of 100 cats, and a whole, blue world still waiting to be explored. Thanks to all for the inspiration, patience, kindness, support and friendship.

This book compiled and made available June 2012

Please contact K Weber
if you would like individual MP3s for airplay

email: midwesternskirt@gmail.com

facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/midwesternskirt>

website: <http://www.midwesternskirt.com>