

# 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.

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## 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.

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## **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.

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## **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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