
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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