

Amerdrogynne

by

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Amerdrogynne

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ABSTRACT

The poems within *Amerdrogynne* reflect on place, mood, the process of poetry-making, identity, artistic & personal development, love, and sex. While no specific narrative is clearly delineated, the poems have been collected and arranged to evoke an arching sense of movement from the ethereal toward the concrete. Changes in mood, place, and attitude toward the other elements described above lend texture and tension to the work which ultimately resolves itself peacefully.

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Annex

In my fantasy house
 there is more space
 fewer things.

In my beach house,
 there are just books, a telescope,
 maybe a man.
I limit things, and motivation, production are limitless.

Snow Schools

Still in bed, after staggering home
through a drunken night. Welling winter
has disheveled white wings and nickel tipped nipples.
An old fridge whirs a fluctuating pitch
as snow falls on the passers' byway.
Shut sills inside, we sleep stock still.
Outside, snow-touched trash
is tumbling through the night.
The morning will bring snow squalls
like glittering fish, untouchable texture
in the sea of the sky.

Re: Verse Libre

The American grain,
eaten, stored, and waving,
also running through the boards,
will go hard if we can't

in practice

modern instruments make things crooked as in nature
chicken nuggets are poured into bone, bell, boot, ball
so content can take shape.

Ceramic vase filled with boiling water makes a sound. Why?

Usque ad Mala

I have seen you in the night
in a garden sleeping
with closed flowers, you held me

on soft grass, greener
in the night than in daydreams
I have seen a dark house

with dark rooms come to, fill
with gradient ombre dawn,
never an instant

broken egg, cracked open, urging
insides through the shades
but melting, white-gold light

rising, opening, slowly, rare.
Somehow, this is how
I have seen you

as I have never seen you,
as no one has.

Unpacking

It is 2012
and you are supposing
because I have a radio
I am into older men
a fine symphony plays
and no other words
are fine enough to name it
to be truthful
appear to never lie
if you have loved and cared
deeply for women
before me, since
life is a polygon
of many bisections
and rays
I am ordinary
but I come alive in it
people will fight wars
people will have abortions
I am moving slowly
but I am moving, unpacking
in this box
Ingres' naked female
with too-notched spine
maybe I ought to say something
about her right breast
but my grandmother didn't die
in World War Two
for me to unpack the Odalisque
still mustering up my mustard-gas
bravado; her bombs are beautiful
if you're into moving fast

Ether

I like to work

without

the notebook

the record is deceptive

it's not the work

without

the notebook is the ether

Storm Summer//Then Now

From the porch
we saw a tree struck by lightning.
A momentary candle
the splitting wood, wet and alive
made a dull crack
but not a split into halves.
An uncle chained the tree the next day.
Onkel in German is used for any old man.
The center split stayed,
the chain is a bubble with bark grown over.

My old man is a young man
with a stormy grey comforter
on his bed, billowing with knees.
Hot sidewalks make rain steam
sweet and humid. I hate his apartment
with threadbare conversation
but slick energy, until the power dies.
Some people chase storms.
We urge them into being, the current
storms are easier than long-term sunburn.

Re: Definition

1. *in the American grain,*
eaten stored waving
2. *also:* running through the boards
3. *then:* it will go hard if we can't, in practice
4. Modern instruments make things crooked
as in nature; chicken nugget shapes
are poured water in a vase
5. that content, themselves,
boot ball bell
can dictate the shape taken

Negatio

John, everyone,
had a date with a girl,
informal, they had only just met
in the ether, not the air
but the alcohol. Arriving home,
they didn't break down the door
with lovemaking; they didn't carry
each other over the threshold
in a floating tangle of arms and legs.
They walked, everyone,
coolly as the night ether.

Growth

Pithy pitch of a bottle rocket shivers
above the dormitory courtyard
its nebulous peal clears a path clean
from second-story window to overgrowth below
makes way for what is inside and should be out
sprouts ember's noise and sticks
the incense burner was destiny-on-the-windowsill
an immanent bottle rocket launcher flinging tiny arias
across the brawling voices of firemen below
who clean up destiny's rocket sticks
telephone the cops - it's time to study now
and put out the fires in the growth

He Said

*Let's write some
poetry
the way some
people
say, let's smoke some weed,
for pleasure. It's positive in some
circles, in some regressive.*

He said add
*some humor, too to
diffuse meditation,*
but I don't know what nothing
this man is thinking about.
So I thought of all the ways out, consecutively:
north – pines, flat lake,
south – rolling, west – flat, West
Virginia, mountains.

Vacation Island

Over the years,
new bridges have appeared
where once they weren't needed.
Some houses stand, stilted, mostly in the sea
or stand there frequently.

Our street is tucked up snugly in the dunes
but maybe we should experience a place with waves
lapping, crashing against
the front windows.
And see that this is the way the world ends,
loud and soft, in dissonance and rhyme
in engine exhaust triggering
an exhausted island's movement
into the sea.

Judgment Day

The beautiful are worthy
he said before I asked
if he would judge
before I knew or realized
the new definition of *worthy*
I, with my story, was
plainly asking for it.

“Plum Patriotic”

[something spangled with something besides stars]

Kept

A holding, stock
share
of love
kept to
near enough distance
from the middle of love.

Free to move
from window to window,
sort of rapunzelly waiting,
in reality waiting for him.

Not kept by witch,
kept by man from wife
for solemn
candlelit occasions in
ceremonial lingerie.

When you met
he kept insisting
on your beauty, primary
stage of brokerage,
supreme criterion
for his clientele.

You insist
it's happiness
kept pent in house with dog.

Bukowski

She and I had steaks at lunch and wine
and then more wine and some herb in her basement
we slouched together, playfully on her couch
beautiful together, she said
something about her twenties being this or that
I said you're only 25 and patted her head
we smoked and watched old TV shows
I came back to my own house, fully adult
high and a little drunk, a little sheepish at driving stoned
but pleased at knowing the backway through copless roads
tossed the keys down wherever
in some kind of shape or spirit of kindredness,
or solidarity, or something,
I flipped through the book of Bukowski on the top shelf
and read one about a man making a sloppy mess
of a public reading, and then another,
he pushes himself on a woman,
Charles Somebody-awful,
on some body unknown
elephantine, enormous
the good spirit of drunkenness was
brushed aside, flattened, stumbling
how awful to feel his weight

Rib//Word Bank

I want to cut out every rib forever,
scatter them in the matted library
carpet, until microscopic memories
of the unpleasurable principle.

They rib out the structure
of a misdirection,
an *abstracted, bric-a-bracted*
rape, locked in a tidy cage.
Birds flown, now residing
on wrists, hips, and ankles.

They rib a sweater in my word bank.
A Franciscan squirrel languishes
in Amagansett.
Cookie slides a cigar to a new dude.
Make a new rhythm in movement
of conversation between me & thee.

The Quarry

Before writing my wife
I swim in the rock quarry
from which something came
that's as gone as the steel mills.
My body of cold water with baby
snails on the gritstone ledges.
The sun dives under the trees.
I shiver in rock water and read
and write love poetry alone.
But upon discovery by my peers,
I throw the melancholy aside
like a sticky magazine
and put my dick back into
my heart, where it belongs.

Grown

I still have to feed myself
and clean
a big baby Anne.

I miss you,
Anne.

In my first backyard
I grew my first tomatoes
and beans, so many
they rotted, an embarrassment
of riches, while I ate takeout.

Gray

I left work at five
to drive home in dark.
I woke at seven,
outside my window
a hundred year's worth
of tree branches rose
through vinyl shades
overcast horizon
blue-gray above white-gray
in ten minutes faded
to the same gray.
I wonder where the swathes of crows are.

NEO

With 200 days of clouds
our space of gray air
can cover the arsenal.

Diptych for a Stranger's Body on a Rainy Night

He talks often
of the Tecumseh Poem –
a great speech,
but not really what I think of as a poem.
It would be tattooed on his chest or back.
Then I could read it,
if I could undress him, more than verbally.

Noises of dropping rain in the dark are ghosts.
I am afraid of most things in the dark,
my own white legs.
Long, hairless, and unruly. They go home with me.
The drops are footsteps, ghosts.
Ghosts are wishful thinking.
Everything we told ourselves we'd have as children:
Uncle Goober's turtle, and Gerty-dog,
not just cats,
pale legs notwithstanding.

Lunch Hour Love Sonnet

Heaving praises, due to
library carrel thrill:
her body equals temple,
his body equals mill.
He strives, turns 'em loose
on three meals a day: coffee,
beer, woman juice.
The mill wheel stops,
the water stills.
Sanctuary latchkeys,
undone doors: *I to my work,*
you to yours.

Nature

is man's way
and he's not to be
blamed.

I know because I love
a man and I see his body twist
with urgency over me.

Dear God, teach me his
urgency, that I might gain
his knowing. Hold back "no"
somehow, they don't believe
they hold me back, personally.

Merm_id's Tople_s Dancers

It's hard to feel nostalgic
in a brand new bathing suit
striped and pink
elaborate and expensive
the unsecured flag hangs
over the balcony
is green, gently,
without confidence
slips up and down my legs
back and clumsily over my face
and shoulders, I stare off
at the sun coasting
along the horizon
and think of how I shouldn't
read serious books while stoned
and wonder if this flag is being
as serious as I thought
the prince was,
coasting along the horizon like
the sun that seems stopped
to my eyes
today might be the day it turns
left or right instead of sinking
unobservable, the unlikelihood is as likely
as observing the married man regularly
I don't have to walk far
to lose the sound of the stereo
to the wind
whips around and touches me sparsely
with the flag with half a mind
remains inconstant
smoke follows beauty's privilege.
flag follows bikini girl
but most men do too
phenomenal, observable
in smoky, low-lit bars
the state boards of health
look the other way

Measure

a drop in the bucket
hair of the dog
tape measure around the waist,
breasts, hips
tax brackets
rulers
calories
computers need space, memory
is a matter of space or room
nearly the size of two Walmart's
fish size vs. the size of its pond
value of an education from a given
university
years on wine bottles
chapter and verse
money was a symbol
of gold
light
volume knobs

Hostage's Love Poem

Every tide erodes.
Saturday's bottles can't be
unshattered in Sunday's streets.

Last night's cigarette is ash
between my legs, quenched
in the toilet.

I cannot bargain with you
for ransom or leniency.

I'm a hostage to splash
and brown glass, and hope

that you're the plumber
or the street sweeper.

Books

Fear-hardened star
rehab too late
an addict not introspective
achy mythology
I can think of very few books

that hurt bones and lungs
exhaustively curlicued
symphonies on the cellular level
opportunistic but rare

Centos from Jan. 24, 2014 Entertainment Weekly Book Reviews

Firetruck

let's finally get to
remembering
a fire that happened in your house last week
the problem is you can see anything
and it will be activated
anything else related
to a truck a smell
heat
for some reason one of these is not that well
connected
so we make up bits &
pieces a lot of self-
control to keep yourself
from doing it how fast were they
going when they hit each other
one cell holds the color red
your mother yesterday
we said this we ate this
you know she was not naked
if firing together they'll form
a network
motivation interest arousal
the whole concept of sadness
is confined to one cell
collateral terminal
delete one memory
part of multiple networks
not because I want you
manipulating it
does it mean the way
that it sounded
or what you're
hearing what it
means for years to come
pre-motor emotions related
memory
cells that fire together
learning together

the network of the situation
a lot of what we stored
weakened by using drugs
cows eating grass
remember every smell
every sound forever
they're not doing their job
it's still
it still makes you feel
the stress
so they turn each other on
they're firing together

Dream Brother

A 30-foot man in a glass box just his size, wearing white shorts and spreading wings, feathered. The box was in a lobby in a large Chicago office building, and six-foot men came and went hardly noticing him. When I opened my eyes, the stars through the blinds formed a pattern but I couldn't describe of what. I saw the redeye flying like a steady, metal meteor.

Dream

A party
thrown in the Wick Park mansion
in the dream
where I'm doomed to repeat
myself, the smell of repetition
and the teeth marks of half-true
encounter are on me.
They will fade with you, morning,
eligible and normal
though you may seem,
my dream will not be waking.
I'm working hard
at taking forever,
working
at a room-temperature
pace at making teeth marks
in these sugar sculptures-
sweet objects inanimate.

Fidelio

My lap is sweaty.
My cat has been here,
maybe an hour
in a war of the wills.
I wiggle, his claws contract.
The deeper he sleeps,
the sharper he stabs.

When he was my baby,
I fed, mothered, loved.
He followed me from room

to room, tiny tail
pin straight.
Now, hairballs, puke,
mice and strange on my
doorstep. He is a confinement.
Get off me, fucker.

A Residency

God is everywhere in Florida, and he is especially present in the Daytona Beach Airport jet ways, blessing America on 8.5 x 11 sheets, one taped to each accordion segment of jet way. Someone had little party store American flags stapled on, too. Aside from the presence of God, the terminal was standing around relatively empty. A few janitors here and there, some security personnel, and empty check-in desks like you see in a lot of regional airports. “May is the end of the season for Florida,” an old, rich, gaudily dressed arts patroness tells me later at the welcome cocktail party. “Summer is our indoor time.”

I waited for a cab, patiently, outside. The steady, still heat was a miracle after the cold of the plane, the three transfers, the scramble for a last-minute ticket, the months of Ohio winter before that, its doldrums. The driver only stared a little at my shaved head and low-cut pink sun dress. The trend for showing a little bra had evidently not reached north Florida yet. He chatted nervously about the area, the beaches; he’d never heard of the artist colony; he’d never met anyone like me. In the gravel lot near the white, windowless postmodern office of the colony, he gave me his card.

Jimmy’s USA Taxi
(xxx) xxx-xxxx
WE SPEAK ENGLISH

Amerdrogynne

Anglo-Saxon
Scandinavian
Baltic-Germanic
above all, American
under all, woman
I flush face at the notion
guilty woman, pale woman

I divulge my sources
if I choose – but I'm not having to
Baltic-androgynne
Saxonavian, still
all-American, still woman
still flush

I make new names
Langosta-revolutionary
Dreamweaver
Non-descripfic
soothing character balms, but
poetry's not for not knowing
and names are our own
Amerdrogynne
or unknown

Re: Derision

the world's derision

its golden medium of abuse

derision is

midway if you can't

dismiss contempt (and you can't)

you've never used the word thus in your life

and now you give me this

cruel wit

not much easier than a cruel rapier

decadent derision

draped in heavy velvet

wears the official robes

hard-boiled derision

steps outside its door each day and returns

each night with qualities of quantity

mistaken for abundance

countable or uncountable

somehow present

in the act of treatment there is a show

a first run screened

a shelling out from a future pocket

a derision on loan

and paired deliciously with constructive criticism

becomes *derisitive criticism*

(beat your friends at Scrabble with it)

Proverbs

Lust is a carnival with no reentry.

So good! But I can't help
but want one more moment.

L.i.a.c.w.no.r. Funnel cake
is what's for dinner tonight, love.

Love is a Ferris wheel.

Take up your skirt at the top
like you said you would
and I shall mine. The wheel creaks,
"who goes softly goes safely;
who goes safely gets two birds stoned."

To stop motion

is to animate,
to stop weaving
in and out of traffic
or a 200 mph circle
to settle
in a garden
in a yard
in deadening stillness
sink into the pavement
along an old riverbank
in an old internet video
inescapable need for
a wanderlust for
place
unending, unknowing
more likely
a prolific state of intoxication
torrential and relentless
wandering from
job to job
bar back to bar fly

The Emotional Act of a Two-hand Shove

Provokes a fight
that in kind, in desperation, shoves a man away
as if it were the last time
after you know you've become a passion project
the studio didn't want made
you know the formula,
the theorem, you've flipped the flashcards
and you know that love is real, and an individual person's
love for you is real
and only sarcasm or the push-back will send him flying
in the other direction, the sound muffled, high pitched, and slightly mispronounced
as from your maps app, "Midlothian"

Comparative Lit

Not a navy blue room
or blue afternoon
just a cramped living
room with blue curtains.

Born in the dark
the animus spark
brightens, and steadily
worsens.

I Describe

to identify as
overeducated in my surroundings,
needlessly able to point out that
which others
do not know, connoisseur of

consumer goods.
I identify my best details.
I am crushed under a woman.
I can only be her, ever.
I don't desire to be a man.
I desire to be both and none

and neither. I have fits of lesbian.
They are unimpressive to men.
I make a different face.
I worry that I have made it up
or bought into something created
to sell me something created

to be sold only.
I have fits of total submission,
fully consenting no matter
what, when hands and feet
are bound. It is a consent like consent
as the girls' team is trying to describe it.

It is consent the way the seashells consent
to be lifted off the beach and jostled on the bus
ride home, no matter what,
private only on the inside.
I still fear his boredom with me.

Describe it. Do good. A service.
I showed him a buckeye I found on a run,
the green prickled case,
dense nut still inside.
And he was bored to distraction by my pleasure

at finding the hard-shelled little treasure inside.

Place

Vendome

Paris

death place

of Chopin, 1849,

#12

residence of

Coco Chanel, #15

Yoko Ono brought one

handful of Keith

Haring's ashes here,

because she believed

his spirit had told her to

Rose

We saw two barefoot boys walking down the double yellow lines, both holding their crotches in a two-hand grip, playing chicken with the Cape Canaveral traffic. I wanted badly to kiss her, in the way that romantic men are always saying they will do to me. It was too nice a day to offend her or face the consequence of *yes*. She asked why I dressed so conservatively for someone who knew so much about music. The boys were in her poem the next day but not the men we also saw on the beach, the naked men riding bicycles and walking near us with bellies and cocks exposed. We swam away from them.

Rose was always in trouble, sort of. *Uh-oh*. She slept with a lot of guys and didn't like to be liked. Her nerves were perfectly authentic. We drove north a few weeks later in her car which she scattered with sage. I woke on the first northern morning, naked and thirsty. From the doorway holding coffee, I saw her waking. She pulled the comforter to her neck. The soles of her feet were black.

To Do

always listing
til blue in
things to do
the chores slow
heavy progress
pensive kitchen
thinking of making
blueberry

my new love
reminds me of the list
of things that remind me
of my old love
he is the age now that my old
love was then
but my old love was older then
and now I am older than new
again

Keats died at 25
how much brain
I must have still
zoetic
and thinking of making-
process
maybe I am great

Love Sonnet for a Long-lost Butcher, or Baker

We had a whole love
in a few bars
of lyric-less song
before I needed your couch
to crash on after a fight
with some other non-lover
in your filthy bachelor spot
you let me have the cloud
cumulonimbus comforter
a lovely white thing in a dingy room
floor sticky stray beer cans wet rug
your sins perpetrated without my touch
I'd got a love

Triptych from West to East

I

To be prepared in the eventuality of forever,
we need 90 years of activities,
I will delay this poem another 70,
for fear of running out of occupancy
for the time for getting old
isn't scary, but it's best to pack
some food and maybe some Sudoku --
not scary, but boring, not knowing
how long we will have to wait
to reach with any certainty
another coast,
manifest west, and its manifold rest stops.

II

We crossed the street near Humboldt Park,
and you told me a nickname for Chicago
as two men passed us in the crosswalk
we did not hear clearly if one said
"Beatles" or "Foals"
"rule"
your shirt said *Beatles*, mine *Foals*
but you claimed it
half selfishly, half selfishly,
to protect you, to protect me
and the words on our chests
and the breasts behind mine
from intruder compliments

III

Only once, young
enough to be caught in the street
I was
in front of a passing car.
The driver stopped after

I chased the ball
into the road before them.
My brother stood in the yard behind me.
It was a prime, bright morning.
Ours was four houses from the top of the street
to the east
where the industrial park rose with the sun
gleaming in atomic era lines
mirroring the giant nuclear furnace
chasing us from the east.

The Kitchen

Fat over lean
in poetry means,
sometimes, an anorexic word
choice, skeletal
diction, insecurities about
flowery, fat old days
in Oma's kitchen.
Only true hearts can be trusted.

If there were a pattern to follow,
lines to sew, edges to crease or pin,
or footprints painted on the floor
with arrows or incantations to make
you trust me, I would have
danced to exhaustion or chanted
to hoarseness, but even a poet knows
trust is not a garment, dance, or song.
Just plain labor in the sun, rain, snow.
And a hoarse poet is no good to anyone.

As long as there are backrooms,
there will be backroom deals.
Those rooms are containers of air,
the ethereal deals' manifest delivery rooms.
The refrigerator whirred in her
kitchen with PBR and Pepsi pop art,
linoleum mosaic floor, glass sculpture
suction-cupped to the window
and the TV looping back the same
fits and starts of life, the ferns
beyond the window waving
like a mobile reminder of organic life.

See

In the right lights, hand to God,
your brown burgundy
iridescent eyes turn green.

Your handsome face
a charming shell, much admired.

I scooped you off the beach.

With my hand over your eyes
can you draw in my portrait?
You are trying to see me, burgundy.
I think you are trying
to collect me too, blindly.

Nor could I see
what it was to be spurred
by beauty or touch or trigger.
I, always gun-shy, until I saw to rob
someone of you. Ultimately,
I thought I had to burn down
a world for love
but now that I've scooped you,
I am triggered to build one.