

New Poetry by Antonio Addessi

OLD IRONSIDES

she is
most days
a ship armed to the chin
cannons at her sides
her mast a sea of kelp and urchin

melting down my iron sides
for ammunition
she pours me
hot and slick
into molds I want to fit
but cant

what does her
naked belly show to sea's floor?

I want to see
I rubber my neck to her sides

only to take in salty sick
and the brim of her
matted cap

I pretend I am inside her—
below deck
she aches with barrels of cider
churning into
drink
to feed her crew
I want to be that crew
get paid little to feed her fuel
to work the nights
as the sea works her over

pandering toward open casks of
sea here
inlet there
till we drop anchor

FISH IN THE CREEL

At the end of summer we had a party for you
do you remember why you didn't show?
You'd been fishing in central park again
with your rod and your tackle box.
You told me you'd use the flies I tied
the ones I made to look like junebugs.
You said they were the most cunning things
you'd seen, that they'd put fish in the creel.
I had no idea what a creel was and I
didn't care. I just knew we'd be eating
fish for dinner and maybe after we ate
you'd show me your lucky tooth collection.

When you left the apartment I got the neighbors
to come over and made your favorites—lime jello
and ants on a log. I waited about three hours, the sun
had gone and the neighbors left too. That's when
I heard the phone ring. It was the police. They'd
found you in the Harlem Meer. You'd caught
the big one they said, you'd hooked a willow and
sank thigh deep into the muck. They hung up
when I asked if they'd bring you home.
It was late and I had my rollers in.



I hosed you off in the alley. No fish for dinner instead we boiled your boot strings. You said when you were flopping in the Meer you thought a lot about my recipe for bran muffins and where I got the hair to tie those flies. I couldn't bring myself to tell you that hair was mine that they may have looked like junebugs but they were tiny red-eyed me's destined for a mouth or three.

ANSWERING MACHINE: APRIL 29th, 1992

for Rodney King

Rodney. Rodney. If you're there pick up. You haven't answered my calls for months. I'm worried. This isn't like you. You may be in pain and that pain is very real but we could talk about it. We could get

lunch Rodney. We could go to Joe Jost and get a pickled egg. It's on me. I'll tell my old lady I had to step out, buy some smokes.

Remember that night in Monterey when she came down the street in her curlers holding that baseball bat? I saw my balls flash before

my eyes and I'd never seen you laugh so hard. She hated you because

you liked the drink. I'm a horrible drunk but I love a good story.

Rodney. If we go to lunch you could tell me about the time you met

Larry David in that carpark in West Hollywood. I wish someone famous pissed on my door handle. I liked that story and I like you.

Always have. What do you say? Those eggs won't stay pickled forever.

FAMILY TREE

I come from a long history and as such a lineage entails, it started rather far back into

antiquity. this is important because the past is neither present in this narrative or

relevant. it is somewhat disturbed as soil often is because if it were undisturbed it would

be a fossil waiting in vein for the unearthing.

my death began like any other—with my birth. I was, for lack of a better word or

phrase, entangled prolapse of a hemorrhoidic kind.

for I, my heart was beating and my blood did it's gyrating as gravity let on to itself and

the core of the earth(made, they say, of ore, of silken iron) pulled me toward it's

embrace.

this embrace had been stalled for 7 months 8 days and a handful of empty bucket nights.

the hole in mom's throat. lump. puss. cyst. anchovies. pizza hut.

back seat sister

baby baby amy grant

du-rag

batman shirt

I come from a long line of liars. the kind that look you in the eye and say trust me and then walk to your house and throw themselves on the porch, their hair pasted to an awkward side in autumn sneaking out of their parents house to kiss you on the mouth.

I misread the signs misspell at the spelling bee uttering instead, thinking that I was going north. I was so far south that the snow had leapt off the pavement, off of the back window till the skin on my eyes rose a quarter of an inch off my face.

holy hello to you and that braided mustache halo you wear on a lipshits tone. your mother says that only we can be spun like this we can only be thawed on the defrost setting. my freezer burn itches and peels in monochrome white.

daddy found his way into a type of trope a type of makeshift reminder that if I keep up the tune I might as well be a dumfounded thirty watt light bulb.

lozenges

I come from long lines of card players
I come from a long line of card player
breathing for the tobacco that fills the air, the acid rain
that comes washing down and
the inlets that form a secret sharer. Their secrets hide
past loves and the fold of older men
that seem to haunt me or just never leave, always leaving
their dentures soaking on the
night stand.

ninja turtle gummies melting on the dashboard

banana boat sun screen

pores so big we soak in them

techno music on the radio

the family home now a car park, sleeps in sediments and the
time capsule we planted will
grow a tree with no trunk. a briefcase with no lips. a leaky
faucet spits out blueberries.

mother buys frozen orange juice concentrate. an ice core
orange grove thawed out as the
tree frogs watch from the window. I step on one as I crouch in
the bushes. its lungs push
up and out gasping for air it cannot use.

I come from a long line of lovers. lovers of farmer's tans and
personal pan pizza. if we
can meet in a chatroom we can meet in real life, use the back
of our throats as putting
greens or even better sand down the chimney stack and use its
remnants for homegrown
tattoos.

Fish photo courtesy [U.S. Fish and Wildlife service.](#)