

Mobius strip

Up on a cloud thinking happy was salvation,
But what did my body think when I
Didn't quite rest it, didn't quite hear it?
How can I be the chaos and be the rules?
How can I break and protect and
Build and avoid and
Be what I need and still be free?
How can I see what I need and provide it,
Never be controlled, or tricked, or taken in,
And plan the uncontrolled, and make it all
Safe, ready, predictable, and regulated,
But unregulated, unbounded,
Unpressured. Not unfree.
Daily puzzle, too hard for me.

Touching lightness

Space. Intermission.
Being present is a curiosity,
No longer unearned luxury of
Seeing past gritted-teeth cliffs.
The weeping soft relief
Of feeling rightness and connection.
Of light in a brainspace, touching
Light in time-space, touching
Float-down wishes, whispers,
Of collective human-heartedness.
In spite of everything that isn't
What it should, what it must, be,
What it would truly need to be,
For what gives us life to fit well
Into interlocked reality.
Into conditions of collective lives.
Into the systems organising us.
For all our lives to be places
Where presence is bearable.
Reconcilable.

Ease

Chasing ease.
Creeping towards or away from it,
On my knees.
The worn out edges
Escaping their stitches.
The persona of achievement
Grinding dust into life,
And life into dust, and
Grinding.

Chronicled

Horizontal agency, the affordance to be this log-like thing,
Who breathes and loves and feels, wishes many wishes in
Absentia from the world, who breaks with steps and wilts,
Survives on anguish that's a task of mundanity made vast,
And takes from life that's taken us. Frida Kahlo wasn't sick,
But broken, modern shut-ins like before are sick in-validly,
Illness hiding and removing, any easy answers, leaving all
Categorisation something to be stolen too, acknowledged
In retrospect only, when torture has failed and here we lie,
Not gone and not forgetting, here we are, shadowy shapes,
Living slowly but not slowly enough, breaking many times.
If I stepped back through time I might choose a wiser past,
I might spring from gaps in pressure, but might miss what
I saw in this life, did and became, present-day agency dry,
With knowledge and distance, handfuls of steps to try at
The edges of life and, this will be the part I miss when it's
About the past again, flourishing self-consciousness with
Efficacy's halo, sick and broken, just like well and whole,
The full respect to be what is, how loud its call, how softly
Gentleness advances, ability to be disabled, just as we are,
How soft to be blessed, given shape in reality, in humanity.

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Twirl-around brain, wrap-around scattergun of words,
Hyperactive drives in a weary, dreary, sweet old body,
Kid in the driver's seat, twelve for a third of a century!
Encumbered and disarticulated, worn like soft slippers,
Open-hearted brand-new colt, meek-mild wizard-witch,
Nonsense spells, gritty-survival-weight, shifting shine.
Foot-stamping, listlessly endless days, horizons alive,
Knowing for sure, lost forever, laughing at confidence,
And at helplessness. Knowing something, feeling cuts,
Tree-creature dropped in a city-world, funny fae-fawn,
Drinking philosophy-bits, gossip-treatise good-rhymes.
Girl, youth, unwilling beginning of an elder, celebrate,
Measure yourself out, lift strength up, glide past here.

Body

Body that was
Awkward,
Slow,
Surprisingly coordinated,
But only very occasionally.
Body that was
Angry, joyful, anxious.
And starved.
Body that was
Spun, hung, swung. And
Learned skipping tricks.
Body that was
Just a vehicle for a mind.
So slow, and tired, and
The site of shame since too young,
And for too long,
And it's still there,
But the source of everything,
And all the good.
Body that was
Carrying me all that time.
Body that was
Pleasure, love, peace.
That was
Slow pain,
Pushed against inexorable tension.
Poor body.
Poor mind.
Too, too long,
Just fighting it all.
Cutting a life into granite of inertia.
None of the energy for any of it.
None of the spoons.
None of the battery.
None of the unburdened will.
Only burdensome.
Only grit and despair.
Body that's here,
Sore,
Perturbed,
Raw.
Waiting to see how
And where I drive it.
Hands up, face-scrunched ready,
Looking for respite,
Still hoping and seeking.
Still living.
Just existing, breathing, feeling, living.

Fairytale

Baby bird to baby bird, elder bear to elder bear,
Don't know if you've heard, but we're the adults,
There's no-one else in charge, and no-one wiser.
We have to make do, with what we found so far,
The answers and the questions, mysteriousness,
And mundanity. We have to guide ourselves and
Each other if we can, it's an absurdist journey, a
Ridiculous expectation, we'll be stars, you'll see.

Self-soothing

Deeply upset, at my lack of understanding,
Frustrated, at my lack of relaxed demeanour,
Listening to tense muscles, snapping at them.
Not calm, letting them be, or disengaging.
I need a different mental substrate, landscape.
I'll listen to different words, funnier or trivial,
Not as real or question-filled, I'll be less serious.
Care for myself like a baby - absolute mystery,
What this creature wants, but follow hunches.
Extend myself love. And nurturing patience.
Hope this colic doesn't last forever, gods-willing.

Verbs made of emotion

Mountain top, creeping steps, welling worlds,
Emotional worm of brainstuffs, making us be,
Middle of us, a pool of feelings, that make life,
Make us act and fear and care and love, arrive,
Be everything we find we've been, wake up in,
Fall through, into ideologies, of worlds we see,
And those we want, and those we form. Souls,
Messy flesh of spirit-minds, calculating worth,
Pleasures, survivals, and sociality, divinities in
The cores of animal bodies. We are all of them,
The things we elaborated, our own gods and a
Guide to ourselves, if we find our whole selves,
And feel into blind futures, knowing just hints.

Neurogeology

Plasticine, elastic lines,
Neuroplastic interstitial. Liminal, elliptical.
Rushing into seeking stasis,
Wading into desperate struggle,
Groping forward to touch time out of struggle,
Out of whirlpool, out of hurricanes.
Mud sucking at the boots of life's basics.
Taking you with it.
Gone from hours and places.
In a place between recovery and peace,
Like a rock and a hard place.

Suspending disbelief

Making friends with darkside places, scared outrage and stomach pits,
Let them take their dues and be here through it, take me and leave me,
Whatever's left gets to rest in tensed absence, recreate space to play in,
Back away from insistent compulsion, into soft, ambivalent suspension,
Wait and see in imminence and grittiness, drab miracles unremarkable,
If they come they're in their street clothes, only acceptance accessible,
Only warts and all allowed, bending to an openness that charts scores,
That counts breaths, builds a less brittle mindscape if it can, observes,
Lassoes instinct and impulse, watches body-reaction ripples, absorbs,
And then just waits, on purpose, with intention, in sensory rhythmicity,
Suspension of needy desires, trailing process, resuspension, recursive,
Watching with a little distance, once and again, stopping provisionally.

Incapacity

The small world too tight to see the whole one,
For all that we know it's there. Everlasting indictable treachery,
Suffering beyond suffering, injustice built on lies,
Long unbroken history of murderous hierarchies,
Like the horror-genre human-nature of reactionary invective.
We know it's all there, but what can we do and survive?

Don't-know-mind

Quilted into stomping perseverance, again, lurching above a storyline,
Foretold punishments in the burden, of knowing fear, and unknowing,
Panic void, lest we forget to remember, hoped-for soft edges, wretched,
Shouting each other, rounds of comfort, choking on restoration's quiet,
Stumbling in strength-drawing hopeful manoeuvres, tip-toed consent,
Restepping old boundaries, old discoveries, new ground again, intent,
We will slowly, uncertainly, forlornly and bedraggledly, overcome such
Milestones of regret and desire, we will be as we are, and re-celebrate.

Co-existence

I could cry at the pure-magic awesomeness of beings walking own paths,
Of creatures being their own souls, of me as just another one of them, of
Being one of such lightshows, comparing myself with subjective perfections.
I could give up for a while, because I know I don't matter that much, but
That I'm also tied, in myriad little ways, to debts and gratitude. That I will
Be forever trying, to be the best I can be, be like my favourite world-mates.

Warmth

Plausible reason to do a little thing and find
That it makes me feel newly good, alive again.
Dancing alone, testing strength, re-examining,
Happiness in restedness, in connectedness,
In co-striving, discovering, logicking through.
Relief in trust of relationships, of self in them,
Of heartfelnness. Proof in life, body and mind,
Relief in trust of muscles and nerves, and their
Pleasure in action, and pleasure in rest. Never
Let me be trapped in lack of that again. And
Let me see out when I am. Remember joy,
Remember warmth, in feelings about self,
Other and world, in feelings in muscles, and
Feelings in joints and cells, in body-minds.

Being and not being

Feeling how small my sphere is,
In which everything exists for me,
How sheltered, blessed, absurd,
How distorted and subject to cruelty,
How aware of horror, and isolated.
Self and mind that make everything,
Interiority like every fellow creature,
Complex like every other human,
Illusory in its totality and boundaries,
But real enough. We need to know,
How small we are, be awed by it,
By our insignificance in an infinity,
In a world we can't ever quite imagine.
A universe demanding faith in
Fellow humans and their knowledge,
Their societies and schemas,
Our narratives to grasp the patterns.
Self not absent but infinitesimal,
In its absolutism, its confidence,
Needs for striving to justice and kindness,
Its suffering, illusion-like, stark truth.
We need to feel paradox as it is,
And act from convictions, as we can,
Make better stories and lives if we can.

Intersections

Dancing between shadows of people's visions of things,
Hard to see over the high walls of unshared perception,
Like lines of sight of uncrossed beams, muddled into
Words and faces and bodies and relationality, haphazard.
Yet these bonds that feel unbreakable, yearnings and
Grips on firmly moulded-into handholds, histories felt
Like ropes and bolts and solid timber, human beings
Created in each other's minds like dreams made tangible.
Fated luck and fated anguish, deliverable to us in absence
Of spirit worlds or gods, just us constructing every drop.

Insight fragments

What did my mind find when it stopped? That it didn't stop,
That it was capable of guiding itself a little, that it was pain,
That pain was bearable, that it was terrible, that it was love,
All love and avoidance, that my layers are just layers, sharp,
And enveloping, that we're all more the same than imagined,
That we're alone and interdependent, that you never know,
That the course of things is strange and changes, is mystery.

Mask grief

I have become more fragile, my prethought thoughts less prethought,
My self-control less controlled, people can see inside me and I can too,
And none of the work has been done to prepare it, raw under my mask,
It's slipping as I hear my body more and my disciplined-self parts less,
And I hate the feeling of it but I need to be the softer-self and hear more.

Persisting

Scooped out of myself, raw, skinless, distant, impersonating,
Almost the same person as when I'm more there, less depth,
More shadowed, aches, heaviness, less connected, floating,
Sleep will have been had again, and I get to fall back into
Presence, again, again, repeatability, feet one after another,
Find myself where I left myself, notice, cultivate, navigate,
Imagine equanimity, tip towards it, live in transition.

Navigation

Diving into a minute at a time, like into clear seas,
Plunging like it will be beautiful, surprising, fresh,
As the past sits like rocks, anchors stretching eyes,
Reels them into a safety position, watching the joy,
Keeping it in reserve, not loose too early, not free,
Quietest parts made space for, patient trust, alive,
Someone left to rest and trust, held safe, in stride.

Lullaby by delirium

Tireder in every increment than in the one before,
Over edges and deeper ones, out the other side of
Sanity and coherence, become a clown child and a
Broken thing. Time for softness, play, for gratitude,
As wide as a giant river, as deep as love, ensconced.
Open me to openness, please inner and outer gods,
Give me strength and freedom to be malleable and
Give me my hand on my hand, helping me up, firm.
Shed skins, open eyes, hum a tune, live in my skull,
Dreams. Let me breathe into weightlessness, leap
Among flying ghosts, stop and go, fly free so slowly.

Watershed

On the downslope of upheaval,
Worn a little lower, but in untrodden ground.
I overspent, misallocated, conjured energy
Out of debt and magically reckoned optimism.
But it was because I was being reborn,
Reapportioned consciousness shaking me,
Holding me against a light and questioning.
The portal is now dumping me, gently,
On another side of things, where
The current is as slow as me, as tired, but
The paint is hope, and the floating salt is
Knowing, accepting, deciphering, unfolding.
Where friendship with deep perception
Is just accuracy, analysis, reflection,
Harsh honesty and grit.
Where connection and continuity
Swim in the empty, accidental injustices,
And the carelessness of where we're landed.
And the hands of fateless brigands we become,
Are comforting, unsinking, rough,
Trying to pull each other blindly through.

Needing it ourselves

Optimism as the innate commodity of intense people,
Balm for ourselves and others, thing to be thwarted,
Joy to be refund, rebuilt, shared within worried love,
Light to be frustrated and bed to fall upon, strength,
And fragility, uncertainty of meaning-driven impulse.

Chronically acute

Crunchy timeline here right now.
Tangy and stinging and regretful and
Apprehensive. Stuck like a lump in a throat.
Weighted like a lead shawl and sitting.
Sitting when that image of quietness
Is an experience of endurance.
When joints don't live in soft or balance.
When shapes don't hold together without
Tension. When maybe the bits that made my brain,
That gave it vision, perspective, precision,
And crunchiness, and made it move like treacle,
Maybe those un-neurally-pruned demons
Also designed all the pieces that
Hold me together, and maybe they really, really
Didn't know how to do that.

Recovery

Pink and refreshed, sweet petals, instinct and intellect,
My corrected body-brain as demure as is dictated to it,
Destroyed and rebuilt weaker and cleaner, quieter and
More realistic, blossomed, ready to sleep, rest, renew.

Transparency

If it wasn't for social fear, what a mess things could be,
If it wasn't for rule-following, bending to expectations,
Becoming other people's intentions, guessing at them,
Then we'd know each other's problematic selves well,
Be more forgiving, or else less entranced than we are,
With each other's images and auras, pearly mysteries.

Unrest

Too enclosed in too-extended ultra-ego-dom,
Funny game of happy chores, to build a man,
To teach a woman, mend a human, score life,
Extracted realities, barely a bookstop, bends,
Downs, up and arounds, sluggish pried eyes,
Open and disdainful, fearful, and unwillingly,
Stretched upon a day again, nothing to mark,
Hell-bent on making something, to feel itself,
Feeding flames to devouring time, and heart,
Choice and pain, barely doing the musts, idle,
In spacetime, tangled spirit, like silly strings.

Freeform

Only as tall, as deep, as old, as my most recent whims,
Trenchcoated uncertainty guiding blind disobedience,
Endless well of wrenched, gritted, all-darkening heart,
Tucking me into irrelevance, and waiting till morning.
I could count and calculate and perform, and die in it,
A better question - how to feel what's where, and live.
Live in it, ducks in puddles, fish in water, tied to a life,
To freedom, discovery, biology, philosophy. Love, blind.

Trapped

On this side of the wall between enthusiasm and anxiety,
In this shadow world, no way back through within my reach,
Watching myself wait listlessly, grasp at gripping weapons,
Listing memories of hope, dismissing and carrying them,
Finding sadness and loosening into it, remembering surrender,
Melting through anger's armour, determination's glare,
Through stubbornness of strength, through shell-like safety,
Covering eyes and ears, wrapping limbs around myself,
Folding inwards against soft edges, friends with bleakness.
Blanketed in joylessness, with acceptance after all. Body felt,
Rest, but not without these words. Nothing in it but tension, till
I give it words. Make a new feeling from stuckness and stress.
On this side of the wall, between beauty and despair. Sheltered.

Brined

Oh don't be doubtful, harvest the fruits of oversensitivity,
Belong in doubting wisdom, in shared overcompensation,
Under the sky of safe connection, be revelled in mutually,
Be an arm of octopus loving-envelopment, be softly here,
Your self-stories as safe as another's, nothing to run from,
Nothing but warm, encircled weariness, peace and desire,
Be unbroken in spiderweb connections, rehealed happily,
Alighting in delight, be a witness of meaning, a sherpa of
Struggle, of suffering, be together in a world of wounded,
Stars in the sky of human weakness, and strength, shine.

Prayer for kindness

Imperious ego protection shielding from honesty,
Desperate deep love for fellow sufferers, healers,
And discoverers of illusions similar to my world of
Insistent realities, forceful contingencies, hopeful
And regretful. May we all be at ease and risk joys,
May we learn and see, and comfort each other well.