

A painting of a mermaid with long, flowing red hair, sitting on a dark rock by the water. She is wearing a white, ruffled top and a dark, shimmering tail. Her hands are near her chest, and she has a contemplative expression. The background shows a body of water with some distant structures.

*A Mermaid
Crashing into
Dawn*

Linda M. Crate



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tenacious spirits

purple flowers
poke holes through
winter's white teeth,
tenacious beasts
unwilling to relent to the cold
of this frigid breath
they seem to say "spring is here
to stay" and i hope they're
right for winter's hold was too long
and too lonely to linger forever
haunting me in arcs of broken
light, cracked halos of eerie
bliss entirely misplaced in cascading
kisses of white rain melting fissures
in the soul, sucking out marrow;
winter is like the ocean
oft crueller than he is kind

so for him to be gone, finally would be
a sweet kiss of relief
welcoming a content sigh for my soul
has been held in ice too long

your star

i'd follow you to the ends
of the world
even if it meant being suspended
forever in the sky
promises lay buried in your eyes
your lips won't utter,
a deep dream
that you're afraid will come apart at the seams
unraveling moon silver coldness between
our love making it emit less light than a broken
halo
a kiss of leaves remembers me
more than it does you,
though, it was a passion shared together;
how does one find their way to eden
when all the snakes are twisting forbidden fruit
into our heads?

justifying things we ought not to
hiding behind a pale lie
simply to get the means out of an unearned
end —
you once said i was too kind to be a raven,
but know my temper will claw your eyes out
and my talons
will steal away your heart to the purpose of
revenge
should you shatter me into the mist of clouds
because i was always meant to be your star
shining
light in the dark places your cracking halo
could not.

ocean soul

pulling ideas from the bottom of the deck
more than the sum of what i'll ever be
i do not apologize for being less than what
you expected —
like the sea changed so did i,
you couldn't expect the little mermaid
to be content with her fins forever could you?
rocks erode to dust by the ocean salt,
just like you broke to fragments by my waves
you call it cruelty; i say it was inevitable
too different
we were to fit together like a puzzle piece,
imperfectly matched
we were destined to shatter
beneath the jade blue
ocean before our love bore
any semblance of life;

once we were the same dream flying on the
wings of
fallen stars uncaring of every crimson sunset
that engulfed the world in flame,
i grew a heart you lost yours and i realized
we would never be the same the day you
professed your
love of me to a room full of friends
yet denied it before strangers,
we warped like a rotting stairway of the sky
falling hard into the sea,
you did not rescue me from my descent
only let the sharks mock me in my pursuit of
the land,
and that's the day i turned them on you
without pity watched them consume your flesh
like you did my heart.



without you

you changed
something new, something strange
i could not recognize
the woman in the mirror,
she was not me
you said she was
we argued —
endless skies bloomed flowers
of white roses
bathing us in the fragrance of love
one we could not embrace
as we fell away
into the cracked chasm of a tea cup,
your heart was as black
as the coffee
you suckled from my fingers;
how many years since you found yourself

staring at an endless sky?
unaware that you lost me along the way —
it should have foreshadowed
our end, but i desperately clung on harder
simply driving you away;
what is truth, what is important, what defines
you?
it is a world without me,
your soul ties you to another world
where i cannot bind your love;
a world where time does not matter because
it is still, and i wish i could join you
but you've closed your doors
the eviction notice
hammered to my heart suddenly
as magnolias blooming in my hair, and i realized
the girl in the mirror was me
only a future shadow of my greatness,
and your absence.

no eurydice

time i've lost
has changed you
something strange
you've become
when we were once
the best of friends,
it's weird staring at tomorrow
without you; you were
once a white rose
you've withered into entropy,
washed up on the sea
a trophy of the darkest deep —
gluttony is your name
as we hurry homeward, you
consume every rotten
vegetable of our once flourishing
garden; my distant voices

through the rain cannot reach you though the
sands have brushed your face from
my hand; i try to find the strength to believe my
heart won't break;
i've taken home upon a star
to burn away all my imperfections that turned
your loving gaze from my face —
the light recedes
in whispers
as you revive my desire to be loved
every time you pirouette
your image close to mine; still indifference
knits your brow, and you don't look back
because i'm no eurydice,
and you're not orpheus.

to burn a god

the dogwood tree standing in our yard half
dead
half living reminds me of you
one foot already in the underworld
years older than you ought to be for someone
so young, and i wonder how many seeds
you've eaten
to be only half way down one and a half
or three-fourths or maybe only one third of a
seed
will do? i planted a seed of joy in you to
replace all the melancholy
swallowing your soul, but it seems as if it has
yet to bloom
over the pomegranate sunsets you've sung —
i was the missing part of your broken prayer
i've tried to

tell you this, but still you're searching the stars
for your mother in an attempt to free yourself
from the cellar
you're half suspended in; the one that makes
you half the man you
ought to be, and i wonder why you won't take
my hand
i've been waiting for a century to pull you from
beneath the sparks
of distant stars —
you have so many flowers yet to grow, it's time
to let go of
this sad resignation you've give up to
let me lift you from hades' fingers, i'll burn him
with my feathers of grace
singe him with the light of truth that his trickery
has been found out
he already has persephone he ought not linger
in you, too —

if he shouldn't submit to my flaming wings
then i shall get to the river of styx and burn him
directly

so that every thread of mankind shines forever
with immortality and everyone that he has
cheated will cheat him back.

shine

shine

your light on me

illuminate me by making

me complete;

burn away all the scars,

wash the world from me in

your currents —

the dawning of ages yet to come

won't remember us brightly,

unless we become the stars we were

meant to shine;

i fear this nation will never

recover enough

to rebuild it's lines,

so take my hand and let's breathe

a new world into being;

one that defies the logic of this one —

we'll become dragons,
and burn this entropy to dust
we will be the heroes of the twenty first
century because we dared to dream,
dared to think, dared to be different than
the rest of them —
let's forget ourselves reality,
and build an eternity.

burnt to ashes

the renaissance of humanity
is singing to me in the
lilt of sun star gold;
burning this world away from
me with all its apathetic
hail of words
meant to shoot through the heart
in the hopes of tearing it apart;
a brighter future
for a darker age,
generations yet to come —
new world symphony,
will they remember melodies of dust?
or will they remember us,
as burning stars to obliterate
the old regimes
and failed ideas that made
us start again —

we have such potential if we'd only
open the bottles of our minds,
instead of drinking wine;
we have the opportunity to use light
to guide us home the
place we should have been
instead of abandoning our caution
to the wind, and subjecting
our world to the chaos of the twenty first
century —
bridges burnt need to be in their ashes,
a new start is exactly
what could save us.



by lantern light

When all the world turns dark, be a lantern.
Let the darkness fade away into the musk of
oblivion,
dream a better dream for yesterday and
breathe
it into the horizon. Never forget yourself in the
trees
the birds will sweep you away to heights you'll
never
return from instead kiss the knees of the
clouds
in humility and pray that tomorrow will bring
light.

the breadth of things

sometimes I'm envious of the evening in all its stark beauty of tangerine and lavender strung with ribbons of gold and bright orange. I wish that I could obtain that level of loveliness. I'd be every shade of gorgeous then — models would turn their heads as I walked and even Aphrodite would be rendered speechless as I walked past. the burnt sienna earth would be praised merely because I walked across it. but I am not even pretty enough to be a star despite all my blazing passion. I try and try and I try again, sometimes life is a hard race to endure. I like the taste of snowflakes on my tongue, it makes me feel closer to the earth, closer to Adam whom God made from the dust.

a mermaid crashing into dawn

once a mermaid
crashed into dawn,
sunbeams danced in her hair
the ocean sang in her eyes
scores of nameless names
i could not understand;
her smile was warm and comforting
she waved her kind hello without
uttering a word —
her magic rippled in the waves,
she touched me with her immortality with
only once glance whispering to me
secrets in my native tongue
though our languages were the difference
between day and night;
an ocean child begot me a promise
i would never be alone the

moon would not forever shine his cold silver
wings on my soul, one day the gilded cage
would be
opened and sun star freedom would be mine
to transform destiny with; she told me i was
more than the sum
of my failures that my heart shone with the
passion
not even a thousand stars could conquer —
i decided in that moment,
to wash away all the misery i've held close and
remember
whose child i was —
summer's queen i always was and the mermaid
said
i would always be.

forty five percent

right and wrong are only separations in
degrees
sixty six percent or thirty three?
i don't know,
my calculations always seem to grasp the
wrong instead of the right;
constantly berated for things i cannot control
nor fix
i find myself wishing i were still a star
when i was no one would yell at me for shining
too brightly or not bright enough —
here there is knowledge unharvested hanging
in shadows of the trees, you don't know
something unless you can prove it
a girl tripping over her syllables and socially
awkward
like me cannot articulate all she knows

so that must mean i'm an idiot?
i'm not, but they won't let go of that notion
let them think what they want —
finding my spark i'll just burn this world
tomorrow,
and the ashes of my rage will betray everything
i knew to
those full of apathy and indifference;
revenge is a poison you give to others yet you
drink yourself,
but i'll gladly do it if it takes them out too
there's no reason their hatred should burn
more
brightly than any star hung into the indigo
black of night.

scents of you

vanilla

orange tea

pinks of a summer sunset these things

will forever mean the musk of you

creeks flowing through a wood

bring tears to my eyes

for these are scarred with memories of you

you left me here in this land of winter

promising i would not remain here forever

the truth of those words seems to be

dimming the longer i stay in this land of snow

angst hangs her wings heavy on my heart

for haunting memories were my childhood

there

was nothing to comfort me from all this

emotional agony breeding discontent within my

soul;

bees buzz spring is here
yet spring's sunshine feels like hell
when i cannot share it with you —
wolf,
your raven misses winging her way through
indigo black
nights by your side; i remember nights full of
me
and you and nothing but laughter
here there is only work and my parents telling
me i'll
never be good enough or accomplish my lofty
dreams
my soul tells me different —
i am the dreamer who reaches the stars and
burns the marrow
of every brokenness thrust upon her, why
can't they
see what you can see in me?

i cannot bring myself to drink tea here for it
smells
of you, and all the anime we used to watch
distance cuts sharp as a knife
in this silent land of brooding thick as foggy
yesterdays
whose dark wings need slain;
forget me not in these trees of bending
despondency,
because your scent surrounds me in endless
memory.

revenge

brazen sunsets of bright peeled oranges
scream the oceans of your rage
not unfounded for unspeakable evil was
wrought
upon your youth; brought about by desires
of dark hearts who cared not
as they tore through your heart holes of swiss
cheese
to feed all the mice of bitterness within you —
i know well the horrors you felt,
but you dismiss my pain and my misery
with cold indifference for none ache as hard as
you,
and those that do have to handle it all the
same way as you do; once you were my hero so
strong
and brave to face the world as you did,

but you are so blind even with your perfect
sight
your broken wings are bleeding black feathers
into the
indigo of night; once you were a star shining in
the sky now you are a crow pricking hearts and
tearing out
organs until brokenness of moon silver spills
upon
everyone and tears of anguish cry their wrath
on the ground —
you criticize everyone including me because
anyone
betraying emotion is weak; you make the
perfect harlot for
stoics because your unsmiling void speaks
their name
one day you will be burnt on the spokes of
your rage because

the sunset cannot hold your vengeance
forever.

burn bright

lonely stars
can only know
swimming in indigo black
thick as your shimmering eyes
and i, too, know your sorrow
it is written in the lonely
song of dragonflies whose beauty sings
their lamentations to me; their
awkward shudder all too familiar to you
yet also to me —
fields of white singe your eyes with
guilt you cannot explain,
not every bad thing happening is your fault
so i wish your heart wouldn't bleed
with all the feathers of darkness that aren't
yours
to swallow, some silhouettes belong to men

who aren't half your equal;
so look at me
when i say angels fall from grace and even
heroes die, but none of this is your
fault it is the way of the world
unfair, uncaring as apathetic as today's
currency
of indifference —
i wish to see scarlet sunsets smile upon your
face once
again as they did in oceans of your youth,
hold my hand and let us burn away
together into oblivion's dust
sewing our seams in the farthest star so only
our love will remain and her tapestry
will feather the world with joy and peace as
they have
never known.



locked behind a door

we've got a long way learning
but i wouldn't mind spending every
moment growing my branches
with you, you inspire me to greatness
to look past the cold words of
snow and apathy that greet me from
the mouths of strangers;
each time you get hurt i don't want you
to change because i know what it's
like not to find anything you need behind
all the doors you happen upon —
there's no shame in being wrong i never
understood that before you came into my life,
i hate that there's nothing that i can do
about your struggles being behind a door you
cannot reach; i think that your mother is
more nefarious than you give her credit for,
she is elphaba and i am glinda the good witch

i try so hard to be kind, but she hates me
because i'm blonde or good or because i'm
taking
her son away from her —
she shatters my pride with words twisted in
just the right places so you cannot pick up on
her
dislike of me, and it aggravates me to no end
how you'll defend her tooth and nail,
but leave me out to be hung and dry like
clothes
on a fraying line about to drop into yesterdays
mud —
i'd rip the teeth out of the moon if you could
finally tell her no, to comb the silver out of your
hair
you worry because you don't do enough for
her without realizing you do too much,
and i wish i could hold your hand again and kiss

your lips

because while our love endures it's hard to

remain

here knowing that you're miles away without me.

love like winter

your eyes are the cruel
garters of the sea,
eroding away
all sense of ego or self
you see past me
through me as if i am the
invisible woman —
you stare past my words,
reading between the
lines of every frown and tear
knowing exactly how
un-confident i truly am; you
hold me tenderly in your arms,
but your eyes forever
judge me as if you are a demigod
and i am beneath even the
deserving of your love —

you are winter chilling my independence
into the fragility of submission,
molding me into your numb nymph
so that i will not run as
once a sister of mine ran from apollo;
you know my pressure points
how to make my heart skip a beat,
to force my knees weakness
so that you can engulf me in your desire —
when you're done you fly away
your winged shoes carrying you faster
than your father's dreams; just as
mischievous and villainous as he you were
when you stole away my heart,
you won't give it back
even if you're killing me with your silence
you call it love, but it's simply
winter drying me out.

the day the lilies died

the day the lilies died
you tucked my hair behind
my ear and your fingers
pranced daintily over my face -

you looked at me with such
intensity | thought | would
surely drown in the ocean
of your blue green eyes;

you proceeded to then massage
my shoulders, my neck, my breasts -
my body quivered under your
touch, as sensitive as those lilies

whose lilt had been extinguished
like the lantern of a dying star;

your lips crashed into mine
waves slamming into the shore -

you swallowed my tears and
all of my fears in a large
gulp, they disappeared as a
snow in a spring thaw -

you threaded your fingers with mine,
and took a clumsy girl and painted
her into a woman; you poured me a
glass of champagne and told me that

everything would be okay, in a constant
volley of change | knew not if | could
trust those words, but | knew also
that it were not your aim to harm me;

you licked my wounds and deepest

hurts the best way you could; I
never meant to worry you, but
I fell like a land stone in the river -

I had not the strength to save
myself so you pulled me from the
muddy waters and washed away all
the miry clay of yesteryears past -
yet you wouldn't let me do the same;
you insisted on healing yourself, and
I tried not to let that wound me -
I'd already shed too many petals.

oblivion's bride

always the option never the priority. i am the monster clawing at the sun. i've always wanted acceptance yet received rejection. outcaste from even the outcasts, i stood on the tip of the coldest moon beam. only jupiter could understand my pain — the once planet reduced to stone as i was rescinded from girl to beast. i know my father was vicious or they tell me so. i look in the mirror and i don't see a girl, i see the monster my father was. my claws are always veiled beneath subtle words no one ever understands. they make me meaningless and moot without purpose in a world that seems full of purposeful people. i try so hard to shine like a star, but the stars whisper all my fissures to me, and unravel my scars until i'm spooling moon silver on the dew. no one wants

or gets me, but that's all right. one day i will
burn them all in my flaming passion until they
cannot rise from their ashes. then my black
wings will unfold and i will fly away into the void
of oblivion.



more deadly than a venus flytrap

your rosebud mouth lured me in,
naively I believed you when you
said you wouldn't prick me with
your spindle, believed the lies
you told me encrusted with rubies —
butterflies lined your face, painted
tissue paper wings beating the
circumference of my heart, your
eyes gazed into mine and I felt
my step falter; a rouge crimson
fluttering of roses in my chest;
but you left me here in a mess
of cobwebs, bones, and broken
seashells laying in gossamer
strands of broken dreams silver
as moonbeams falling upon the
grass, and I close my eyes and

wonder why anyone chooses to
be trusting of people with there
are swarthy villains like you out
there; wolves in clothing of sheep;
greedy to tear the throat of any
that choose to enfold them in love.

sole survivor

you were a song | carried in
my heart, yours was a name
that resounded so prettily to
the ear; you made my heart
pirouette like a ballet dancer —
took the soul of a clumsy
girl and made her look queen;
but then you were stolen from
me by the hands of time, that
pulled you back into the sea,
a raging storm neither of us
predicted encircled us | was
the sole survivor; but | oft
wish that | wasn't, | hear
your voice in the void of
night, a starless winter night
with no stars; and you're

calling me like a prayer —
I see your ghostly face in
the fog before your memory
rescinds like a phantasm my
hands slipping through your
misty ruin, and it hurts all
over again like losing you
again and again but in a
different way since you've
been buried in the earth;
I often wonder why I was
spared, why I could not
follow my eurydice into the
underworld, but I am no
orpheus and I suppose the
universe was aware of that,
and I know life isn't fair;
but if I could undo the hands
of time, I'd make it so that

you were here; holding me in
this dark shroud that stifles
me in his pungent death arms.



chasing the dark away

she dances in the gold
of day, a rush of crimson
feathers against charcoal
smoke; a river of sapphire
against the brown hickory;
an autumn leaf aimlessly
flying through the air, a
pirouette that lasts a life
time of an immortal moment —
caught by her mother in the
lens of a camera, but no
one can know the fathoms
of the girl's mind, only see
her tilted face; her smile,
caught forever in mid spin,
as if the world were her
merry-go-round and she had

no worries in or of the world;
she is no longer that dancer
in autumn, she is the lone
wolf, starving for warmth
looking for love in all the
wrong places; a potential
for such greatness ruined
and shattered by broken
hearts and scalped dreams,
but her mother forgets this
wishing to forever cleave to
the idea that her little girl
will one day dance autumn
in her peculiar fond lilt,
chasing the nightmare of
what has come away into
the opaque darkness of night.

kisses of stars

bleed a sunrise for me,
chisel it out of the sky
with your sharp teeth;
place marshmallow clouds
in their places – paint
the heavens in citrine,
gold, and bright hot pink –
tell me a secret that I've never
known, and unravel me
until I lay bare before you;
kiss away all my sorrows
with the flames of nights jewels –
let those lanterns carry us home.



eve's lament

flesh of my flesh you've turned against me
stabbing the life from my veins, breaking my
heart into a thousand pieces; the earth
cried out with his blood and still you
denied your transgression - hate clouded
your mind louder than my love ever did,
and now you've gone where I cannot go;
ripped yourself from the comfort of my arms
that I would have used to shield you
from all the evils that swallowed you whole.

stranger in the room

there is a room outside with locked doors
| always stumble into its branches, thorns
have overtaken it and serve as master of
the keys when | reach for the silver keys |
am met with bloody palms; | see you within
happy without me and it aches my very soul
to know we that were once thick as thieves
have

all this distance between us, you are the most
sophisticated and eloquent bloom and | am but
a wild rose overlooked by everyone even you
it's

sad to know that this room will outlast us
but neither of us will be happy for you impaled
me with too many thorns and | invoked too few;
it's discouraging when two friends become
strangers.

truth

behind the hatred
there was love in
their eyes, but they
didn't believe it —
because believing
us meant they never
would; they wished
death upon us with
their unsaid words —
they spoke more
volumes than the
longest book known
to mankind; they
spoke with more
severity than the old
testament and sprawled
their spines before us

showily like a Pharisee —
I didn't know whether
to laugh or cry so I did both —
it doesn't matter what they
think, we know we're true
and that's all that matters.

her moon

out in, out in, out in
breathing him in was the
only thing that kept her
sane — breathing in
the nicotine that laced
his breath — out in, out
in, out in she just had
to convince herself it was
worth it; each day she
felt as if she were slipping
out of her own skin, she
looked at her reflection in
the mirror — she didn't
recognize the woman staring
back at her; it was not her,
out in and out in and out in
taking in the scent of her

beloved was the only
thing that was worth meaning —
she lost her reason and her
worth in the silver sheen of
his words glittering brighter
than moon dust upon dew.



forbidden fruit

he touched her heart
just by smiling at her
she always savored
each piece of him she
was given; she sewed
it into the fabric of her
life, though, she knew
she could never have
him; he was not hers to
hold in her embrace —
so she'd hold him in her
chest of lust, never to be
unlocked; he was that
forbidden fruit, but his
Eve had cottoned on to
her so all she could do
was watch him and pretend

that he loved her back, too.

natalie

charred
remains of amber
are all that remain of your
love for her, angels
sometimes fall from grace
and her wings were blackest of any
i had ever seen; i tried to warn
you not to become part of her blazing
wrath, but you wouldn't listen —
you painted her sunsets with kind words
of compassion and love,
yet her only expression was a smile
duller than a butter knife;
she left the coffee you made her on the table
to grow more bitter with age, and leave
circles on the table you once shared
disappearing as mist to some unknown place

you couldn't follow —
this cold abstraction you've subjected
yourself to
burning
through tears; i wish i could rescue you
from all your broken dreams,
but i can't save someone who can't help himself
just like you
were incapable of saving her—
she was your first love, and i cannot compare
to
memories untarnished even by time
of her perfection;
how i hate even her name spoken into your life
still because i am a girl of insecurity
with faded dreams, and you said you loved me
yet she seems
to consume more of your time than i do
for that i hate her —

she is still your friend, and i wish you'd break
that bond
if only so i could keep my sanity; i pour you
cups
of coffee that only spring conversations
spoken that i rather not be
my doubts are climbing for a better view
trust for you diminished by your lies, you told
me you didn't feel
good so you could speak with her —
did i ever mean anything to you, or was i just
another notch
in your bed post you called love when it was
a hollow husk of lust?

Acknowledgments:

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