

diaspora

for k. ulanday barrett

to be in diaspora, maybe you are always a ghost
always missing something. your spirit hovers over bloor and
lansdowne,
will hover over this bench on the berkeley library's second floor,
this alley in melbs, your grandparents' ashes memorial garden
you've flown to once:

you are always looking over your shoulder. packing.
always panicking that this place won't
let you come back. border slam down, longing longing, over
shoulder, missing missing,
even when still here, about to go, gone—

perhaps the good in ghost
is that we everywhere we missing all the time:
you can call on my spirit that hovers bloor-and-lansdowne
I'll help you get the best score at the value village
get you your coffee served right, get you a cab, get you home
—the small miracles we survive on, so much less than we deserve.
your own ghost while you still alive, wishing and whispering you:
yes you came back, yes the the border will open,
you will live all the places your heart lives, you will come home.

my city is a hard femme

for Chanelle Gallant, after Qwo-Li Driskill's "nothing like a love
poem for Greeley, Colorado/ Something like a Love Poem For Greeley
Queers."

When I left Worcester, I took the smirk I learned from the side-
walk with me,
the girl gang of wild weed trees busting through every
vacant lot like a bank robbery
kicking down the door with the grin of getting everything for free.
I'm as hard-assed as every pretty broken thing in town,
every donut shop that'll tell you off in a heartbeat,
every dress with just one fucked-up thing
dug out of the Auburn TJ Maxxx quadruple clearance rack.
My city is a lovely tough girl
asking you what the fuck you're looking at,
all fitted up in skintight dirty redbrick & vinyl siding

My city a broken

beautiful bitch with
a necklace of junk trees blooming
from her throat.

bodymap

For christmas, you write me your body.
For a love token, you offer me your body's map.
I stroke gold glitter finger tips and satin beige skin
on the crackle of paper unfolding.

Here, levitation.
There, a cock you created
out of your best imagination
that grows hard at a shot of cleavage
like straight-up amber whiskey.

In return, I gift you mine:
austere wordless infant
g spot shooting tears
ass stomp and razor blade switch
the pleasures and the dangers.

If a map is created by conquerers and the unconquered,
if the empire shrinks Africa but Africa remains how big she is,
these maps can be rewritten.
Rewrite my body.

Each day I tip tincture to lips,
drip three drips, whisper
change me.

If a map is an artifact made by explorers and colonizers
if a map names where bodies begin and end & who will own
their treasures

if a map can show the hideouts and secret passageways
the stashes of food and drugs and guns;

If we both have written maps to the stars
where our spirit flies out
and then written our return:
rewrite my body with me

you have wings tattooed on your breastbone
where I have the word *home* in cherry rust brown

I can already feel where we will make each other's bodies new

what story will we unfurl this time

change me

crip sex moments 1-10

1. When sie slams me up against the wall at Ships in the Night and we both lose our balance and fall over (into x's ass which is hurt from being hit by a truck in March). it's still hot.

2. your tiny starfish hands are perfect for fisting. slide right in.

3. all that time spent in bed, flat on my ass, I just jerk off and jerk off and jerk off. This has been documented. It keeps my free. all that time spent in bed, another virus, pain day, fatigue day, reset sleep schedule, stiff hips in the morning, I jerk off and jerk off and jerk off. My magic wand is better than any prescription pain med I can steal a script for. I ride the pole happy, get myself off like none other. how many five million orgasms has this ass writhed around and given myself in this fibro blood red candy apple bed?

4. you squeal like a little kid when I take you to the gluten free restaurant because you know you'll be able to eat everything that's there.

5. you wash and fold my laundry washed in fragrance-free detergent when I'm flaring and unable to take time off from the two jobs or make it up and down the stairs.

6. washing dishes for you is foreplay so your rsi wrists can be strong enough to fuck me later.

7. I am twenty-nine and I am living with the girl who is supposed to be my everything forever. she doesn't think I'm really sick and I understand why. both raised poor and working class, where anything but disability the world calls obvious, you suck it up

and work and work through. her with the shards of metal in her eye from one construction site, asbestos in her lungs from another, her body lean with cigarettes and coffee. she tells me I could work more than two days a week if I really wanted to, tells me the organics I scrimp to buy because they are the only thing that brought me out of the tired years are luxury. one day in our lesbian two bedroom Victorian apartment with the wood floors, the one I moved into because it got me into a warm apartment with a bathtub that is above ground, my legs go out from under me and I fall into the shower. I scream. She doesn't come. When I come out and say, hey, didn't you hear me? she laughs at me. *Why do you make such a big deal out of everything? Why are you always freaking out?* Her laugh gives my hips no place to open under hers.

8. three balance-and-mobility challenged crips go to Hella Gay East Bay. "ok, I usually grab a bar stool and dance on it." we assess but can't drag one through the writhing masses. instead, you sit with your fake legs dangling off the stage and I dance nasty and grind between your thighs. dance with my lover like I've never danced with any partner. definitely any white partner. you slam me into the amp and make out with me while Ellery claps her hands and says "that's so hot."

9. I am thirty-four and when I start fucking you and the other one, I decide I don't want to date anyone who's not a crip ever again. Same as when the end of white boys happened, I sink gratefully into the pleasure of never having to explain. My sickness, unpredictable tides of fevers and sore hips, microtrembling butterfly hands and legs, need a strict sleep schedule, Siberian ginseng, yoga once a week that is medicine not lululemon luxury. Of moaning and cajoling and coercing, yes, there, fuck me, oh yes

sudden breaking into oh fuck! my hip! no, no! Being absolutely normal. I sink into knowing that you will never laugh shame me for being too tired to make it to the club, and I will never shame you for the pain that tops you every day all day.

9a. the pain tops you every day all day so you top all the time. you top at work at the dungeon and with your lovers. you don't let anyone touch you. when I ask you how the yoga for people with scoliosis class went you said, "it was difficult." when I ask why you say "it's difficult basically any time I try to be inside my body."

10. fibro hips like butterfly wings, that tremor tremor tremor. so fast nobody could see it. little earthquakes on the left wing, on the right wing. fibro hips like butterfly wings tremmoring. micro spasms you can see can't see. can you see it? do you know how to see it? as I hold on tight to the bus railing, inch and inch up the stairs. fibro hips that shake and shake that I do not curse and fear anymore.

dirty river girl

1.

There's an underground river flowing through every queer-of-colour community I've ever been a part of and kissed.

The underground river of kids who went away.

The girls and boys who got sick and tired, spent hours curled up sleeping.

An underground river swelling its banks
filling the riverbed
carrying us away

*Fibro
chronic fatigue
lyme disease
epstein barr
cancer
endometriosis
MS,
multiple chemical sensitivity*

We were all just too sensitive. Fatigue too thick to make sense of phone, Trader Joe's, Laundromat, let alone meeting, party, dance floor.

We
go
away

Sick