



*The Vegetarian Sells Furs  
& Other Contradictions*

an abridged poetry collection  
by Kelley Brannon

*The Bruise Storytelling, Short Fiction & Poetry Show!* is moving from Idlewild to Bohemian Grove next month. The current format is one to three openers with 5/7 min sets, two longer featured sets ranging from 15/20 min and 30/45 min and a musical guest with breaks in-between. It's literary madness at its finest! The show takes place every Second Sunday. Please get in touch if you're interested in reading/performing or for info: [kelleybrannonprojects@gmail.com](mailto:kelleybrannonprojects@gmail.com)  
**ALL THE PERFORMERS GET PAID!** Since there is no budget from a bar at our new spot, I will be asking for a \$5 suggested donation at the door to ensure payment continues. However, no one will be turned away due to lack of funds because this show is also about fostering creative community. byob+. March 11th at 8pm  
<https://thebrisestorytelling.wordpress.com/> - hope to see you there!

Our last show at Idlewild is **THIS SUNDAY** Feb. 11th. 8pm. Free!  
(there's a flyer in the window:)

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\*All poems were read at James&Mikalena's Open Mic & Cabaret at Idlewild except *Houses*

*Alabaster*

Alabaster

my only word for you  
and one derived from  
my imagination

because I can't tell you what Alabaster is exactly  
without looking it up

I think it's a rock

semi precious maybe but the kind people drive over  
when they're in a hurry or not paying attention

or oftentimes, both

I get nervous when it starts getting colder

even though I prefer winter  
the hardest part  
of being alone  
is found in dusk at 5pm

In a city, a ruin  
void of alabaster  
and all other colorfully named rocks  
they are just rocks here

And maybe that's why  
I always come back.

*Untitled (or should be something like Whore or Only as Good as My  
Vagina Since I Only Exists for Your Objectification and Consumption)*

He doesn't want to hear about my bad experiences  
because he likes to think of me as perfect  
a madonna, a virgin, untampered with and intact

I am not

I am wild and sad  
damaged but grateful  
kind yet selfish

and I think most people I know here are like this

The peril of seeing the limitations to existence

is not without joy, is not without struggle

But life doesn't have to be a competition  
we're not in darwin-ian times  
survival of the fittest still permeates  
but does not dominate

and in this perspective  
there is hope

so that's what I tell him at the end  
or want to, but  
too many times I'm drunk before I finish the story  
and maybe I don't care about what he thinks, that much anyway

*Carvings: DETERIORATED*

There is no solution for you  
to a pipe drain that has burst open  
from the years of accumulated  
waste

A gray blue tint is the last remaining color  
in the spectrum  
of your contrived house, no longer invincible against  
erosion

The dust agrees, settling on the doorknob as it clicks shut and locks  
at each end

The last time you were here  
you swore never to come back to a place

so debilitating

absentmindedly, you confuse impatience with strength  
and fool yourself into thinking the conditions have changed  
these notions are blinding  
and you quickly put on sunglasses  
hoping for a quick resolve

Instead, the waste thickens  
and sticks to your iris like a map only the dead would use  
as navigation

The build up is only the beginning, you know this  
because you've been here before  
and you know how the pipe will look  
when removed from the wall

but the construction is far from over  
and you're anxious to see the end

As predictable as gravity though you fail to see both until  
your arms sag uselessly from your shoulders and the wall is  
made hollow

In a refined moment you second guess yourself  
and find complacency  
only when dreaming  
under the ageless urban canopy  
of high-top Converse and Nike sneakers dangling overhead

But you were never one to be refined  
and instead you see  
an ominous billboard  
erected in mid-air

a consumer solution  
to an inevitability you never would have bought before

My eyes are slow to adjust  
to you

in most imagined scenarios outside the focal range of the moments  
in which we sit  
together in the dark, quiet  
save for the sound of the pipes; the noise, seemingly impossible  
to ignore  
though, I'm certain, I'm the only one who hears the hammer strike  
the interior  
and this is not a singular tragedy.

## *Chickens*

And the chickens chirp “help me, help me, help me”

But I’m not a chicken in a crate

I’m too big for that

I lurk instead

Outside

Among cat tails and fire escapes

I peer into

An abyss bigger than me

Its size is hypnotizing

And I walk out the front door

Before I even put on shoes

I want to live there  
Among the wild hearted  
Who care more about their impact  
Than the effects of another's

We try  
Sure  
All of us  
sometimes

But other times there is no salt to spare  
So everything tastes dry  
And meaningless  
The same sad feeling I get  
When I watch men toss crates of live chickens on the sidewalk  
From a truck

Higher up than I stand with boots on

I remembered my shoes this time  
And this time they are fastened to my feet  
Like a damn chasity belt

But my keys are still loose  
And the kids wanna play

Any game except the one that ends with “help me, help me, help me”

*Marble Machine Gun Hero Mythology (unabridged)*

someone put a muzzle on that bitch and get her in the crate  
I'm quite then-sedated by the violence of my abrasive presence  
though I've only been barking  
intoxicated

I came crossing out over the water from a dreamscape  
ripe and awake unfortunately

raw and attracted only to the raw

I peel back my better judgement

I peel it back to the beef

to the limbs and the cartilage

a cow is underneath that, a stray Mexican dog sniffs that

the stirrups and antipsychotics

the woman, the man

I've got 'em all pinned under my paw

I'd cry if I wasn't laughing  
Seriously, someone get her in the crate and throw a blanket over it  
She won't know she's behind bars if she can't see them  
That's what they think, that's what they think, that's what's  
...turmoil, breeding in the blood hole circumcised of the right  
to pleasure or choice

she wrote a letter and sent it nowhere  
and I never got it  
through the fog  
and under the vapors, under the state, the stare, under the stolen  
moment of an arm shared with my hand  
I confiscate napkins  
to write these notes on  
because paper costs too much  
when you've got too little cash and too much nonsense

we used to be logical

I avoid the lights and signs at all cost, ride through them fast and  
furiously shaking, standing up from the sidewalk bruise

I move to another parking spot

too late

no use

I won't leave

you know that

unarmed but equally dangerous, are my words

I use to pin you against the wall with as an answer to the  
question you won't ask me

the bars are real even if they're

only imposed

so

your restraints peel at my self

worth

I think, wiping hot chocolate off my face  
in a tunnel, a scavenger hunt through mud enclaves, my hand paw  
sore from digging myself out

my hands

my hands

my paws

my core

bubble like water boiled and I wish

I was back there in the nutshell where everything made some kind  
of sense- maybe I left it in the country or a taxi or a waffle house, I  
don't remember

I'm on, I've been on  
a chaos pilgrimage

circumnavigating the man ocean of power  
resolved never to be chained by a woman  
but alas, you made a box  
and I stepped inside the one you made for me  
because I was tired of being a stray  
and it was the only thing  
you offered

I wore the muzzle  
briefly  
just so you could fucking pet me.

## *Houses*

I've been in so many houses  
Some are extravagant for my standards  
Others are in ruin  
Regardless of the living quarters or what the facade is, the  
bare, worn or isolated is as present as the silverware and  
lightbulbs.

Most people are sad  
And look for distractions  
Some sad people embrace it and either live in empty rooms  
or chaotic ones  
But most  
seek balance and

Fill up space  
Like an aquarium  
As if they were fish  
Just learning how to breathe,

but there is no balance to sadness or air  
and these houses are little more than relics  
from a past  
that vibrates intolerance  
with every wheel put on  
and every road paved.







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