



*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: kellybrannonprojects@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://thebruisestorytelling.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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