

## "K"

What if I say you're fine, spelled with a K?

What if you said nice? K N I C E.

What if we had glitter eyes and wood hands?

And what if the curtain dropped again?

And we were unstoried, unseen, unheard,

and unbelieving of the other sides--

love, death, all the way to the balcony.

No puppet maestro two-handing the stage,

no footlights to set our flounces aflame,

no crying crescendoes or brassy bands,

no love-me, love-me-nots. (Spelled with a K.)

What then? Is the audience enraptured?

Or felted and velveteen, quicksand and lime.

## **Never the less**

My mother danced late and never played chess.

She threw two hundred ravens at the doves.

One for every decade of the wars they forgave,  
feathering the unconquerable sky.

My cousin chews the faces off wild dogs,  
and laughs so hard at silly dreams they melt  
like overdoses in silver soup spoons.

You were as loud as a witch of the West,  
beating hearts with mallets through fine mesh sieves.

Sí, mi amor, Krylon Coney Island.

Sí, mi amor, Frogger turtles and logs,  
and crocodiles and cars and never tells.

Sí, mi amor, never and nevertheless.

## **We**

We said what we said. Do you remember?

We drank what we drank, and walked where we walked,  
and paid who we paid, and saw what we saw,  
and took what we took, and lost what we lost,  
and talked where we talked, and kept what we kept,  
and gave what we gave, and got what we got,  
and were what we were, if you remember.

Spearmint mojitos. Mincing stilettos.

Cash on the copper. Disco candelabra.

Bones on the boardwalk. Dulces buenas noches.

Patio table w/ blistered Padrón peppers.

Souvenir pics @ Spook-A-Rama, and

a loan against a dollar and a clock.

## V & V

We'll cloak our bones for la mascarada--  
you in a crepe gown and me in black muslin,  
and all our v's and v's will pass through us:  
ingress to egress, prayed-for sweet breezes;  
torsos cleaned hollow by real mojitos;  
echoes enchambered by años caprices;  
vacant to capacity de nada.

Sí mi amor, and should we disrobe we'll  
clack clavicles, interlace in thoraces,  
bonk bonk mandibles, orbit to orbit,  
and serpent our vertebrae in one den.

White stripes multiplied, distant Adidas.

Marathon 20s and O Superstars.

## Party Tricks

You really had all the best party tricks.

Like that time you pulled me into a hat.

Nevermind the delight when I climbed out.

And what a fantabulous cabinet

of curiosities. That one display.

Not only the prince pauper, rag and bone,

but a perfect twin in the pauper prince,

shoes and watch and a better bicyclette,

and just as broken and shining a trophy.

You, with your baton and ringmaster tails,

standing at the top of the stairs, Pinot

Noir and another walk-up sublet,

and candy bowls filled with wooden matches.

## **Brass Rings**

And the tunnel of love at Love Canal.

When we were, what? Children? Pixies? Zombies?

The walking wounded? The last ones standing?

It was after the fires--Dreamland first--

but before we'd forgotten mermaids in

Adidas and the menu at Nathan's,

before the quiet of these petit mals.

Ten punches a ticket or two brass rings.

The midway prizes in three tries times three.

Under the boardwalk in Levolor sand.

Slushies and french fries in buckets and quarts.

Seagulls, saying, "never call, never call."

And the D train won't tell but sings and sings.

## **Gum Wrappers**

Let's cover the windows with gum wrappers,  
and rot a bowl of fruit and watch mold grow  
and fruit flies hatch; we'll drain our batteries  
and use rolls of aluminum foil  
on the antennas and the wireless  
so we're shielded from radio waves  
and secret transmissions from the others  
who might beam in thoughts about not just us,  
like nonsense about stuff out there worth saving,  
like celebrity gossip and Congress,  
like wanted posters and terms of parole.  
We won't be subject to frivolities.  
You and me and dirty sheets and the glow  
of old tv, and fudge pops in the freezer.

## **Cloth Monkey Make Me Jumpy**

Cloth monkey, say you're sorry. Say you are.

Cloth monkey, I was worried as a child.

Cloth monkey, give me cookies--crisp and rummy.

Cloth monkey, make me jumpy. Stick your tongue out.

Cloth monkey, come with ice and pour me twice.

Cloth monkey, peel me roses--with becauses.

Cloth monkey, tsk and pshaw vieilles vignes of Napa.

Cloth monkey, weep me on your terry tummy.

Cloth monkey, do-no-harm me when I'm seven.

Cloth monkey, knead you, knead you--with my claws.

Cloth monkey, smother me in fuzzy pile.

Cloth monkey, itemize me--any price.

Cloth monkey, you're not sorry but I'm l8nely.



## Close

Tomorrow, tomorrow and tomorrow,  
every morning you'll be farther away.

Back when we were kids and you stabbed me in  
the scrotum with a toenail clipper file,  
I wouldn't have believed we'd drift apart.

We really were close, inseparable,  
weren't we? And now when you come to town  
you email weeks before your arrival  
so when you don't text me from the hotel,  
the Plaza like old times, I'm sure to know.

Who would have guessed you and I would stay friends?

Laying down our swords and barring our hearts  
like prey--and picking up rifles like snipers  
and taking aim for the killshot, longrange.

## **Emergency Contact**

I've been putting down your number as my  
emergency contact for a few years,  
so don't be surprised if you get a call  
about the demon I summoned and lost,  
or the memory I had that went rogue  
and road raged the boardwalk by bumper car.  
Don't be taken aback by the stranger,  
so angry, so worried, so familiar,  
and so knowledgeable about ghost ghosts  
you gave storm names a long long time ago.  
And if there never is a voice, email, or Fedex,  
there's no emergency and I'm just fine,  
barreling through Luna Park as always,  
without a care but with a blue Slurpee.