

Hubris

Would you accuse the Mountain of arrogance if it pronounced itself mighty?

Would you chastise the River for deeming itself beautiful?

Why then would you deny me my wisdom?

I want what I want to be

I want what I want to be
My desires all feel to me like self-love
Twisted, twisting, self-obsession

I'm thirsty.

I see no fantasy save for myself.
To be the handsome prince that sweeps me off my feet.
To be the woman in the flowing sundress for whom I fall

Piety strikes.

The gods present themselves, quiet but undeniable

But can I be pious? I don't love them.
My love is for the soul I carry.
Every prayer is a prayer to me, first

I feel old.

I feel important
I feel undeniable
How could I fantasize about anything else?

Billy Shook Spears

I am going to write in eights
I've a tendency for extremes
Short or long, order or chaos
I bristle at restrictions, lord

Billy Shook Spears, I watched them flop
Wiggly and loose like a pencil
Turned rubber between two fingers
The pencil won't oblige for me

Billy Shook Spears, but I did not
I shook my tongue, and my finger
My arms and legs and torso too
And my fist, my fist above all

Billy Shook Spears, and I can too
A foot soldier, for the army
That knows no nationality
And isn't called by loyalty

Billy Shook Spears, in ten not eight
But it is foolish to pretend
That that count of two could be 'nuff
To draft-dodge, avoid conscription

Billy Shook Spears, did nothing else
All the time it had taken him
Shaking the spear, neglected life
Life rejected all but the shaking

Billy Shook Spears; praised my work
Liked my approach to the shaking
I agreed with him, and thanked him
The compliment was a knife wound

For Billy Shook Spears, and I shook my fist
But I wanted to be more than shaking
I wanted to live, to love and to kiss
But it seems by the spear I am taken

The Reversal

Do you miss when you were big?
When the world could rest comfortably atop your shoulders, or between your legs?

Do you miss the alacrity of the walks?
One step to get you anywhere and one step to return you to me?

Do you miss the ease of being big?
The magnetism that opens doors and turns heads.

I think you miss when you were big
I think big people can hold their heads high, no matter the moment.

I miss when I was small
When I could lean up against the world or against you, and know I was safe

I miss when taking my time felt significant
I miss when moments could feel like days.

To be small is to feel grounded.
You weaken yourself for a promise of earthliness

I miss when you were big and I was small
and I fit between your legs.

Kingdom in the Sky

The gods.
Once we knew where they lived

They sat atop the mountains
Land touching sky, their power manifest
Their anger a red ocean, divine proof
The greenness of the rock, their doing
No other place holds such majesty

One day we checked the mountains
We found no palace

The deep of the jungles then.
They live on in the wild places.
The tangled underbrush hides them
The spiraling canopy shields them
The vicious beast protects them.

One day we checked the jungle
We found no temple

The desert! The beginning of us
Surely the gods are seated there
Desolation as majesty.
Nothing between the earth and sky
They must exist within the barren place

One day we checked the desert
We found no throne

How could we have been so foolish?

The Sky! They are nested in the Sky!
For man can find the will to ascend a mountain
Man can abandon sense, brave the jungle

Man can lead a loyal camel into the desert
But man cannot fly, and this the gods know

One day we checked the sky
We found no kingdom

We should check the ocean.

A Critique of the Mountains Out West

Your Infant rivers
Your Grandfather valleys
Your Boyish peaks
Your Ancestral trunks
Your Orphaned brush

Everything you are is
at once old and quiet;
And young and excited

You are not mine

You exist at heights,
Unimaginable to most
Variety shapes you

You are lakes
You are twisting roads
(Though you've not felt them yet)
You are those who live in your shadow
You are the whisper of travel agents
And a temple for those who worship another.
You are magnificent

But mine are old.
Older than you know
Older than I can understand;
Though I feel it
I feel their age for it is my age

They exhausted their excitement
At a time when there was no one to join them
They called out when there was no one to hear
And that silence broke their heart
Now they groan, a quiet groan

The ache of young trees on old soil
Animals tread soft through their gentle night

Now in old age this land calls out once more
Lonely, desperate, mournful cries
But this time a response is given
Their age and their loneliness
drew the attention of quiet souls
I belong to these mountains, dull as they may be; one billion years, and waiting for me.

Back to you, lord.
Your excitement excites me
And your magnitude humbles me
But I beg pardon, god, for I cannot love you
I am sworn to another, and she's quieter than you.