

'Filled to the Brim'
Final Portfolio

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Advanced Creative Writing (Poetry) Workshop
Professor Susan Miller
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1 – Marie Ponsot: Running Dragons

springing,

In the yard, beside the chain-link fence,
a sole monarch nuzzles its proboscis
into an orange zinnia. Its wings shudder.

The budding orange tree bears on fruit,
a humble offering; its crown still green and bitter.

The bitter cold from months ago,
Nothing, but a memory
Rays of sun beat down the field

The wind whispers through the field
Sealing its promises with a kiss that nothing else matters

A cracked cicada shell promises silence—hooked
around the chain-link, braced against the wind.
It waits for its brood to finish screaming into the sun.

One translucent larva broods over the melting cotton candy cloud
but it refuses to budge from its browning leaf.

Through refuse and rain, stubborn new life;
wet newspaper stained grass green lifts
away in the last chilly breeze.

The chilly breeze full of fiery presence
but not enough to devour new souls

With spring comes a soul of its own,
wings flutter and buzz
spinning the sky into a whirl

Rays of sunlight dance in the ever cerulean sky,
a lonely woodpecker drums its way to a new home

Homing in on foliage; sticks make the bed
newspaper clings to chain-link
nipped and torn into sheets

With torn wet wings of black and white,
and an aroma of spring dew and old ink, what is left flies over fairyland

The fairyland is where she lays her young
Waiting until she arrives, small and helpless
The fairyland is where they will remain, until the day they do not

The remains of the day settle on to the street,
Wet newspaper, larvae, and wet white string summoning spring.

Budging through meadowsweets
Fever, drippy damp droplets from the leaves
Cascade together through stubbornness as they march to victory

2 – *Evie Shockley: Alternated Indentation*

I watched

as they admired her slanted fox eyes and slick black hair waving
like an oriental flag being spat on and ripped to shreds
of amazing technicolor rainbows. Admire its beauty, feed the flames and watch
forests burn. I inhaled the smoke and let it suffocate the way
I have been taught to suffocate my voice. Quiet mice survive...others get trapped
in a melting pot with too many loud spices. They say to pour some milk
to bring out the authentic flavor. And I watched as they poured and poured
until I was filled to the brim. I choked on their oatmeal and the reflection
from the window choked. She watched as they admired
her teary rounded red eyes and bleached blonde hair waving
like a pale white flag signaling an end to a war.

3 – *Natasha Trethewey: Ekphrasis*

purple petals

Cartwheels in sundresses
And
dirt covered callused feet

smushed beetles
give
the perfect shade for rouge

melancholy cicadas
scream
a harmonious sound

mother calls out to join her for lunch
little does
she knows
the feast the flowers provide for us

(Based on Irises in Monet's Garden (1990))

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4 – Agha Shahid Ali: Ghazal

let it go

pull on the rope and keep tugging, don't let it go
no matter the reason, please do not let it go

let the words flirt and let them fill to the brim
though the stench hurts - it is wise to not let it go

an abundance of food stays stale on a broken plate
Will you let it rot? Let it go

a scratched off lottery ticket flies into a sewer grate
Too bad it did not get caught. Let it go

burnt espresso tops off a bitter cup of coffee
it sloshes and lingers on a tongue – isn't it too hot? let it go

a boy interlocks his fingers with her
isn't it lovely, the way it looks like one connected knot? Let it go.

Blow out the dying candles and eat stale cake
Happy birthday to everyone who forgot, let it go

take scissors and cut the line
Ezra, I know it hurts, but do not let it. Go.

5 – *Mary Szybist: Erasure*

more

she was
naturally began around the house. The she could studying she household
and when she had she wanted something more
belonging to her heart,

What's wrong

Excerpt from "Matilda" by Roald Dahl

6 – Anya Krugovoy Silver: Address

Apples

Pluck me from my tree and
take pictures. Your relaxed smile
bounces off my shiny red skin

Bite down and let my juice dribble down
your freshly shaven chin.
Tell me, is it satisfying?
Why do you frown when
my sap remains stuck to your skin?

When I come into your home, I scream silent pleads,
“Do not let me become a dessert!” but
You decide what I become.
Stop peeling away my skin.

And now,
it is almost Fall and once again,
I must prepare for this seasonal change.

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7 – Mark Doty: Description

Hive Mentality

Black and yellow

Yellow and black

Black and white

How does one feed the queen?

They work together

In a line

In a formation

In a

System? But what abo-

Black and white

White and black

Black and blue

Honey?

I want to go home.

Please?

Plea-

Please make your way back into the line.

Thank you.

8 – *Ocean Vuong: Poem Interlaced with Found Language*

Because

*When you wish upon a star
It Makes no difference.*

because

Who cares?

Stop being a child.

because

You are – too old to be like this.

Take

Anything your heart desires

And

Erase it

because

It will **never** come to you

9 – Ross Gay: *Poem of Thanks*

Still,

I'm thankful for the baby blue linen sheets on my queen-sized bed
and how it slowly swallows me whole as I lay in it and
how it drowns out the sounds of war
coming from the living room tv
and how I can just close
up my mind and
pretend that
I can just
stay

Thankful.