

Faith and the Burden of Blinking

I wake on the edge of my bed My eye shuffles daylight and my dreams Dawn I begin each day with masturbation and prayer but not in that order I do not desire to be intentionally forgiven That is what the boyfriend does He is not Toussaint He cannot consider life beyond Buddha's instructions and forgives me in love Faithfully I promise to try to forget my shaman/-/toussaint/-/an image on the insides of my eyelids A portrait/-/toussaint/-/encrusted into my every desire I tell the boyfriend I am hungry I want/-/toussaint/-/ I am thirsty I want to sip/-/toussaint/-/kiss I am preparing to leave The boyfriend prays I tell the boyfriend, I want /-/toussaint/-/to go for a walk I run I dress in stiletto heels It pains him, a spike /-/toussaint/-/in the heart I slither into a black dress His eyes wander The boyfriend says I am gift wrapped/-/toussaint/-/ in sin That I should be meditating I should love him/-/toussaint/-/the boyfriend I wave good-bye afraid to speak his/-/toussaint/-/name Will the boyfriend forfeit his faith for me tonight? Each day begins with me folded in a fetal position pretending/-/toussaint/-/ to pray Haunted by/-/toussaint/-/the isolation of the boyfriend's pressed palms, I always dream/-/toussaint/-/ The boyfriend prays that I am/-/toussaint/-/ celibate and mantras that I forever love/-/toussaint/-/him The boyfriend chants for me/-/toussaint/-/to forget The boyfriend shouts his name/-/toussaint/-/to be specific, so the universe does not confuse whom to remove from my life He is rocking back and forth and if this /-/toussaint/-/portrait wasn't tattooed inside my eyelids, I could see the boyfriend levitating toward/-/toussaint/-/heaven Each morning I hear/-/toussaint/-/ whispers for me The boyfriend has a higher power I/-/toussaint/-/ The boyfriend has a third eye and warns me not to be blinded by sin I open my eyes wide The boyfriend's reflection is absent from my stare I/-/blink/-/ The boyfriend begs me /-/toussaint/-/not to think of him/-/toussaint/-/ The boyfriend says thinking/-/toussaint/-/is a powerful mantra, maybe more powerful than/-/toussaint/-/praying I leave The boyfriend is yelling from the 2nd level square opening about God, doors and windows I close my eyes/-/toussaint/-/ I blow a kiss toward/-/toussaint/-/ Heaven The boyfriend inhales, savoring temptation I desire/-/toussaint/-/ I close my eyes/-/toussaint/-/and walk away.

contributor's notes

Although most of my recent poems are in formal verse, I also experiment with self imposed restraints. In my more experimental work, I attempt to psychologically engage the reader using techniques that challenge the reader to negotiate between realism and surrealism. *Faith and the Burden of Blinking* is an example of these attempts. The poem explores the body as a psychological prison. The subject embraces the esoteric obsessions of sexuality and spirituality. The boyfriend recognizes sexuality and spirituality as polar opposites.

The boyfriend employs sexual restraint as a means of spiritual sacrifice. He is devout in his spiritual pursuits and in his relationship. Ironically, the physical restriction the boyfriend imposes within the relationship leads the speaker to have an affair with Toussaint. Toussaint becomes a sanctuary for the speaker, a space where she explores her humanity. The sexual affair edifies her human experience, he becomes her god.

One aim of this poem is to create a sense of intimacy that extends beyond empathy and elicits a physical response from the reader. Enjoy!