

Five Poems

by [Mather Schneider](#) (May 2023)



Alone Together, Maria Kreyne

Normal

I haven't talked to Natalia in 3 days.
We had another fight.
I've been sleeping in the room out back
and drinking like a hole in the ground.
It's 2 p.m. and I hear a knock on the door
right in the middle of a dream where all my hair was falling
out
and spiders were crawling out of my veins.
Natalia says,
The guy's here to fix the water pump.
We've been waiting for a week for him to show up.

They never call first.
I spend too much time reading Emerson's "Self Reliance"
to learn to fix anything.
I get dressed and go outside.
It's sunny and a bit warmer.
Natalia and I stand and watch him dismantle the water pump,
40-ish Mexican man with his son learning the trade
handing him tools.
He smiles and says,
You need a new tank and a new hose,
I'll go get the materials,
and you'll be back to normal in no time.
Gracias, I say.
We watch them drive off in his old truck.
Probably the same truck his father used.
I put my arm around Natalia
but she twists away and goes inside.
I stand there next to the pieces of the water pump
laid out on the cracked concrete,
wondering what that guy thinks normal is
and how much it's all going to cost.

Eggshells

The sun comes up a little later and a little slower each day
and so do I.
Natalia stays in bed all day.
I water the plants out of habit
and drink coffee.
The birds chirp.
Birds don't get depressed it seems.
They've seen the big picture.
Eggshells on the ground under the big tree.
No sex anymore,

no kissing.

I wait for 3 o'clock so I can start on the beer.
There's a water leak in the wall of the bathroom
seeping through.

I look at it while urinating,
turn the light off and walk out.

Some people can't smile through the pain.

I might as well apologize
to the abyss

and wait for an echo.

Easter will be here soon.

The Spit that Fell from the Clouds

When your wife has been ill for 2 years
and no doctor in the land can put a name to it
when she cries in bed each night
and flinches when you touch her
and all you can do is remember
how young and happy she once was
it is difficult to give a shit

that they're fighting over sky-fairies in Tal Afar
or that demonstrators are up in arms in Barcelona
or that somebody made hot cakes on Facebook
or that glassy-eyed poets are passing mouth-gas on Spotify
and bitching about Nietzsche
with their laptops and backdrop bookshelves testifying
to their talent and mental acuity
or that the motorcycle rally is next weekend
or that the car is filthy
from the spit that fell from the clouds
or that jam has bits of fruit in it unlike jelly
or that a pubescent loop-job dropped artillery

in a Missoula classroom
killing eleven
or that the monarchs are fluttering again
on the motherfucking wind.

Lucky

The doctor told Natalia she has a hole in her eardrum
too small to see with the naked eye,
been there from birth.

It never bothered her
and has nothing to do with anything
but that's all the doctor could say.
You've got a hole in your eardrum
need to fix that, that'll be
4,000 dollars.

We don't have 4,000 dollars.
Now Natalia puts cotton in her ear
and is afraid of the wind
and the sea
and showers
and sand
and the rain
on top of all the pain.

But what about the other problem, doctor?
No idea, but there's a hole in your eardrum, doc said.
You're lucky I found it, doc said.
Doctors don't listen too good
and they only see what they look for
just like you and me.

Footprints

Went swimming in the ocean yesterday.
It's October and the water was cold,
bracing and good for the hangover,
helps to freeze and shrink the hot balloon head.
Natalia went with me but she doesn't swim.
It was a bit windy
and there is a lot of fecal matter in the air here
in our small Mexican town.
Natalia is scared of the wind.
She's scared of almost everything these days:
dogs, cats, strangers, yeast, grocery stores, the sun, sugar.
We carry an umbrella
and plant it in the sand of the beach.
She sits under it and watches me swim.
It's like being on the moon when I'm in the water
or flying in a dream.
Sometimes there are manta rays that will sting you
and bright blue jellyfish the size of baseballs.
They've touched me and didn't sting me
but it's only a matter of time I'm told.
A lot of people wear shoes in the water but I don't.
The scientists found fossilized footprints
in New Mexico the other day.
It was on the news.
In the photos you could clearly see they were human footprints
with the unmistakable splayed toes.
They say they are 23,000 years old
which is hard to imagine.
I wonder what they were doing 23,000 years ago.
Just walking around
looking for food,
trying to get out of the mud.
I wonder if they were confused
about the meaning of it all
or if they knew something

that I do not.

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Mather Schneider was born in 1970 in Peoria, Illinois. He has had many jobs over the years and published many poems, stories and 5 books. He divides his time between Tucson, Arizona and Mexico.

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