

Love Is Not A Tempest



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Preface

Most of the poems in this collection happened at a meet between misery and contemplation. They explore love, loss, anxiety and the endless probe for God.

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Mother

Red-eyed goddess
Travelling through eternity
Worshipped by the sun and Sons,
Your stone is an altar

Red-eyed goddess
My first bone,
My eternal home

Dead People

I

Dead people don't say nothing
That a lie, they be talking all the time,
Like the narrator of sad film
Who be yapping when the characters be doing things

II

Dead people don't just die
They disappear

III

But they be talking all the time,
Reminding you of their softness
And the stories only them fit know

IV

They be teaching you things, if you listen,
How to make hay
And do a stitch before sun sleeps

V

They be reappearing
And making you sad
And happy
And be teaching you things

Divine

There is sin in the water that
The priest calls divine,
Him who sullied the altar
And fed his grace to swine,
Doesn't he see that he has pushed
God into the gutter?
That there is blood, that
There is blood in the water
And death in the oil?

Ground Control

Ground control to Jesus Christ,
Can you hear me cry?
Do you know that I hate goodbyes and
The loneliness thereafter?
The void— do you feel it too?
Can you fill it too?

Traffic

I looked out the window to see
Scrawny-faced boys and girls
In oversized khaki shorts and defeated pinafores,
Play-fighting and laughing while
Dodging speedy vehicles
Exhausted by hunger and terrible education
In a city where
Help is always at hand, but hardly in hand.

Weary

Weary of fighting things that
Bury my peace,
I will dance in quietness
To mirrors that flatter my sway
— where I'm the prettiest of all —
And scream till my lungs deflate,
Till I hear God willing me to live
Or till I see his face.

Graveyard Music

Give me to joy and lightness,
To glorious pathways
Of praise and lifting.
Let me breathe a breath
Bereft of anxious tomorrows,
Lest I wither like flowers to graveyard music.

Bush Baby

The moon fell
And splattered into bits of glare.
I took a piece for light
And heard, as I pranced through the woods,
One foot-slapping sound after another,
(The louder, the more ominous)
And the blubber of a baby
(The louder, the more nefarious)
And all I wanted to do was wake up.

Night Rain

I wonder about the others
Who dream of night-dancing under water
Praying that grief is swallowed by thunder,
Tired from counting sheep
As the pouring rain
Quiets the voices in their head.

Worship

I have fractured bones from worship
Eyes reddening and swelling from
Lifting my head to the hills.
I have known the silence of God too
Many times to keep believing
But here I go again,
Enraptured by grace,
That even through the pain,
I long to see His face.

Mother's Aftermath

In my mother's aftermath
her love beams
like an overfed floodlight

There is laughter
and recurrent sorrow,
and schizophrenic hope

She is what love is—
always happening
everywhere I look

Song

Your voice is the soundtrack of lovers
Holding hands under a strawberry sky,
Carefree children
Eating vanilla ice cream from yellow cones.
You talk with a love so fat
And even after you have stopped
And night comes along,
I lay awake watching the ceiling
Recollecting the things you said,
How you said them.
Wondering, *what poetry is this?*

Eyes

You look like you carry God in your eyes
Like you can set the world on fire
And watch it burn
I am in awe
I am terrified

Bus Station

We sat on the ground
As horny lizards pursued their mates
And famished flies perched on shit,
Maggots crawled out the gutter
Of sewage, disease and spirogyra.
We swatted daylight mosquitoes
While children begged for money
And crippled men on makeshift skateboards
Lifted their hands to the deaf ears of drivers and
Yellow buses with too many people
As conductors solicited more passengers—
CMS! CMS!

Mural

Lovers loved unrequited
And love we did not requite,
Moons and moons of
Holding God and letting go
And running to the pulpit with tears
And eating His body with fear.
What do we do with old selves?
Do we carry them along
As latent ghosts,
Biding the time for a dangerous return?

Shh!

~~Do not~~ speak.

~~Tie your tongue till your frenulum begs~~

~~For mercy~~

~~And hold your breath till your lungs fill up with death~~

Shh! be quiet (only if you want to be)

~~Listen to those who push you towards happiness~~

~~Without listening to your sorrow,~~

~~Those who reduce your despair to ingratitude~~

Close your eyes and count to Jesus

Or Allah or wherever your faith dwells.

By The Beach

As vast water
Fades into the breadth of the sky,
I am serenaded by waves
And kind whispering of placeless wind.

The ocean is a gospel
Of complete emptying,
An erasure of sorrow and
Forgetting tomorrow.

Love Is Not A Tempest

There is rain and it thunders
But love is not a tempest
It fights, oh it fights
But love is not a battle

Love is soft, it has to be

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If you can read this, I hope the world is kind to you. And that your burdens are made lighter by loving and being loved. Thank you for reading. .

About the Author

I am Tomi. Allow me to bore you with tweets: @tomiOlug. My Instagram handle is @tomilade but there are many tomilades, so look out for the one with the poems.