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MUH 377: The Pictures Project

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# “Poetry, Light, and Intimacy” - an Exploration of Internal Struggle through Ekphrastic Poetry

Vanessa Brown  
*University of Maine at Farmington*

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**“Poetry, Light, and Intimacy” -  
An Exploration of Internal Struggle  
through Ekphrastic Poetry**

A Collection of Poems by Vanessa Brown

**A note from the author:**

**In a time where my mind is kind of wandering and thinking of ways in which my life could go, I keep remembering my time at this art installation in Phoenix Art Museum in Phoenix, Arizona at the beginning of 2020. It brings me immense calm, but also in the calm it conjures up the most complex of feelings that I still look back on and try to disentangle, but I can't. I hope that these poems give you a chance to look into the complex thing they call "my brain", and that it'll help you understand why I am the way I am, how I act, how I breathe, how vulnerable I truly am while making these. I hope you enjoy these poems, and I hope you can begin to find ways to conjure up the emotions you keep down.**

**If you wish to look at photos of the exhibit while you read this poem, here is a [link](#) to a powerpoint of photos I've made of the exhibit, as well as a [link](#) to the Phoenix Art Museum website.**

**I'd like to thank my best friend for letting me stay with him during the trip in Phoenix. I hope you are safe, healthy, and changed by the way the installation grabs you.**

**Thank you.**

***Vanessa Brown***

## **I remain oblivious to the world**

i remain oblivious to the world,  
and i hope it stays this way  
if it means sitting in a midnight blue field  
and capturing the floating lights  
in the palm of my hands;

if it means consuming the earth  
and flossing my teeth with strands of grass  
hoping a garden with bloom in my mouth;

if it means that one day,  
you will come back to me,  
calm me like the winds,  
and tell me i'm illuminating your soul.

i wish to fly  
to float  
to flee  
to you.

i aim for a light  
as bright  
as gentle  
as blinding,  
something as filling and illuminating  
as a first kiss.

so,  
blink twice if you like me.  
and wade it out

only for a night.

## Confessional #1 - The Initial Thought

When I was maybe nine years old,  
I began to stargaze, hoping to connect the dots  
from star to star.  
Everything, according to my brain,  
was interconnected,  
Even if the dotted lines didn't show it in the pitch dark,  
floating sea.

When I was fifteen years old,  
I saw my first firefly outside my home,  
the humidity hugging my arms  
and charging the bug's light.  
It was the first time I wished for love,  
in its purest form.

Now, at twenty-one years old,  
I walked into a room, full of vibrance and stillness.  
I gripped my hands with childlike excitement,  
and I was reminded on the wish I made.  
I look up to a swarm of greens and pinks,  
hoping to be swept away into nirvana, into love, into something

in hopes that one day,

i will create something that goes through this cycle too.

**i'm not a poet,**

but i wish i could be the romantics, the modernists, the realists.

“Oh captain, my captain” a familiar audio that craves the imagination,  
that longs for the break beyond the formulas that preceded before me.

i'm not a poet,

but i want to describe and articulate the way colors gleam in infinite realities,

while i try to decipher how parallel universes exist in art,

and yet like philosophers, only infer the answers with ideas and hypotheticals.

i swear i'm not a poet,

and yet i'm used to colorful language pouring out of me

and touching beads that glow

and letting that determine my aura for the day.

i'm not a poet,

but i am an artist.

and maybe that is synonymous.

## **I want you to unravel me**

When I'm no longer trapped in a million possibilities,  
and my mind finally sets on your reflection,  
I want you to unravel me.

No, not in the way lovers do,  
No you are not ravenous and lustly,  
I don't want to be ripped apart.

Instead,  
I want you to unravel me in the way  
You open gifts up in front of the one you love

And when you finally see the gift,  
You immediately treasure me,  
Because *I am the one thing you've always wanted.*

I hope that when the moment comes,  
And the colors fade in and out,  
You fixate your eyes on me.

You'll make me feel whole,  
With the way you'll unravel me.



## **Confessional #2: sitting on the floor, waiting**

sitting on the floor of an art installation  
focusing on the sounds around me  
waiting

waiting for the moment he sits beside me  
in silence in perspective  
relaxed ambience around us

waiting for a instance of internal combustion  
explosive fireflies that warm my heart  
waiting

wait ing to remember what it felt like  
to be okay like *this* all the time

## **Covid-19 thoughts at 2am while I think about my Pictures Project**

if i admit that i'm scared,  
I'm sacrificing the moment to immerse myself in the brightness of the art.  
instead of admitting that  
i'm in a horror film, i allow the multi-mirror facade  
of multiple sources tugging me back and forth between  
"life will be back to normal soon"  
to  
"you should prepare to not leave your house for months on end"

if i admit the unknown haunts me,  
i'm reminded that there is darkness in a room that feels so large,  
but is so  
So  
SO  
small.

when will things be normal again?  
when will i be able to admire art as art again  
rather than an embodiment of my own fears?

### **Confessional #3: the japanese symbolism of fireflies**

In Japanese folklore and culture,  
fireflies represent both love and death.

“Hotaru” - adored, beloved, loving, and kind.

the way that fingers clasp around long strings of light  
and instead of butterflies, fireflies warming your insides.

in opposition, these beads, orbs of light are the lives of fighters.  
how can art represent so much?

How does it feel to know that,  
    in a simplistic exhibit  
        that love and death inhabit everything you  
perceive  
    see  
        breathe

inhale , the inevitable tingling in your fingers as your lips interlock  
    with his or hers  
exhale , the inevitable last breath, as you watch yourself fade  
    into nothingness.

let's  
just  
pretend  
for  
a  
moment.

remember:  
a  
childlike  
wonder  
running through  
cattails  
and  
hoping  
you  
didn't get caught,  
as you find a vacant space  
to set your blanket down  
with your best friend,  
who decided that sneaking out  
was better than routine.

and they were right:  
they reached their hands out  
to try  
to grab  
their first love,  
their ancestors,  
their first soul  
that floats in the sky.

i wish i could have done it, too.  
but i stared.  
i couldn't bring myself  
to touch something  
more  
beautiful  
than I.

## **You Who Are Getting Absorbed In**

I want you to know that I'm here.

I'm connected to you.

We are meant to meet here.

I placed my hand on your cold skin,  
chills.

I rest myself with you, staring directly

at

you.

I don't want to go.

I want to stay with you forever,

Frozen in time.

You are the only thing that makes sense.