

Stolen Moments

What happened, happened once. So now it's best
in memory—an orange he sliced: the skin
unbroken, then the knife, the chilled wedge
lifted to my mouth, his mouth, the thin
membrane between us, the exquisite orange, tongue,
orange, my nakedness and his,
the way he pushed me up against the fridge —
Now I get to feel his hands again, the kiss
that didn't last, but sent some neural twin
flashing wildly through the cortex. Love's
merciless, the way it travels in
and keeps emitting light. Beside the stove
we ate an orange. And there were purple flowers
on the table. And we still had hours.

Kim Addonizio

Stay

It was restful, learning nothing necessary.

Gwendolyn Brooks

All day, I kept still just to think of it—

Your body above mine, what was
A lack of air between us—hot but restful

As I sat center on my bed of learning,

Mouth open, touching nothing,
My memory the only noise necessary.

Jericho Brown

a note on Vaseline

praise the wet music of frantic palms
plastic toilet cushion & shiny fingers

your eyes shut, rebuilding how Sherrie bent
over in math or how Latrell walked around

after gym class, his underwear too small
& brand-new manhood undeniable. praise

the endless tub of grease. it's been the same
empty but not empty your whole life.

this very same Vaseline you're using to polish
your favorite body part was used by your mama

to slick her face when Ms. Lorelle from over
on Hague St. called her a frog-eyed bitch

back in '76, same grease your auntie used to make
a disco ball of her small, brown mouth when she

decided it was time to put it on Craig at the skating rink.
this same family-sized tub has been young

with all your elders, soothed Grandpa's gout
Grandma's fryer burns & Saturday morning bruises.

praise petroleum. how oily & blessed
the space between your fingers

supple blade between thumb & index
sends you to the guts of stars

remember this grip when men use the stuff
to prepare you for their want, when they leave you

throbbing, tender, & whistling from the wrong mouth
your bones replaced by yokes. you will never have enough

spit, & this is how men will want you always: slug slime
slick of a man, twitching tunnel of left hands.

Danez Smith

what lesbian porn has done for me

After Donika Kelly & Vievee Francis

the women, small and neat,
top each other like
slices of wonder bread.

when she and i
finally meet,
we knead each other—

fresh dough—
adjusting our
rehearsed finger-tread.

outside, magnolias
cup their sepals
like good hands.

inside, we spade
like leaves: tenderly,
and only at each other's bidding.

when my sister
stopped speaking to me,
what she wanted

was for my body
to stop speaking.

now look: i fold what suits
me in the loaf of my thighs.

i am learning
how to call my

self, how to put my mouth
on whatever i like.

Destiny O. Birdsong

Basket of Figs

Bring me your pain, love. Spread
it out like fine rugs, silk sashes,
warm eggs, cinnamon
and cloves in burlap sacks. Show me

the detail, the intricate embroidery
on the collar, tiny shell buttons,
the hem stitched the way you were taught,
pricking just a thread, almost invisible.

Unclasp it like jewels, the gold
still hot from your body. Empty
your basket of figs. Spill your wine.

That hard nugget of pain, I would suck it,
cradling it on my tongue like the slick
seed of pomegranate. I would lift it

tenderly, as a great animal might
carry a small one in the private
cave of the mouth.

Ellen Bass

**softness brings you
to worlds within the immediate**

*there is no distance in childhood... whatever is absent is
impossible, irretrievable, unreachable?'*

— Rebecca Solnit

We are barefoot as new beginnings
 washing each other warm, under an outpour
she rubs the soap bar under my fingernails

suds rolling down her ribs.

When she finishes I stare at my palms, every
 wrinkle & crease, the weight of everything
held written in the language of skin

this autobiography of wanting.

(In the village a newborn sees her hands
 for the first time: marvellous & grotesque
a pair of oceans on the ends of her arms.)

I step out amid steam, embalmed in heat,
 piggy-back my Layla to her bed our mouths
smell like caramel. I hold the moment.

Another crease in my palm.

Press my skin to your ear now to hear a song
being sung somewhere very far away:
someone we stopped searching for
 is calling out
 for shore

lisa luxx

The Spastic's Guide to Sex

After Jillian Weise

Step One: Preparation

Before he arrives shove the wheelchair
and night callipers in the cupboard.

Roll your jeans up, take off
your splints, strap by strap,
and lay them under the bed.

Step Two: Foreplay

When he runs his hands over your body
and steps back, shocked how your muscles
are right there on the surface, taut as guitar strings,
don't take it personally. It must be the first time
he's felt a leg like yours.

Step Three: Sex

No sudden movements. Your calf will spasm;
followed by your back. When the spasm starts
put him at ease, laugh about it, assure him
it's fine, happens all the time. Repeat this
until he's calm, for as long as it takes.

Karl Knights

'First, I want to make you come in my hand'

First, I want to make you come in my hand
while I watch you and kiss you, and if you cry,
I'll drink your tears while, with my whole hand, I
hold your drenched loveliness contracting. And
after a breath, I want to make you full
again, and wet. I want to make you come
in my mouth like a storm. No tears now. The sum
of your parts is my whole most beautiful
chart of the constellations - your left breast
in my mouth again. You know you'll have to be
your age. As I lie beside you, cover me
like a gold cloud, hands everywhere, at last
inside me where I trust you, then your tongue
where I need you. I want you to make me come.

Marilyn Hacker