

*Disarm: Poems & Songs ~ Excerpt: 19 Poems*

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(i) 1. **The Accusation Alone**

The man molested his daughters  
The accusation went  
I couldn't believe what I was hearing  
Because I'd been to his house  
I'd played with his three girls  
When my sister had been their nanny  
And everything had seemed fine

His bi-polar ex-wife had sent  
The girls to a counselor  
Just the right counselor  
I didn't want to be in doubt  
If something had been done  
But I didn't want to be blind  
To the fact the man could be innocent

Either way there was nothing I could do  
Now he sits rotting in prison in isolation  
Because other inmates will beat him up  
His consecutive sentences will take  
Most of his life but he could have time taken off  
If he took their counseling but that would involve  
First admitting guilt and he refuses to do that

This looks to me like the man is innocent  
Why else would someone take on  
Over 10 years more of rotting in prison  
But no one cares and no one believes  
That the man could actually be innocent  
Because after all he is a grown man  
So clearly he must be guilty of something

(ii) 2. **Adolf Hitler Superstar**

Hitler is the rock star of evil dictators  
Stalin killed more than Hitler  
But Hitler has the Hollywood glamour

And he wasn't evil, he was insane  
But nothing supernatural made his power  
He was a messenger in World War I  
Facing mustard gas and rifles  
Watching his people starve to death  
After the reparations and inflation  
While being taught by those who mastered  
Concentration camp slave labor  
In German Southwest Africa—Namibia  
Hitler was a human, though Christian  
Not possessed of any supernatural creature  
Humanity made him what he was

While no one wonders what dictators  
We're creating for tomorrow by our  
War-driven actions today

(iii) 3. **A Father's Fears and Hopes**

The sun was high, the monotonous aqueduct filthy  
We drug her decaying body up while flesh dragged off  
Her light brown hair was kissed golden by the sun  
Or soft hair color, one can never tell  
Such is the nature of Los Angeles  
I slapped my hand over my nose and mouth  
As we checked for underwear, signs of sexual assault  
And where were you? It could have been you  
My daughter once so eager to be safe in my arms  
Now so eager to run from too much protection  
Smiling, kicking a black and white ball  
Circulating school petitions, standing up for other girls  
The opposite of the shaming Catholic faith I grew up with  
And never wanted you to inherit; dragging women down  
With notions of being possessions rather than people  
I long to hold you but want you to run  
From what I must face here on the ground  
Chasing after creatures that lurk and slither in the dark  
So girls like you are safe to soar higher  
A transcendent determination, open the cage of my  
Parental worries hoping you're safer ascending  
To where I cannot go, staying down here  
To keep beasts from striking you  
From your glorious angelic flight

(iv) 28. **Female Slavery**

My dad told me of an article he'd read in the past few years about  
A man in England who'd sold his two 14-year-old daughters  
To a tribe in Africa and the authorities gave him  
A little slap on the wrist for it  
Meanwhile the girls were held down by the tribe's women  
And their legs forced apart, spread so the guys chosen  
To be their husbands could rape them without resistance and impregnate them  
After a couple of years some people finally got them out and  
When asked if they wanted to keep their babies they said no because  
They weren't their babies  
At first I was shocked but when I thought about it  
This wasn't really so rare  
Our society never does tell girls  
*YOU HAVE A CHOICE!*  
In our society girls practically don't have a choice with  
No sex ed, no option of abortion in many families, no emphasis on  
Or encouragement of individuation and pursuance of  
Whatever really interests you and makes you feel happy and  
Whole within your own soul. NO.  
Our society says just get married and have babies,  
And never challenge a thing in this society's female slavery.

(v) 43. **Modern Portrait in Pink and Blue**

Flipping through magazines in the bookstore

After college, not wanting to go home

The women's magazines are:

Make-up, jewelry, beauty products, diets, ab exercises

(Your body is shit and you look like garbage)

Home décor, weddings, babies, parenting

(You're an irrelevant slave for others' use)

The men's magazines are:

Hunting, fishing, shooting, automobiles

(Get more skills at the stuff you love and are good at)

Naked women and thought-provoking political articles,

Including profiles of "kick-ass" woman like Planned Parenthood president Cecile Richards

(Be strong, independent, think for yourself, support Freedom of Speech,

Have women empowered to make all their own choices)

At work stocking shelves

The girls' toys are:

Make-up, hair, babies, kitchen sets, and vacuum cleaners

(You're ugly and you're everyone's servant;

Don't get an education or dream)

The boys' toys are:

Cars, trucks, guns, action figures

(Go do cool things and lead an exciting, adventurous life)"

(iv) 44. **The Minds of the Masses**

On a break at Spanish class

A couple talks of their nine year old daughter

Her recent school project

No hobbies

No travels

No plans for the girl's college even

I speak of college

My trip to Mexico

I dream of the future

Then I make it real

I use my higher mind

Not a mindless breeding animal

(vii) 51. **Not a Hearing but a Listening Problem**

I said hello to a woman at church, she said she'd been taking college courses on all manner of health information. She said the man who said vaccinations cause autism was proved to be a liar but that didn't get the press coverage his lie did. She said many still believed the lie and were putting their kids at great risk by not vaccinating them and I nodded my sad agreement. She said she'd also found out that double-blind tests had proved that vitamin C did nothing—it was all the placebo effect.

I said I'd used vit C to lessen and cure colds, and lessen flu's by—no, she said, that's just the placebo effect. I said I'd done things like take 500 milligram tablets every 30 to 60 minutes for a day, every hour the next day, and then—no, she said, placebo effect. I said, I had echinacea hyped to me as a cold remedy as much as vit C but hadn't noticed any results with it so clearly—no, she said, placebo effect. I said, the body is made of vitamins and minerals and many studies have shown their efficacy; the tests must have used too little a dose and—no, she said, placebo effect

Running around like chickens with their heads cut off are most people, not thinking for themselves; brainwashed by religion, political party, inaccurate TV, conformity, school, beauty magazines, the military—she thought a college course said it so it must be true, just like the man who told me his anthropology courses told him the climate getting warmer was a natural occurrence as we were coming out of an ice age and disregarded decades of science that prove we're causing global warming by creating a huge carbon layer in the atmosphere that keeps the sun's rays from bouncing back to space.

I said, I think it's a combination of both things and that both liberals and conservatives have it both right and wrong—no, he said, no global warming. I said, that's interesting but from space they can see the hole in the atmosphere over Australia where greenhouse gases weaken the—no, he said, no global warming.

I met a young woman shortly before we Americans were all to vote about oil companies wanting to drill in Alaska. I said, I'm against any more drilling or clear-cutting forests to get there and she said, I'm tired of people complaining about the environment when we need the oil. I said, well, we will eventually run out of dirty oil so we need work on alternatives to oil such as steam and steam-powered cars, which were only abandoned because the gas companies and lobbyists were more powerful. And she said, well, you have a point about the fact we'll run out of oil eventually—one in a hundred points seems to penetrate the dense skulls of one in a hundred people, so maybe one in a thousand points actually gets through the immense stupidity of humanity.

(viii) 52. **Owning your Degradation isn't Freedom**

In a book of poems I was reading recently a woman poet  
    Compared the color of a car to the color of her menses  
And this is not the first time I've seen a poet  
    Write about her menses as if we really need poetic images  
Of poets having their menstrual periods  
    What next, I wonder, a poet compares  
A field of yellow flowers to the color of her urine?  
    Or writes about the browns in her defecations?  
Surely most any woman would find that offensive  
    Yet blood oozing from their genitals is poetic fair game  
Why is it that these women feel compelled  
    To throw their female bodily functions in our faces  
Seemingly obsessed with their body's monthly hormonal cycles  
    When male poets never seem compelled  
To obsess about their daily hormonal cycles?

    In fact everyone seems obsessed with the menses—  
If you go to a doctor the paperwork,  
    Receptionist, nurse, and doctor will ask you  
"WHAT WAS THE FIRST DAY  
    OF YOUR LAST MENSTRUAL PERIOD?!"  
Even if you tell each of these women or men  
    You haven't had sex in months so  
You couldn't possibly be pregnant and even  
    If you're not there for a female check-up  
They still insist that they need to know  
    And when you tell them they write it down  
So they can have your menses on record FOREVER  
    Even acupuncturists want to know when your last menstrual period was  
So they can write it down in their permanent records  
    Even if you tell them you're not there for menstrual concerns  
And everyone just gets mad at you if you tell them  
    You're not comfortable discussing your menses with them and don't want to  
Write it down on a form or tell it to them because it's private  
    They don't ask when last you slept, ate, drank fluids,  
Peed, or defecated, and they don't ask men  
    "WHAT WAS THE EXACT HOUR AND MINUTE  
OF YOUR LAST ERECTION AND EJACULATION?!"  
    And keep obsessive track of men's daily hormonal cycles

But by god they demand to know when  
That last period was as if  
They want to take a SWAT team to bust down  
The door to your uterus and interrogate it  
To see what it's been hiding!

They act like who you are as a person  
Can all be reduced to uterine bodily functions  
Even women will act like  
If you have a righteous point to make  
You must be expressing female hormones, estrogen, and PMS  
Even though women have two main hormones:  
Estrogen and progesterone, and then a little testosterone,  
And not all women get PMS or mood swings  
Besides that angry men aren't called "hormonal" and  
Dismissed as non-people without real righteous opinions  
For their main hormone testosterone  
In addition to their little amount of estrogen  
But as a woman you are reduced to nothing more than  
Female hormones and bodily functions  
This notion was stamped on us first by sexist men  
Then Feminists came along to own it, and now oddly  
Just tattoo it on all women willingly  
And pretend this means we've actually made progress  
Like blacks calling themselves and each other "nigger"  
And pretending that means it suddenly doesn't mean "subhuman" anymore

(ix) 53. **Parole Hearing for the Serial Rapist**

They say he's not a bad man  
He is hardworking  
He came from an average background  
The low side of middle class  
He wants to go back to the outside  
Maybe finish college one day  
A worthy aspiration, yes  
But he rapes girls and women

He's done twenty-one years  
Of a thirty to seventy-year sentence  
He's tried to stay out of fights  
He's been known to read some books  
He's been known to help out with chores  
He hasn't been rowdy and he  
Comes from a white family, yes  
But he rapes girls and women

He didn't kill anyone  
He didn't spread any disease  
Until that one woman who had gonorrhea  
From all the men *she'd* been sleeping with  
We think we can safely  
Let him back out into the community  
Because we don't care  
That he rapes girls and women

**(x) 54. The Politically Correct Café**

Please refrain from being...

Sexist, racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, heterophobic, ethnicityist, nationalityist, heightist, weightiest, sizist, clothes stylesist, hair stylist, musculoskeletal structurist, piercist, tattooist, car drivenist, bicyclist, or otherwise.

Please enjoy your conversations.

**(xi) 56. The Pyramid Scheme**

Come in, change yourself, take our materials  
Where we tell you how to have a soul  
Go forth and try to turn at least two  
And they in turn will hopefully turn two  
And make us all so very rich as we  
Gold-plate the church for our vanity  
Brainwash them all to turn two, turn two, turn two  
Thinking we have all the answers when  
With real spirituality we haven't a clue

(xii) 57. **Quixoticisms**

About her people spread rumors  
Which proliferate like tumors  
She glosses herself till she shines like new  
But she'll be a basement bargain for you  
Bleach-fried blonde, low-cut dress  
And a Navy tattoo that's highly suspect

She says "Men are just like candy  
They're real cheap and easy"  
I say "So what does that make thee?"

At everyone else she scoffs  
And through her puffs she coughs  
"What the hell have *you* been smoking honey?  
Love ain't no Cinderella story"  
But everyone craves a meaningful touch  
And her actions have nothing to do with love

She says "If you search for love, if you really try  
The disappointment of never having it will make you want to die"  
I say "What about having love for yourself over time?"

In a society of disconnectedness  
The only time we can be held is after we undress  
These diseases have their well-known causes  
Overcoming not feeling is a thing to be applauded  
Why to each other do we never say "Are you okay?" anymore?  
Why can't we get a hug or a kiss without having to whore?

She says "When I was your age I was a beauty queen  
And I imagined marrying the man of my dreams"  
I say "Why didn't you decide to be your own dream?"

(xiii) 62. **Sandboxes**

Like little sandboxes the ladies move the contents around thinking

It makes them like a god, a god of their tiny 50 foot by 50 foot sandbox—

A house with a yard and children and pets they try

To control, to mold into their likeness standing on the porch above it all

High and Mighty, a lord over... their very own little sandbox

Bullying every occupant to mold itself into what they wish the sand

To shape itself into... cookie cutters and buckets turning

Wet sand into castles that time, elements, outside and inside forces

Will erode into nothing but dust in the wind...

(xiv) 66. **Springtime in the American South**

My weathered hands were covered  
With scratches and thorn pricks  
Her soft hands cupped peaches and  
She bit into one with her delicate pink mouth  
She looked like such a sweet young lady yet  
She had no trouble ordering me around

She gathered birdseed and put it in feeders  
That were decorated with fake pink flowers  
She was always generous to animals  
And so gentle with them  
She loved to watch robins and blue jays  
Flutter their wings

She once commented on how she'd loved birds  
Since she was a little girl  
When she spoke I didn't dare make eye contact since  
She was a white woman and I was a black man  
I'd once heard she had eyes that sparkled like  
Emeralds cut at all angles and the light from them

Could refract and pierce right through you  
I was once told she was as beautiful as a gem  
But I wouldn't know, I knew better than to ever look up  
From the ground of the earth whose fields I'd ploughed since  
I was a child, my soft flesh buckling under the pressure, breaking and bleeding.  
I used to soak my hands nightly but I learned to callous and now I feel nothing.

(xv) 67. **Starving at the Banquet**

Welcome to Grandma's  
Have a cookie

She's a chain-smoking alcoholic who  
Hasn't exercised since before you were born  
She yells everything at her adult kids  
And barks at the dogs to stop barking  
Have a cookie

She talks about herself as if she's fascinating  
And hears nothing you say in return  
All of her perceptions are assumptions  
She will never take the time to get to know you  
Have a cookie

All her husbands have died but they've left  
Her with kids, a house, and money  
But she can't spend it on making your life better  
When there are so many taverns in town  
Have a cookie

Have one then another followed by another  
Have ribs, have ice cream, have it all  
Have your arteries clogged as you choke down  
The immense feeling of rejection  
Have another damn cookie

Cushion yourself with soft, chewy deliciousness  
Try to soften the lack of love in this family  
That hits you every time you see them  
Lose your appetite for emotional drama  
Don't have another cookie

Get up and leave Grandma's  
Don't be tempted by the cookies

(xvi) 68. **Stoning a Woman**

When those men in the Christian bible surrounded  
The prostitute with stones in their hands ready to kill her  
I can't believe it was their idea.  
I'll bet their wives told them to stone her and  
When they said no the wives accused them of  
Wanting to be with her so they reluctantly  
Made their way out to her with stones and  
When Jesus said "He among us who is without sin,  
Let him cast the first stone" they breathed a sigh of relief,  
Dropped the stones, went home to their wives and said,  
"We couldn't murder the prostitute like you wanted honey,  
That Jesus got in the way so there was nothing we could do."

(xvii) 86. **What if your Mother...**

Had had an abortion? they say but my mother  
Did have an abortion the second time  
She was pregnant then she had  
Three more children and I was her fourth child  
At the fourth she stopped and decided she wanted no more  
Had she not had that abortion I wouldn't be here  
I owe my life to abortion rights—  
What if my mother hadn't had an abortion?

(xviii) 88. **Worth the Ride**

The bodies of trees  
Ripped from their roots  
They took the plunge  
In the winter floods  
And by the spring  
I was taking pictures  
Of so many trees  
Washed dead upon the shore  
Others had said  
The floodwaters of winter  
Had dragged them from their homes  
But I knew they had chosen it—  
To live life fully  
For those few fleeting moments  
Although it would mean certain death  
On the other side  
Of the rapturous wild ride  
And I knew I wanted this life

I never showed up for schoolwork or tests  
Thinking that was the stuff of living  
I never did a chore thinking it really mattered  
Only that it mattered for the moment  
I never had a job I really cared about  
Jobs are for paying for nothing being free  
Society means to suck out another  
72 to 80 beats per minute of your life every waking minute  
But only you can choose what you care about  
I won't show up to my funeral in pristine condition—a virgin child  
I will show up with scars, wrinkles, gray hairs, and  
An adrenaline-fling-and-art-addicted heart  
Shot to pieces from inside and out  
After a lifetime of it beating in my ears like a symphony  
Of birdsong and beauty and those  
Perfect moments of indescribable pain  
When you realize nothing can make you  
So aware that you're alive, so you smile

(xix) 92. **It was that way when I got here**

I believe in working, not worrying  
I believe life is affairs with everything  
You have to learn from suffering  
To learn how to learn without suffering  
I wanted to have, and help when not a burden  
You got your depression—tried, true, and lived in  
And you fitted us all for suits like yours  
We'd bleed our hearts for others with you wanting more  
Talking, debating, contemplating wars a-plenty  
Demanding how will my generation and I so flaky  
Ever fix this mess, but

Don't ask me to save the world  
It's not my responsibility to sort  
It was that way when I got here

I believe in romance, not rules confining  
I believe real love is freeing  
You have to open your whole being  
To learn how to let affection fill you completely  
I wanted the future, and to let the past not be within  
Your reasons for every action and reaction  
And you fit me well I thought but I wanted more  
Than to bleed my heart for your always wanting more  
Talking, complaining, contemplating wars within so many  
Demanding how will I take these old wounds so heavy  
And ever fix you, but

Don't ask me to save your heart  
It's not my responsibility to sort  
It was that way when I got here

We cuddle then rebel and break free one day  
Just to learn about life the hard way  
Adulthood is usually about doing the things no one wants to  
Like admitting when the mistakes have come from you  
And knowing that if there's a problem you'll fix it without ruse  
So I'll mend what I've hurt and you mend what you've  
And if we all did then the chance for peace is what we'd prove

But you can't hold us responsible for what others have been up to  
We should fess up when guilty is what we're  
But the world was this way when we got here

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