



And you.

There's something about the corner of a wrap-around porch that makes you feel like you're sitting at the edge of the world.

And the way the willows shake their leafy hips in the breeze that makes you feel like dancing.

And the smell of a wood fire that warms you, even though its flame is out of sight.

And how a hand resting upon your lap rests upon your heart.

Punctuated Love.

When you're beside me I want to wrap you up in parenthesis, and bracket your heart inside. & when I see you I pause like a comma and my mind trails off with ellipses...

When I'm alone, thinking of you makes me scream into the nothingness with exclamation points; no question mark hangs to the right of my heart. I'm as flustered as a run-on sentence: my hands they shake, my head it spins. & before you say anything, because to top it off, hearing your voice jolts me like a comma splice — & he took her hand in his, squeezing it three times — period, he said. & all she could think is that his feelings were punctuated better than any card or conversation heart she could have ever received.

Quick Fix.

She woke up with a giddy gait. It was the kind of giddy that felt so good she felt guilty holding on to it. So she passed it on: In smiles, in greetings, in words & in song. & the love continued to spread to him, to her & on. The songs, however, began single-man raves in offices and apartments near & far. & that alone she decided was more than enough reason to not have bottled her giddy good up in a jar.

Connect the Dots.

We once were just dots on a map, single and disconnected. Until that one day, when our roads intersected. & from that point on, our dots were connected...linking one to another...in body...in mind...and in love throughout the ends of time.

Whisked Away.

Stepping outdoors, exposed, onto the emptied slab of asphalt, the blistery breeze welcomed her back to life with a swift burst, and a shove of assurance that it was right to move forward. Every fragile piece of her became nature's raw ingredients, to mix & swirl, to create what it wished. Her tamed tousles were easy prey, pulled apart, played with, & set back in a merry mess atop her head. & she thought if only it were strong enough to pick her whole self up & whisk her away for playtime in a far distant land for a short while before returning her gently to the ground, back to reality, but with an overall head-in-the-clouds, gleeful sheen.

Cosmic Collision.

He turned, arms outstretched, presenting his cupped hands before her. What do you have inside there? she asked. A whole lot of everything, he said. It's my world; I want to share it with you. & with eyes sparkling like the brightest stars, she grabbed half of his "world" & enclosed it in half of hers. & it was the best cosmic collision they'd ever experienced.

Live It Up.

She had been told many times to "live it up." But it wasn't until the day she dropped the moments that were had behind her, let the moments waiting to be had run free ahead & allowed the moment she was in to saturate the liquid life that ran inside her that she finally gave those words the meaning they deserved. & from that day on, her heart proclaimed its thanks for relieving the weight of the past and the pressure of the future; it was happiest beating for right then...right now.

A Brighter View.

Her orange heptagon-shaped sunglasses always provided a bit o'sunshine, even while she was trying to block it out. It gave her eyes a sparkle, as they graced each eye with their own gleaming ring o'sun. Even on overcast days, the days one's face could go sans masking, she carried on her daily routine with sunshine upon her face. & the sun of her eyes traveled to her lips & spread its rays there, too. & even on the dreariest of dank days, she & those who passed her enjoyed a brighter view.

Keep What You Need, Shake What You Don't.

She stepped into her cranky pants this morning; it had been a while since she last wore them. & as she stood in front of the mirror she could see why: it wasn't a flattering look for her. But they were the only pants she could find & since she wasn't comfortable with the idea of facing the world naked, she shook off the cranky & kept the pants & figured that was a good enough compromise.

How Much I Love You.

He asked me where the sunshine was & where it had been hiding. I told him I didn't know, because *he* was my sunshine, my only sunshine and he was always there when skies were gray.

Her Story.

She read the works of others to find the words to write. & when she finally wrote, she wrote until night fell and morning rose. Until nothing was left. Leading her to another author. A list of new words. Another birthed story—some premature, others induced. Until one day she realized the words of her stories weren't sticking. They didn't feel at home, as they were words she had cut and pieced together. Words detached from their origins. Each story: a waif. It was then she selected the belongings that were less likely to weigh her down. She moved. Saw. Did. and with each step she took and every corner she turned she gathered the words that made her life. She wrote them down. They were words that stuck, like a heavy meal to the ribs. She had built a home for which her words felt welcome. & those words lived together, telling a story all on their own.

Twinkle, Twinkle.

I had a dream you were a star, he said. I can't stop thinking about how bright you were: brighter than any star my eye could spy. No you didn't, really? she asked. Who was I? A singer? An actress? Tell me, tell me. No silly, not that kind of star, the kind in the sky, he said. Well, that's a little odd isn't it, you, dreaming of me, as a giant exploding ball of plasma? Lovely. Where's your imagination? he asked. Did it ever occur to you that maybe, just maybe, you, as a star, could represent a form of connectedness between the many miles that separate us? You know, kind of like the idea that we can both look at the same moon while standing in different places. Well yes, & I do just love that thought, she said. Well, if you were a star, I could see you every night. & if you were a falling star, you could fall down right beside me. & if we were both stars she said, we could shoot across the sky & meet each other, too. Hmm, now I see. & to think I've always been wishing on a star when in fact I should be wishing to be one. & before he hung up, he said, but you already are a star, my star, & you always have been. How else do you think I found you?

Beauty Mark.

It was one of those autumn days found in dreams but often never had: the aroma of brown sugar swirling with adrift leaves, torsos jacketless, legs shielded lightly by pantyhose; it's too warm for tights. She welcomed the day with an overly confident smile, hair bouncing, skirt floating, a twirl came on, and as her downward gaze began to travel up, a gasp. The opaque fabric cling to her thigh revealed a speck. With a flick of her middle finger she aimed, determined to defeat. That's when she realized the "speck" was not a speck at all, not a fuzz, nor a smidge of dirt, rather a beauty mark—not a

freckle; freckles are for faces. And she thought how silly she was for wanting to flick away her beauty. Just as that thought began to dissipate with a shake of the head, something landed lightly upon her bare arm. Instead of giving a sudden jerk—as she most certainly would have done at any other given time—she warded off the urge and slowly cranked her head right, then down. There a ladybug sat. Beginning to crawl she knew to wish for something soon...but she already felt lucky knowing that not only could her beauty not be flicked off, it also could not grow wings and fly away.

It's Time.

For a moment, my senses capture the freshly scented air that passes, and I wish I could bottle it up for a cloudy day. It's fresh, soft, like just-showered, gently perfumed skin. For a moment, spring is found. Maybe it has drifted from a neighbor's home, someone else who's trying to urge spring on; they carry its scent in their textiles. And in these days where winter stubbornly hangs on, these little touches are more than delightful. The temperature continues to make its cooler stance known, while the sunshine battles on, showing its face more often around these parts. The houses slice the sidewalk into strips of shade and rays; we walk slower in the warmth, hoping to build up a reserve to last the block, and then some. With each step, the extra weight felt from layers becomes burdensome.

I am more than ready to welcome bare skin. Freckles. To bathe myself in a sunny glow from head to toe. To sit upon the porch, windows swung open, and let the breeze rejuvenate all that's gone stale. I'm ready to breath in air that's once again full of life.

The Heart.

I remember the day he turned to me and asked how it was possible that the feeling of love could so easily be summed up with a heart, the heart, with a muscular organ that pumps blood, which was more than just another element in the equation of life. To him, blood wasn't something he associated with feeling good, with feeling alive. No. Instead, it was that thing that was symbolic of pain, of being hurt. And he said that he guessed that part wasn't completely misleading. Sometimes, he said, he thought he felt love (the good kind) in his stomach, sometimes in his head and on rare occasions even in his toes. Then he told me that to him, love was a total-body experience; it shouldn't be confined to one organ. And he seemed so content with his conclusion that I didn't want to tell him it was because of "that thing" that pumps through that "one organ" that he could feel that kind of love in all those kinds of places.