

poetry reading 04/09/2024

refrain poetry night: fundraiser for gaza

hacks (huntington, wv)

kyrsten hodge

poems

in my memories, i remember that

that's between you and god

i'm feeling guilty for

goddamnit kyrsten, goddamn

since i was there

"ohio should be illegal"

we took a two week break

i just want to be

they're calling me slurs

i can't name

very close friends

in my memories, i remember that

i'm just how i always imagined i was
my body, confusing emptiness for nothingness
and my heart, confusing sympathy for empathy

but either way i'm going to feel something tonight
because i want to lay prone and powerless

and finally feel
and finally feel
and finally
feel —
finally.

that's between you and god
and me and my
teenage mutant ninja turtles
because what you did to me
i forced them to learn
smashing plastic bodies together
donatello wrestling raphael
leonardo pinning down
both bebop and rocksteady
and me confused
from figuring out why
their cowabunga sneers
suddenly felt so empty to me
and why their frozen faces betrayed
a pain that even
undressing april o'neil won't fix

i'm feeling guilty for
falling in love with
the queers
who deliver
my groceries.

but i will
enver admit it.

goddamnit kyrsten, goddamn
purrs my imaginary girlfriend
who i just broke up with again
after the greatest
hate sex
we've ever had
and i honestly
have no idea why
my imaginary girlfriend
is so forgiving
my cute little cat girl
her big breasts bouncing breastfully
she's kinda fucking intolerable
my beautiful, incredible, and exhausting
imaginary girlfriend

since i was there

an old fart was talking loudly

about caitlyn jenner

like i fucking cared.

"i probably wouldn't fuck that thing"

another time a mother

tugged her toddler away from me

while her tiny dog yapped loudly

man.

man, man.

man, man, man

man —

this poem

is called

“ohio should be illegal”

we took a two week break

the week the target

broke in half

and there was

a lot of weight

to the silence

in the air

between us

my insanity

not an excuse

but an explanation

for why you gave up on us

and why i gave up on you

and the hardest part

of growing is letting go

and the hardest part

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and the hardest part

of growing is letting go.

the person i used to love
stashed her condoms in
a 1992 mcwitch bucket
and was always herself
for halloween
every, single, year.

the person i used to love
spoke these sentences
with sudden sinkholes
that always surfaced with
these "scare quote" echoes
and god, she had a amazing laugh

the person i used to love
loved me not a long time ago
and maybe one day
i will love her too
maybe one day
i will love
this girl
i've named kyrsten

i just want to be
the person
you thought i was
being
when i was
the person
i thought i was
being
the person
i thought i was

as a child

you taught me
to shut down
and shut up
but i wasn't calm
i was numb.

and now
i can't stop
feeling bad
for feeling bad
and i want to love
and be loved
without feeling
that numbness
again

so fuck you.

they're calling me slurs
with their eyes again

what kind of faggot are you?

i'm misslady ma'am woman sir
i'm miss lady woman ma'am

we need more
silly little bois
and big goons
and trans girls
obsessed with
tossing the shark

we need more
gummy bear butches
and transsexual tops
and squishy enbys
with date mates
carrying mushroom purses

we need more
dapper little mascs
with millennial
finger mustaches
and genderflux zucchinis
in checkerboard suspenders

and we need more queers
because we always need more queers.

i don't want to save her
i want to make her worse
because i want to average
the ghosts of our past
against the ghosts of my future

but i kinda like this
feeling that i'm feeling
it feels like we're hiding
but underneath our skin

well, except that everyone can see you
everyone everywhere except for you
because you can only see him
and i'm just not, him.

i can't name

the things i feel

feelings so deep

and so terrifying

that i don't have words for them

because you can't hunt

what you can't name

and your can't hurt

what you can't name

and you can't haunt

what you can't name

and you can't have me

because nobody can have me

very close friends

when the dude who started
blenko glass in milton died
he requested that his ashes
be spread over the grave
of his very close friend
the socialist firebrand
eugene victor debs

this dude's name was
william john blenko
and he was
a total fucking comrade

blenko had met debs
in kokomo indiana
and they were both
very close friends

blenko wrote debs
dozens and dozens
of love letters
for over thirty years
and they were very close friends

and that's the story
that's all there is
because the
dozens and dozens of

love letters
were burned by
concerned family members
because william john blenko
and eugene victor debs
were just “very close friends”