

**poetry reading 06/09/2024**

uncloistered poetry online: pride edition

toledo, oh (virtual)

kyrsten hodge

**poems**

in my memories, i remember that

i was eight years old

that's between you and your god

i'm feeling guilty for

goddamnit kyrsten, goddamn

ohio should be illegal

a kiss in the kitchen

we took a two week break

and the hardest part

the person i used to love

i just want to be

as a child

missladyma'amwoman

and yes i celebrate

we need more

very close friends

my nsa agent broke up with me

a whisper among the fireworks

**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.

i was eight years old  
when i was forced  
to discover my gag reflex.  
this was before  
he made me wear the dress  
and filled his granny's bra  
with his dirty underwear.

this was before  
he chomped down so hard  
on the cartilage of my cock  
that it snapped and  
filled his frenzied mouth with  
quivering droplets of blood.

this was before...  
this was before..  
this was befo

and i still have this scar  
and i still have to tell this story  
before someone can  
truly love my body  
and understand why  
i disappear sometimes  
and why i

stop.

that's between you and your 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 kissing  
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

maan —

this poem  
is called  
**“ohio should be illegal”**

thank you.



**a kiss in the kitchen**

the yearning in your voice  
agreeing we can't  
but what we can have is  
different than  
what either of us will have  
with anyone else

and while we both recognize  
our limits together  
and expand our hearts  
for the renewing  
possibilities  
of new people

just know that ...

i will still love you.

**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 me  
and why i gave up on —

**and the hardest part**  
of loving is letting go  
and the hardest part  
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and the hardest part  
of loving is letting go  
and the hardest part  
of loving is letting go  
and the hardest part  
of loving 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

and yes i celebrate  
gay wrongs  
and the right  
to be forgotten  
and yes i celebrate  
your growth  
and your right  
to correct wrongs  
and become  
a better person  
and yeah i guess  
i can also tolerate  
your need to be  
fucking intolerable  
if you can tolerate  
my need  
to serve cunt  
and become  
fucking ungovernable.



**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.

## **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"

**my nsa agent broke up with me.**

after nine years of  
surveillance together.

i had brought up a new text  
document and typed

– how are you today?

my screen flashes three times  
which is how they respond

– "good"

i type into my search bar

– do you want to get lunch?

my browser window shakes  
side to side, which means

– "no"

i type into a new email

– why not?

my screen flashes  
sixteen times, which means

– "i don't know if  
this is working for me"

i bring up a new word document  
and type in comic  
sans font size 72  
– i love you.

my agent takes  
control of my cursor  
closes the new document  
and saves the file as  
– im\_sorry.docx

and then my computer shuts down