

**kyrsten nerys hodge**

**poetry reading 08/23/2024**

the dope as fuck show  
portsmouth, ohio

in my memories, i remember that  
that's between you and your god  
i was eight years old  
i just want to be  
goddamnit kyrsten, goddamn  
since i was there  
"ohio should be illegal"  
a kiss in the kitchen  
the person i used to love  
my nsa agent broke up with me  
we need more  
triggers  
the ice cream poem

**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 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 revealed

a pain that even tearing apart

april o'neil won't fix

**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 dead 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.

**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

**goddamn it 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 ...

even now, i still love you.

**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

**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

**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.

**triggers**

marlboro cigarette smoke, large dogs barking, anyone touching my lower back, the taste, texture and smell of vienna sausages, long term exposure to fluorescent light, being restrained (most times), especially being physical restrained by someone bigger and more powerful than me, children being hurt or murdered, children dying, children being sexual assaulted, abandonment, gruesome gore on the eyes, large escalators, driving cars, anyone being disappointed in me, waiting for long periods of time. the tug of a retainer on your teeth. the care bears. the little plastic tables that hold you pizza together.

being yelled at, the sound of someone playing with a switchblade or similar knife, being cut open, being stabbed (again), the sound of fingers tapping in quick succession, the clink when teeth accidentally touch.

neapolitan ice cream.

## the ice cream poem

i can't do a good job of pretending to be vanilla anymore. not after what was done to me. you are going to learn something horrible. the reason i can't eat neapolitan ice cream.

now close your eyes and imagine. close shut your eyes and stop fucking squirming chris. now close your eyes and hold your breath. a six grade field trip. colonial williamsburg. busch gardens. a hotel room in rural virginia.

teenage boys wrestling. his jock body easily pushing and pinning me down. his fist around my belt, yanking it loose, somehow still holding me down. the way my belt betrays me, it comes off so easily. it never comes off this easily for me. he tosses it like a snake found in the forrest.

my mouth inaudible, caught in a moment. unsure if it was going to happen again. i close my eyes. i imagine my hands running across cds in a store, i am anywhere but here. he spits in plam, and prepares me, and –

later. sitting in the shower. trying to sit down on the toilet, but i can't. it hurts. i had held my eyes closed until i was torn apart. My eyes crack open in pain, i see maroon stripes my sour asshole was red with blood, brown with shit and white with cum. i had held my eyes closed until i was torn apart. I felt my sour asshole was red with blood, brown with shit and white with cum.

chocolate, vanilla, and strawberry. neapolitan ice cream. i am a little kid's mother. so i have been to a dozen different little kid birthdays. and it's always the same shit. it's always neapolitan ice cream.

i never eat the ice cream. it always makes me feel sick inside. sometimes i would stare off and try not to shake. sometimes i would forget that i was a little boy's father. buckle up and be brave, daddy. but i always i look down on the paper plates and all i can see is blood, shit, cum. blood shit cum. blood shit cum mixing together. neapolitan ice cream.