

kyrsten hodge

poetry reading 09/07/2024

barbara kingsolver event

booktenders (huntington, wv)

poems

in my memories, i remember that
that's between you and your god
goddamn kyrsten, goddamn (kmart version)
since i was there (kmart version)
"ohio should be illegal"
i just want to be
a kiss in the kitchen
the person i used to love
my nsa agent broke up with me.
we need more
"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 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

goshdarnit kyrsten, goshdarn

purrs my imaginary girlfriend
who i just broke up with again
after the greatest
play date
we've ever had
and i honestly
have no idea why
my imaginary girlfriend
is so forgiving
my cute little cat girl
her big brain always thinking
she's kinda totally intolerable
my beautiful, incredible, and exhausting
imaginary girlfriend

since i was there

an old man was talking loudly
about caitlyn jenner
like i cared.

"i probably couldn't love 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”

thank you.

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

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.

“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”