

poetry reading 11/13/2024

poetry for palestine

the frame station (huntington, wv)

kyrsten hodge

in my memories, i remember that

that's between you and your god

since i was there

i just want to be

goddamnit kyrsten, goddamn

i'm feeling guilty for

as a child

we live in a society

"ohio should be illegal"

the person i used to love

my nsa agent broke up with me

"very close friends"

we need more

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

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 —

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

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.

i'm feeling guilty for

falling in love with

the queers

who deliver

my groceries.

but i will

enver admit it.

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.

we live in a society

not an economy
and i want everyone to get firsts
before anyone gets seconds
but for housing
and medicine
and pets
and poems

i'm really not that radical
i just want a line
where we say
"this is ours and nothing less"
because there's nothing
powerful about the struggle
nothing beautiful about bootstraps
and yes, i still believe
that a better world is possible
as long as we fight for it

this poem
is called
“ohio should be illegal”

thank 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

“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”

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.