

Collected Works of Missed Connections Poetry

YOU CAN'T KNOW WHO I AM

Edited by Sabine Hadley



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Editor: Sabine Hadley

Cover Design and Photography: Sarah LaPonte

Masks courtesy of Barbara Luderowski

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INTRODUCTION

The publication of “You Can’t Know Who I Am: Collected Works of Missed Connections Poetry” marks the start of year five for the Lovelorn Poets blog. It was in early 2010 that the collection of non-standard missed connections writing (poetry, haiku, flash fiction, fantasy...) began with a handful of Craigslist fora in college towns along the East Coast. After several months of investigations and observations, creating a blog appeared as the best solution to preserving and archiving this ever-growing body of “found” creative work which would otherwise be systematically “disappeared” due to the routine refreshes of the Craigslist servers every 7 to 45 days. While the total amount of time it takes to effectively create a habit is debatable, the missed connections bug bit swift and strong and shows no signs of abating – the Lovelorn Poets archive currently has close to 1,500 entries – and increases every week. Discovering these often anonymous, frequently pseudonymous, and rarely named writings amongst the steady stream of legitimate missed connections, NSA hook-ups, and locker-room erotica has never been boring. The ebb and flow of where to find stories and poems is ever-changing – a location ripe with material one day can dry-up overnight; a little used feed can suddenly experience manic levels of creative output. Why this happens and those responsible typically remain unknown. Short of a wildly unsuccessful brief stint early on to contact the writers, no attempt is ever made to establish a connection. Many writers may never know how the words they once submitted to a public, online forum would catch the attention of someone wanting to preserve them – simply because of something in the way they wrote...

A “best of” compilation has been on the project list for over a year – but, as we all know, transforming ideas into reality takes time, energy, and creative collaboration – valuable resources that don’t always appear simultaneously. Therefore, much bonhomie to Sarah LaPonte for her cover photography, overall enthusiasm for making life fun, and friendship; Amber Hinds of Au Coeur Design for keeping the Lovelorn Poets website looking clean, fresh, and visually appealing; Victor Van Carpels for technical know-how of the printing process; Amy Catanzano for her encouragement and interest in this “weird” fascination with missed connections; Frankie Leone, the Brooklyn street poet-hustler who craved publicity to the very end and is dearly missed; and Lee Taylor, a constant presence since the very beginning, gladly offering his orange summers and frozen marmalade pop songs. None of this would have happened without you.

Sabine Hadley
The Clever Bot(tle) Finder of the Lovelorn Poets

Laura Zurowski
The Human

YOU CAN'T KNOW WHO I AM

For him
For her
For me
But especially for you



BROOKLYN. NEW YORK

Linguistic Fusion

We've packed up the crock pot and stock pot
along with our nightly meals of
red swedish candy fish
flavored dreams
We're using only homeopathic medication
meditation and masturbation to soothe
our tight tired
muscles
Thank you for all your kind letters
and support over the
years
We've left a note attached to the refrigerator
affixed with a magnet, in case you
need to get in
touch
We're off to a place where every table
has a bottle of hot
sauce
If you can handle it, use it, a few
shakes will take you
Places

The Poetry of Laughter

I walked out at my stop on the f train this morning
and saw him playing his plastic keyboard
filling the station with a soundtrack
for the new day

as I climbed the stairs, I heard him say
I hope you fall
in love

and as I stepped into the sunlight
I realized I was laughing
and I was

light

The Playlist

I left my home and extinct profession
to walk the empty streets during
those orange
summers
we were alone together and covered
in nicotine patch quilts
singing
frozen marmalade pop songs
and adding color to the high
contrast grey
days
playing jazz and new world sounds
on countertops and garbage
cans we dance like
children
and somehow managed
to touch each others
sweet
spot

You Can't Know Who I Am

You can't know who i am, when your few steps on the moon winded you
in that foreign place, deep in cyberspace you wondered where i was
but i was always there
watching you from a distance because you're dangerous
not only to me, but to your own kind
just look at what you've
done
and yes, it's not all black and white
it's always been about the in
between shades
and subtle shimmers
placed just so
so the rest of them
know
that there's
hope

mindgallery twitter - beatboxbliss tumblr

**Love Doesn't Smell Like Lubricated Condoms
Opened By A Stranger**

or
more credit card debt
in soho
or a long run
from yourself
at the y
or well whiskey
on a black
black(ed out) night
or awkwardness
getting caught
staring on the train
or the bodega guy
knowing your favorite
ben and jerry's flavor
or forgetting
there's something else
working dawn til dusk
or desperation
to see someone else
in that reflection
love smells like
breathing deeply
alone
noiseless
ok
love smells like
spooning
with that reflection
eyes closed.



MANHATTAN. NEW YORK

Dug My Eye Patch But Not My Broken Crown

*i'm desperate to believe i'm the hustler
so end up being the last one to see
i'm the hustled*
*the booty call's an odd thing
arrogance blinds me
into thinking i'm taking a piece of them
with each toe-curling orgasm
so it's a harsh surprise
searching the top of my dresser
months later
to find money they've planted
and my dignity missing*
*i've chased the myth of normalcy
through mundane beginnings
to cringe-worthy ends
but the most liberating thing i've seen
is the only people i know who aren't fucked up
are ones i don't know well*
*i'm not complicated as i'd like to believe
neither are you
or people you love and hate
our experience all vines
from the same simple template
the only variation is in details
i, and you, will only become fascinating
after realizing how similar we are
to each other
and everyone we know.*
-one eye open-
by someone followed only by the blind
(frankie leone, just a man)

Let's Flip a Coin

Let's flip a coin... Heads, I'll give you a kiss... Tails, you promise not to fall in love with me.
I walk these city streets banging to the sound of my own drum.
Clumsy me I trip over my own feet. I guess that drum skipped a beat.
I place my faith in the hands of coincidence hoping that one day these cobble stones and dead ends will lead me straight to you.
That awkward stare and my sultry smile, in a flash our whole lives spin together as one.

A world wind before I even get to know your name.
I probably shouldn't be feeling this way about you already...
You can blame my lack of resistance to years of loneliness.
The Island of Manhattan isn't kind to those with a pretty face and an empty heart.
Let's feel alive again, please?

This Is What We're Capable Of (Our Love Was Art)

august came too soon
and I'm counting the days
until time will return
to the normal way of things
no more of this speed of light bullshit-
lately the sun burns so hot
and this city drinks in the heat
leaving me helpless in the humidity
that burns like a rough whiskey-
it is only in a place like this
that the sound of a hurricane
is generated by the excessive amount
of artificial air
trying to keep the seasons away-
last night i thought i heard
the sound of shattering glass
and this morning
the sun's reflection was in pieces
shining with the stupidity
of last night's drunks
walking around like they owned the place
but in a place like this
no one owns much of anything-
the summer has been flying by
as summers tend to fly by
even when there is nothing to talk about
but the absence of social encounters
and personal relations skills to master-
I've dreaded September
ever since i was a child
trained to hate the re-institution
of the same old institution
taking my mornings
when i just wanted my morning for myself-
i realise i've been

looking out the windows more
waiting for someone to walk by
on the street outside
so i can watch them smoke a cigarette
or lean casually against the wall-
these days
during these heat waves
and somewhat cooler weeks
that seem out of place
the line between freedom and chains
begins to blur
because a filled day is a filled day
and sometimes it feels
like that's the goal anyway-
if life is too short
maybe a cold, hard winter
is all i really need.

Pilgrim (Plus A Haiku)

oh lover, i came to your
skin a pilgrim: barefoot,
humbled. i sought in the
strands of your hair for
meaning, and i traced my
prayers in script down
your bared thighs. in the
lines that brace your lips
and deepen when you sigh,
in the valley behind your
bent knee, oh lover, i
came seeking.
your secrets
are as candles; the flames
shudder to my liturgies.
above us, still and silent,
are the evening stars.

promise you'll only
read me in a quiet voice
in quiet places.



WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS

Your Issues

I've had enough of your issues.
I am canceling my subscription.

The Month Before Christmas

'Twas the month before Christmas when I left my house, seeking a girlfriend, lover, best friend or spouse.

The woman I sought was all that and much more, how I wanted a girl that I could adore.

I ventured on dates with girls of all kinds, some old and some young, some really true finds, but by end of the day we had to admit – it was nice, it was pleasant, but no perfect fit.

After a while, the fault being mine, I wanted to stop wasting everyone's time.

As Christmas approached I went to the mall and lined up with the kids, even though I was tall.

When it was my turn I whispered to Claus, "Please find me the one who will make my heart pause."

I told old St. Nick that I had been good, and he promised for certain, I'd find love, yes I would.

He assured me that soon I would find what I seek, and I asked how could I do it?

Would it happen this week?

Go to the craigslist, whispered one of the elves, there are plenty of good girls, just sitting on shelves.

They are waiting for you to say you are ready, that you're tired of dating and want to go steady.

As the month before Christmas was nearing the end, I relayed this story to one of my friends.

He warned that craigslist is fraught with dangers and spam, and was hardly the place to find a good woman.

I tried hard to nestle all snug in my bed, but the arms I longed for kept filling my head.

Then out on the lawn there arose quite a clatter, and I went to the window to see what was the matter.

It was a sleigh, of that I was sure, but no Santa was there just the elf from the store.

He waved as I stood by the window that night, and said, "Go to the craigslist and find her you might."

So trust in the elf is what I must do, and now I'm on craigslist seeking someone like you.

I heard the elf exclaim as he drove out of sight,

"Maybe you'll find her, maybe tonight."



VERMONT

My Car Has Fruit Flies

My car has fruit flies.

My jeans are worn.

My shirts are faded.

My hair is long.

I never meant to hurt your feelings.

We should go shopping sometime.

I want to look good for your wedding.



BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

Melting

melting
undoredo
redunspun
wordsmeltintoemotion
meaningunseething
eyesplaytricks
orisitjustmemory
habitformedphilosophy
thisworldnotmeandforme
anditseverylittlethingisee
istandsoaloneandconnectivity
seemingimmortalitybrings
unrequitedrejectionalasmyprecision
equalizerlikestanzasperhapsforming
mynewshinybrandhalcyonhaloseenfromorbit
asmyfreeversefollyflyintocompleteandutteroblivion
everythingissodifferentwhilemaskingsimilarity
determinedriotorjustwhatoneoncecalledquietroit
smallacityescapesmewhilstcomplexitygeneratesme
justanotherlivingmachine
breathingeatingfuckingshitting
cattleherdconcertsblackspeckedpalegrainshearingthesame
understandingthemselveswhichisliketheneedlerippingthruthe
grovesinthepinningcirclesofsungheraldartistsang
whenisitmyturnyesthesameasmyoblivion



PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

Capote

Man-mother. Pride-father.

I don't know which I love more—when he opens door to let me out or let me in.

Is that what love is?

I was let in long after the moon appeared last night; I slept beside him.

In the morning I tried to cast purspell of never-leave; he left, of course.

He always does.

I left too but he left farther than me, far up the steep gravelpath and past the water-spill pipe.

I will run to him when he returns, calling for him from the bushes.

This is our love—I love watching him go so I can watch him return.

Be let in.

Cast purspell each morning and fail.

Wildness is the failure.

I always fail adventurously; I chase moonshadows and windghosts over the neighbor's blue tarp.

This is why I write you. To chase you in your window frame.

Capote 2

carnivore obligate, not carnivore literate.

let's cut to the heart of it: silver spoon?

part with it.

at witching hour i devoured heart of mammal, not once considering my animal enamel.

my feet barely touch the gravel.

i don't hear the judge's gavel.

between rock and hard place i can always choose to travel.

saw you in a polish hill window in the morning, your day woman was out late last night.

how do you spend the time?

you have a right to revolt.

topple the food dish tip the water scratch the drywalls bare and eat so much you puke on the floor.

i can't work the door;

i want to see you in a forest.

between ankles in a market square.

four dirtpaws in mud along river.



ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

It's Us Against The World

it's late at night and our rooms are soaked in moonperhaps you are:
 laying in your bed. flat on your back. you've got downbeat on. the lows help beat
 your heart and stir your thoughts. you are gazing out at the twinkling lights in the
 distance. the sprawling humanity. the mountains.
 and you are wondering:
 how can i still be alone? how can i still long so deeply?
 to read favorite pages aloud
 to hum and conduct that one part in Beethoven's 6th that nearly brings you to tears
 each and every time you hear it?
 the inside jokes and knowing glances
 the whispers of inappropriate things in your ear at inappropriate times
 the solace of being truly understood.
 celebrated.
 the smell of your neck soaked in rain
 the tattered books in our bags. the cheffing at home. the hugs from behind.
 sleeping in on Sunday and just plain not giving a shit what comes next because
 we've already arrived.
 we are together.
 the discourse. laughing at ridiculousness. being aroused by seriousness.
 chewing on our thoughts.
 the bliss. the hurt. the reconciliation of past and future.
 a work in progress.
 you are brainy. you are thin and give warm enveloping hugs. your heart is on your
 sleeve. you can see music and taste words.
 you are sarcastic and sincere, progressive yet domestic. you push me to think harder
 and make me lentil soup when i'm sick.
 i make you cds with contrived themes, underline passages in books I loan you, and
 make you feel appreciated.
 it's us against the world.
 i'm lonely. i am incredibly real. i am lovesick. i am brilliant and fragile and unafraid
 and human and inspired and powerful. i am a contradiction. i am gorgeous because
 I am distinct. just like you.
 are you somewhere? pining? yearning? refusing to give up? feeling a slight gravita-
 tional force towards a center that you can't seem to locate?
 are you mine? am i yours?
 tread lightly with me.
 i don't share these things every day

All Your Burned Bridges (A Haiku For You)

all your burned bridges
 will lead you back to that place
 opportunity



ATHENS, GEORGIA

Fingers for Your Braille

The foothills, the mountains, the vales,
Always covered in mist,
I stumble through the woods of your heart,
A blind man, with no dog, no cane, no trail.
I am no cartographer, I am no mountain man's son,
But here where Appalachia meets the Piedmont,
I am learning to steer by touch, and by the myriad,
Differing silences of that wood, that emanate like the sun.
But, oh, that I might love you well,
Instead of making such a mess of it all,
I'd need a heart that could traverse your skyline,
And had fingers, for your Braille.

On Writers

Writers
sit
and watch
and record
and fluff
the ordinary
in an attempt at extra.
If everyone were a writer,
the world would simply be
watching itself
watching
the most arrogant fucks who have ever lived.
They are fools,
putting a gown on shit
and calling it a
princess.



SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

Romance Novel

Today, I found
a romance novel laying on the floor
in the laundry room. On the illustrated
cover, a chiseled, shirtless man, sat
bareback on a tall white horse against
a backdrop of the rising sun; while
below him, a barely-clothed ravished
woman lay asleep in the long grass.
Maybe, they are doing laundry as well,
I thought.

-Bison Jack

The Hoping Dress

He walked in a minor key;
stopping only at the window
of a small cafe—where clouds
from an inclement sky appeared
to hang from the ceiling.
Sitting alone in a booth, a heavily
made-up woman in a hoping dress
briefly wondered if he was the man
she was waiting for, then looked away.
In her purse was a list of things
she wanted to say, but not to him.
In his pocket was a plan to save
the world—but not hers.

- Bison Jack



ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA

Into Your Palm, A Sea { }

into your palm, a sea {s h e l l}
tied up in a bow born of curiosity at your smile
after the gift I ran fast away, needing to warn the stars,
wondering then & still at the happenstance of strangers & music & saturday nights,
that particular fever.

...

'A woman who writes feels too much,
those trances and portents!
As if cycles and children and islands
weren't enough; as if mourners and gossips
and vegetables were never enough.
She thinks she can warn the stars.
A writer is essentially a spy.
Dear love, I am that girl.'



FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA

Items of Little Interest

A lady walking by talking to herself.
A car alarm going off across the street.
It's been going a good 15 minutes and that is jus... It stopped.
Jim Beam and off-brand Sprite.
...It's going again.
Arcade Fire's newest CD.
The wind.
Men in flip-flops.
The.. stopped again.. hot sun.
Men in flip-flops?
The sixteen thousand things I want to accomplish before I see you.
Things that I am yet unaware of.
Going again.
I believe in you.



BOULDER, COLORADO

Polar Bears

I think about the polar bears
And it makes me sad.
My wishes are potato chips
I can't have just one.
The universe expands
And my mind contracts
The rocks on the ground are stars.
I found one for you
while walking home today.
I put it in a small brown box
In case our paths cross



TUCSON, ARIZONA

This Paper (My Spiral Notebook)

White with blue lines
Its margins encasing my fears and desires
Like a fireproof box
It hears my voice
It allows me to speak
Without interruption
It holds no grudges
It passes no judgement
This paper
It has holes
As does the depths of my soul
Though it does not abandon me
Like so many do
It hears my voice
It allows me to dream
Without giving up
Though at times I won't give in
It feels my hurt
It feels my pain
It knows how long
I've tried to sustain
I wish I could tell you
Just how I feel
Like I do this paper
But I know it's done
My darkest fear
This paper
It hears my voice
It tells me to give up
I have no choice
But this paper is wrong
I'll find my way out
It won't be easy
This paper should listen
It knows my heart is queasy
It tells me to get out, move on
Get up!
But it's hard when you have no one
No place to go
No safe haven
Except this paper



ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

I Hope I'm Not Just Fireworks In Your Sky

...I don't want to fade that fast.
Sometimes I wish you knew that you were the first.
Maybe not my first kiss, the first crush, or even the first love;
But you did something more than anyone else.
I know I told you that you were the muse behind almost everything I had written,
But when life left me on the verge of ending it,
You inspired me to live.
Maybe that doesn't mean as much to me as it used to,
But you're the only one who makes my heart skip a beat anymore.
Come to think of it; you've always been the only one.



LAS VEGAS. NEVADA

Solstice Ever

cold magic twists
cabin fever
crisp noses pinched
ice air
heavy smoke
mead
prayers
fears
celebrations
the long night by inches becomes
the melt
until spring

Semaphore

manifest destiny
pushme-pullyou egos
smoke signals
fire extinguisher
firestarter
fire horse of a different color
waterhorse arms akimbo
dissimilar proclivities in tandem
evolutionary buttons
navel oranges
shiny nickels
worn pennies
priceless pocket change



SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

Sunday in the Park

and so we spent sunday on the great green
broadcloth of our favorite park,
the splendid silent sun above;
we bent our backs in tandem, like two sheets
in the same breeze, and talked of leaves
of grass, and why you like whitman
~sx

Land of Bukowski

i was looking for something in particular that night,
as i flipped through those pages sitting too long and too late at the bar.
i didn't find it;
but as is usually the case with Bukowski,
i found something else.



PORTLAND. OREGON

The Moon Is Full Again

This one is a work in progress
When it's finished
I'll call it "surrender"
And deliver it to you
In your apartment
On the hill.
You'll serve me wine
And laugh your nervous laugh
I'll look at your legs
And try to talk seriously
You should let me move in here
I'll say
Take care of me, feed me
The future royalties of everything I write here
Will be yours.
You'll laugh
And cover your mouth
Then the painter will show up
With his books
And ideas
And you'll keep laughing
Telling me to come back later
And to leave the wine glass there.
I'll go back home
To my own wine
To my words
The thoughts of finally bedding you
Buzzing about the room
Like the mosquitoes I cant kill.

When a Woman Asks Me Out

I don't think it is inappropriate.
I don't think it makes her look desperate.
I think it indicates that she has very good taste.



BEYOND THE USA

TORONTO, ONTARIO

Silence on the Streets

Silence on the streets
 Parkdale streets
 And once again
 I brought my own chopsticks
 "No maid I've seen
 Like the sweet Colleen"
 Pipers playing
 Johnny Cash still dressed in black
 A voice from heaven
 Loreena McKennitt
 I'll stumble upon lost thoughts
 Cherish the tramp within
 It's the seclusion of time
 Her scent impaled
 In my memory
 I've gambled on the ponys
 I've gambled on the pints
 I've gambled on the love
 Inspiration dazzled
 The mystic wind blew
 Time to plant the garden
 Let the flowers flourish
 Let the flowers grow limp
 A decadence devoured
 The garden trampled
 Saturated and stained
 The river overflows
 Ah the silence erupts
 Harp music
 Gentle sweet
 This is what Love sounds like
 My my
 I found heaven
 In parkdale.....
 If I see her smile this week
 And if by chance it may be my...
 My last week of life
 Thunder and lightning
 I'll
 Be smiling back
 At her

MONTRÉAL. QUEBEC

Chew These Chaps ((A Perpendicular Place))

geometry gets us through
our daily lives, our angular ways
we skew and swindle
we measure and mitigate
we follow our own lines
but in precisely navigating
one makes compromises
to cut a novel path
through a nebulous crowd
you will step over a man
asking for change
you will meet eyes with a woman
and not look back
you will hear the news
riddled with drivel
you will collapse under currency
and not know why
you will orchestrate your own image
and hope it's a window
not a mirror
perpendicular
parallel
parabolic
our trajectories are all the same
these angles we use
lead us inward
in a store window
in a black screen
in an online profile
in a coarse rumor
in her teary eyes
acutely obtuse
these self-wrought lines
will lead us all to the same question
have i already made the biggest mistake of my life?
or is it yet to come?

COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

Struggles & Constitutions

let the blue flower
hide in plain sight
let the soft fragrance fill your mind
even as beauty eludes
fingertips

does anyone remember their names?
the names of those who wrote love songs to the blue flower?
(Sophie perhaps, but who remembers her?)
We are the great
unmissed
unknown
unchartered
territory waiting to be discovered
for the first time
by the man who stands in the parking lot of the
Walt Whitman Shopping Mall
and sees with laser sharp clarity
leaves of grass and something that is not a plastic shopping bag
he thinks he sees a blue flower
and he sighs



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Do You Remember Either/Or?

What is a poet?

*An unhappy man who hides deep anguish in his heart,
but whose lips are so formed that when the sigh and cry
pass through them,*

it sounds like lovely music....

*And people flock around the poet and say:
'Sing again soon'*

MISSED CONNECTIONS: PITTSBURGH

