

Four Poems

Katie Brownlee
Butler University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.butler.edu/the-mall>

Recommended Citation

Brownlee, Katie (2018) "Four Poems," *The Mall*: Vol. 2 , Article 25.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.butler.edu/the-mall/vol2/iss1/25>

This Essay is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ Butler University. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Mall by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ Butler University. For more information, please contact omacisaa@butler.edu.

Four Poems

Katie Brownlee

Waves and Shards

Amber waves shiver above,
Mixed by a rose and indigo glove,
The rays bathe my body and spirit,
Stillness just for a minute.
Not her with knobby fingers stretched,
Not that with wrinkles deeply etched,
Not whore with eyes dancing in flame,
Not ghost with blood-stained knives to
maim.
Not traitor which tearing voices guarantee,
Only and forever me.
How I long to frolic in the light,
Soak in the peace come withering night,
Shed my shoes and muddy my toes,
Free my hair from the root it grows,
Run until I reach the sky,
Through the colors my soul will fly,
Fingertips obstructed by only cloud
Until I gently land upon the ground.
Rising as a soldier on the field,
I stand, a weapon my arms wield.
Head pivots up and down and side,
But only forward do I stride.
I take back my pride, my dignity,

Reclaim my vibrant identity,
Define my existence, never to tame
And shout – the world hears my name.
My moment of serenity. All mine.
Beautiful, if only in my mind.
SNAP, the glorious vision shrinks
boom, my tender heart, it sinks
tick, roars echo, splinters crushing
tock, ebbing, manic rushing
I knew they were coming, I'm out of time.
as golden shards of dusk pierce my eyes,
one docile question overwhelms my mind:
how ever did I marvel at the morn's sun
rise?

Music and Me

Around the table we crunch and sip,
Sharing smiles and an occasional quip.
The wind whips and frigid air bites at our
door,
But inside together we are safe, we fear no
more.
The plates clank
Chairs scrape
My fingers itch with anticipation,
One two three.
Heads nod
Jaws yawn
My arms twitch towards emancipation,

The notes set me free.
Even if just in my head
The music is a magic, coursing spread
Like water to a riverbed, the music, in my
veins it's rife:
I'm surging with empowering life.
And then...
My hands flick and twirl like birds in flight,
My feet spring and point, muscles flexing
tight
My dress gently completing the aesthetic
symphony,
At last my joy swells liberally.
But then...
Bam bam bam.
Fists upon the door.
Stamp stamp stamp.
Thundering footsteps roar.
Bump bump bump.
The music cuts to a rest.
Thump thump thump.
A band drums in my chest.
They want to see they want to hear
They want to take they're drawing near
Nasty smirks creep on their faces,
"Dance:" a chorus of shattering vases.
I stumble, hide my hands and turn,
They tremble where they were once firm.
Just one step is one too far

The knife is sure under my jaw.
The word “dance” is now a growl,
Uttered by minds trained to prowl,
Accompanied by words of condemnation,
They think me an insect of manipulation.
Screams escape my throat and plead,
They don’t hear the rationale I lead,
“I am a woman, a Muslim. Don’t kill me!”
(Yousafzai 147) I say,
They make me pledge my passion away.
But what is life without joy?
What is life without living?
And yet...
What is life without a beating heart?
Do I even have a choice?
Not with the knife digging into my neck,
Not with the gun raising, sights in check,
Not with the grip on my hair,
Not with the cursed role I’m forced to wear.
With my last breath of fury
I affirm my spirit they will never bury
And I dream of a world where I am free:
A world where I can truly be me.

Day

One day I will see my reflection on the other
side of the window, first steps outside as
natural as the rooster’s crow.
Out there where I grew up, where my

brother joked, where my father guided,
where my mother loved.

Out there where danger could not be found
in my dictionary of childhood bliss.

One day.

One morning I will wake up in a library,
“Niloufar” glistening upon my blouse.

Children with shining bright eyes will
marvel amongst my field of books.

Tinkle of the bell, warm words floating in
the air, venture in with a hunger, venture out
nourished with stories.

One morning.

One autumn afternoon, like leaves after a
crisp nudge of wind, the ground will be
covered in sheaths,

Loosened from their hold to swaying minds,
distorting the vision of every eye.

I will bounce about the crunchy street

One autumn afternoon.

One evening my head will be bowed in
prayer,

Thanking God for miracles so wondrously
His and those that before lived only in my
imagination,

From the turning of the Earth to the growth
of the trees to the encouraging heart beating,
reassuring my soul that it is all real to the
hands that clasp each of mine, entwined

together forever as one.

One evening.

One daybreak the world will be silent, but
for the greeting of the birds.

One by one people will give in to the light
peeking through shades, and blinds will
open.

One smile will transcend panes of glass and
venture across open streets. Doors will
swing, and feet will tiptoe through dewy
islands of grass.

One child will share a giggle with another,
imaginings turning in sync. One parent
will embrace his elderly neighbor, words
bouncing cheerfully. One aunt will lock
arms with the uncle across the way,
brilliance radiating between the two like
waves of heat when the summer clock
strikes noon.

All will go about their day in harmony.

And the following day and the day after that
and on and on forever until the world
exhausts its might to spin and lays down
smiling upon the love that lies within.

One daybreak.

Dawn

So here I am.

I awake every morning.

I am the one who gets to tell my story.

Not only mine, but the story of thousands.

The voices call desperately, waiting in every reflection, breeze, whisper, memory, and mountain.

I can either close my eyes and plug my ears in servility

Or take the Earth-shaking leap into the land of possibility.

To those who were left dreaming,

Whose souls lifted up to the sky,

Whose words kindle hope redeeming,

Whose rivers don't deserve to run dry,

With the life I cherish every day,

The opportunities and education that pave my way,

With the support of fellow dedicated minds,

The stroke of her pen, his respect for humankind,

We can bring sparks of inspiration and learning to wicks freshly sewn,

Guide fires to sustaining themselves all grown,

Absorb insight, allow our own canopies to further unfold,

All together we will be the voice for those whose flames were blown but refuse to lose hold.