

Rachel West's
30 Poems
April 2017



Table Of Contents

page

1	04/01/17	Education I
2	04/02/17	RPG/Union Story
3	04/03/17	Scurry
4	04/04/17	Ears
5	04/05/17	Tenderness
6	04/06/17	Geometry Cornball
7	04/07/17	9:14pm
8	04/08/17	Education II
9	04/09/17	Poems To My Government
10	04/10/17	Poet As White Child
11	04/11/17	Monuments
12	04/12/17	Glitch
13	04/13/17	
14	04/14/17	
15	04/15/17	One Hour
16	04/16/17	Easter
17	04/17/17	Mom's Birthday Poem
18	04/18/17	Poem About A Cat
19	04/19/17	Gravitas
20	04/20/17	New Union Songs
21	04/21/17	Food, Water, Shelter, Allies
22	04/22/17	Weed
23	04/23/17	
24	04/24/17	Memorial Cities
25	04/25/17	
26	04/26/17	
27	04/27/17	
28	04/28/17	Oolong
29	04/29/17	Apartment Haiku
30	04/30/17	Just Please Don't Make Me Say It

04/01/17
Education I

Surely we see our mistake now: creating
a level of heaven in which to imprison our poets
so they can't help us.

I am tainted with my dreaming of New York.

It's all to be done
presently, and near. It's all to be heard
in my neighbors' voices and sounds.

It's not time to leave.

04/02/17

RPG/Union Story

This one likes merging narratives.
I was sitting half visible at the bar

when you piqued my interest
with talk of battle.

Maybe it was an opportunity deferred.
I laughed and called you a Communist,

forgetting to say it was a compliment.
You were already talking about something else.

I'll find the right moment.
I'll undo my self-protective spells
and make it about all of us, this time.

Do you hear it? the tingling, singing,
far-off rebellion?

I came to make a deal.
I came to hear about the union.
Either way we must imagine another life.

04/03/17

Scurry

Ignoring the free newspaper,

I could only think:

This is so ugly.

I lose track of the consonants,
say something toxic.

Accommodate my
sugary reptilian nature,
my eyes with their immovable facets,
their glimmer of faraway worlds.

She comes in, this benign look on her face.
Will we be resolute.

04/04/17

Ears

My hands are never satisfied.
My hands are just always reaching, pulling, choosing.
They would rearrange every bit of the world over and over.
The world is their fabrication.

My eyes approve and catalogue this world.
They say yes, this is so,
no matter how absurd

until a doubt lodges somewhere in the side
of my face
and my shoulders turn into telegraphy.

My ears, however, are the most loving and helpless part of me.
I can feel them turn and search, attentive at all times,
and there is nothing, nothing they can do.

04/05/17

Tenderness

I'm transporting myself to
another dimension
where everything is just right.

Through the arched door
I smell the pear trees.
I see the white towers.

I don't know what I will see, really.
The senses are metaphors only.

Why am I alone here,
with the blazing sunlight,
with the cruel faces of men?

04/06/17

Geometry Cornball

My ego is too dragonlike,
refuses to be small,
refuses to do
unmagical labors.

I did not like that guy.

I am never motivated anymore.
Perhaps I am the wrong shape.
The spheres of movement
conceal themselves.

04/07/17

9:14pm

Today was not as easy.
I spent it trying to become
invisible, a recurring theme.

I became very concerned about dinner.

Even now I sit here
expecting the immediate solution,
a poem to explain it to me.

I don't even understand my own words.
Make it quick.
Make it worth remembering.

In solitude with myself
I can divide the day
like a wheel of cheese
and still go hungry.

04/08/17

Education II

They all wanna teach me
about sigil magic.
I'm too chaotic
to even adhere to chaos.

I've got a book
about men and women
getting beaten by cops
for organizing laborers.

I've got a book about god
penetrating the zone of evil.

I've got a book
about the terror
of writing books,
that amazing power.

There's no retreat,
no mage's tower
in my chaotic heart,
only desire, desire,
desire.

04/09/17

Poems To My Government

I can mail
poems to my government.

It's like trying,
in the most ineffectual way,
to win a friend.

Like apologizing with flowers.

Like when something is over
that was never understood.

04/10/17

Poet As White Child

I've never been a particularly kind person,
not when you really add it up.
Acknowledging this
may yet lead
to some modest improvement.

As a child I was often cruel.
As a youth I was grim and thoughtless.
As an adult I merely neglected to make amends.

Mostly the narratives are buried
in self protection but I know
I once told a classmate
her blackness was ugly.

I don't forget the people who hurt me;
how could I? My body shook for hours.

I know my bad actions matter,
even if they were never acknowledged in a ceremony.

Kindness isn't everything;
only God can grade you on it.
Lately I've started
extending my circle of aggression
to include some authority figures.

04/11/17

Monuments

Writing frequently to my government
raises interesting questions
about what I expect from the social contract.

There is our world.
There is the libertarian dream.
There is a simulation

modeling happiness outcomes
in a game about space.

I should read more.
All I know is the shell of law bequeathed us by the Romans.

We shall have monuments
to our efficiency.

04/12/17

Glitch

My mental garden
is snowed over. It's not even
cold. The landscape
seems poisoned with discursive
lethargy. And it's inverted. That's weird.

I came out to look at it and there was nothing
to water, to harvest, so I laid down
where I expected to find
ground, accidentally
slipped backwards into
a smoke-filled sky.

04/13/17

Never have I lived
with a body
of water or stars.

I know little of
non-human things.

They talk to me
as I might talk to myself.

They can only represent.
They are not themselves.

I am the one
acting multiple parts
in a life-long interrogation.

04/14/17

I'm not speaking to you anymore.
I'm investing in red clothing
and terrible wings.

I only want to see beauty,
to speak it with every breath.

Somewhere my spirit is doing all that.

On this day capitalism exhausts me
with its shrimpy ubiquitousness.

04/15/17
One Hour

Funny how living life takes up so much time.
I have so much to do it feels like I'll never be a writer.
I have to go outside and see three sparrows.
I have to burn incense.
I have to listen to roomfuls of human voices.
I have to entertain each of my senses
as they file through my awareness continually
submitting data.

When does one become something?
When does one get anything done?

04/16/17

Easter

I'm busy eating chocolate torte
and drinking coffee
with people I love.

Marilyn did all the cooking.

I read poetry on the radio
and made a big deal about it.

04/17/17

Mom's Birthday Poem

Here are some things that are happening:

My mom is sixty four today.

I'm thirty four.

She lives in Arizona.

I live in Nebraska.

We recently realized how
talking about politics doesn't really feel good.

What does feel good?

Probably this sunlight on my leg.

Probably the view from her back porch.

In about an hour it'll be the perfect color.
You can hold a glass of wine and if you face South
it'll be black like oil and smell of warm coals;
if you face East the glass gets an orange halo
and up on the mountain the earth is dry like the moon.

There is no unawaking from this; or maybe there is
but I'm pretty sure

that when they all decide they're ready to go back
to business as usual it'll be too late.
They'll have a nation of activists and self-care magicians on their hands
who don't need that shit anymore.

04/18/17

Poem About A Cat

Dear Mister Cookie,
In your interstellar journeys

did you bring back
a crystalline intelligence?

Did you lose it
when they trimmed your fur?

Your eyes like deep space
gaze upon ivy-hung windows.

We are in this world together.

04/19/17
Gravitas

I know it sounds odd
when I try to broach the subject;

every creature is a friend
if you stay in touch.

Every notion, every justice,
can slip away just like a friend.

The whole universe
flies from itself.

04/20/17

New Union Songs

Something to the tune of
one massively shared childhood.

Something we can all sing
because we all remember it.

It's okay if it doesn't exist yet;
it's good how numerous we are,

how aware of the grand impossibility
of being alike.

04/21/17

Food, Water, Shelter, Allies

I brought you here because I need
something to read.

I'll go first.

Listening: what is it?

Creation is the inhale-exhale, the frisson
without skin, so where does it originate?

Can you touch me,
can you reach me there,

or are we both busy contemplating
a long sequence of responses,

as if this were all indeed
preordained: the capacity to just recite

our lives, in real time?

04/22/17

Weed

The dream of a free world
still includes no smoking indoors.

The smell gets into the fabric.
You can't escape that.

I went to Trader Joe's
for the cushion of anonymity.

I am now sitting in my apartment
oscillating between anxiety and assurance

that I am safe,
that everyone is safe.

04/23/17

Intent is free flowing
Gold stars and checkpoints
Life is short, Joseph said
When can I go back
to being personal?

04/24/17

Memorial Cities

the architecture of tomorrow
bears none of our likenesses

it was tiresome to comb out the days into a history,
to select the worthy and omit at random

this was a large scale project,
gradually falling apart

the architecture of tomorrow need not
be smooth, angular, reductive

but in whatever form, its austerity will reflect
the story of unknowing

no one was saved, and none damned
there were no heroes, but there were so many people

04/25/17

All these subjects: clouds
in the sky. My life is repetition
and dynamics.

Nobody ever comes back
for anything.

04/26/17

My mom bought me a pack of tarot cards
at a joke shop in the mall of america.

My dad made sure they didn't get lost;
years later I found them in his office.

I've tried to train myself to think
in symbols, learn them, add to their density.

We wanted to store the most information
in the smallest box possible.

04/27/17

I wanted to boast of being a troublemaker
but that's not my dream.
There's more than one kind of shelter.

If you're born in the right categories
and are compliant
probably nothing will happen to you.

But instead of that, something wonderful
could happen: we could find ourselves
making coffee, sweeping the floors, like always,

only this time it will be in a place
where we can just look at each other
in peaceful wholeness.

04/28/17
Oolong

I poured the water;
Joseph slept;
The sky clung lightly
to its slip of grey.

We could all
have rested, perhaps
in that mercy.

04/29/17

Apartment Haiku

Dachshund's shadow on
pale carpet.
Artificial light.

04/30/17

Just Please Don't Make Me Say It

With vigor they applied themselves
to their great project: that of breaking up the human family.

We are new here, those of us
who've never been hit by a cop
or haven't yet felt kinship
with someone outside the genetic cloud of familial scent;

in other words, we who are still babies
and yet command big salaries.

Everyone asked *us* how we felt about everything
because we consistently gave the same answers
which didn't point to anything in particular
besides the nearest mcdonalds, open 24/7, forever.

It was important to preserve a sense of mystery.
Lots of new and rarefied dilemmas
were invented to obscure the really really obvious ones.