

The Blush Upon Her Cheek

25 JANUARY - 22 FEBRUARY 2023

POEMS SELECTED BY THE ARTISTS

FLORENCE REEKIE SELECTS

Much Madness is divinest Sense
BY EMILY DICKINSON

Much Madness is divinest Sense -
To a discerning Eye -
Much Sense - the starkest Madness -
'Tis the Majority
In this, as all, prevail -
Assent - and you are sane -
Demur - you're straightway dangerous -
And handled with a Chain

KI YOONG SELECTS

The Cave
BY JENNY GEORGE

Someone strikes a match. Briefly
the earth is illuminated.
Then it goes out, just the drifting flare of
memory.
But our eyes hold it for a while
it will be all we can see,
the dark will stream with it, the nerves
will salvage back the light until they can't
and we are bodies again.

LEO COSTELLOE SELECTS

An undated poem about bridges
BY MARILYN MONROE

Oh damn I wish that I were
dead -- absolutely nonexistent --
gone away from here -- from
everywhere but
how would I...
There is always bridges --
the Brooklyn bridge...
No, I love that bridge
(everything is beautiful from there
and the air is so clean)
Walking it seems
peaceful
even with all those cars
going crazy underneath.
So it would have to be
some other bridge,
an ugly one with no view -- except
I like in particular all bridges --
there's something about them, and besides
I've never seen an ugly bridge.

STUDIO WEST

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The Blush, a response
BY LU CUNNINGHAM

They say when the ground rises to the surface, the human face decomposes in the mirror.

Pre-lust,
lined eyes find you,
amber cutting through this exterior,
innocence ripping these seams

amid bleak inner wintering,
lashes butterfly kissing,
rising, then down, rising, then down,
breathing and the epidermis whispering,
closer closer.

In this version I am your lover.

Post-loss, lust,
in the next version I am crystalline, maybe gelatinous, moulding.
Waiting - you are yet to notice - in frosted glass,
curled curved and coy, tilting with nervousness.
One foot arced back, poised to retreat or forward fleet footed,
pieced by piecing piercing hot rod
- I ask you tread lightly over these limbs -
as you attempt sculpting,
closer closer.

In this post-version I am a chain,
having theatrical battles with language and God,
or perhaps I am to be the headiness of a peony garden
or the scent of orchids - your grandmother, always -

a myth to be slipped in, on, adorning,
link by link, piecing together slow, this vignette
and my position is sentimental, and you don't know your own origin
tales yet,
your deaths and lives to come —

Closer closer, what good is it discussing such absurdity,
when i am a single eyelash, a spindled glass comb, a metal gap -
but in this version you feel something,
watching one another unpicked and plundered,
toeing silk and silver, softened or pricked,

a plinth, a screen, a bracket,
waiting for placement for adornment for what good is it discussing,
when you are the freckles surging to trace meaning,
a shoal of minnows haphazard,
chewed apart by grief by forgetting by synaesthetic memory.

But, in this version we continue looking, listening, noting
the sliver of light on the casing tinged blue,
like the navy middle of night
when you say my name, and the corners of your eyes crease
when you enter, denial dialled up and everything comes absorbent,
the walls lucid, the rain marks writing truths,

when you are scared and i a-void am sleeping, broken,
dreaming compounds and
they say dreams cement memories;
the more absurd a scene the more resilient the memorial.

In this version, we cement the memory,
when we breathe we
bare nerve ends, we, heart pulse and scorch;
in heaviness and heat, in a solitary flame, closer, closer,
my eyes find you.