

HUMAN ACHIEVEMENTS

poems

LAUREN
HUNTER





*I think it's hard to write poetry
look how often it doesn't work for those
who should have succeeded
but I also think it's not easy
to take poison climb mountain tops
or swim across the English Channel
and yet all these are human achievements
that's why I dare one more time*

Halina Poświatowska

disco affirmation

give me
the good lies
and no shit
i've got magic
in my veins—sweat silks
in a subway tunnel
your apartment on fire
my feet on the pavement
i feel love

april fools

april always comes along
to ruin my life
so i'm in love with martin landau
in north by northwest
he's annoying and ruthless
and has the clearest blue eyes

i'm sorry for all failures
mine and otherwise
i can take the heat

monstrous applause always raises my lips

but what i want
is so much easier
than adoration
i want to make breakfast
and savor it with you

to laugh lying in grass we could never own
mirror interviews via late night skype
and i knew you as a child
the very it of it

there's no more fight
in my valley we pacifists
go on burning our own homes
to show you how it's done

on wings and on fire
missing and missing

the thing is
we're already unhappy here

i, too, dream

of where i am as where i'm supposed to be
how i now saunter up to strangers and friends alike muttering *look into my heart*
holding my ribcage open with my own steady hands

when the ufo crashed into our backyard pool and the other kids scattered
but i pressed against the sliding glass door like
and what like i've not chased boys around the cul-de-sac with knives
like i didn't mean it like i didn't not mean it i want to tell about the most
idyllic childhood traumas the crash and summertime ghosts and that time
i wanted a bee for a pet how about these ides asshole i am fond
of misplacing my anger on you dredging up the drowned barn and each bloated
cow to lay on your hearth a sweet rot and gifts go on and scold me
i'm listening i'm amused by every single one of my faults

loose lips

comes hard and goes easy like march and other platitudes
i have decided to spend the summer with rats
when i press my palms completely together the world keeps spinning nothing changes

i would follow your heels to the edge of the earth
and if you walked off i'd follow there too

we grow stronger than our allergies to each other melodrama with horns
i honor you like the perfect hand on my breast
do we breathe do we age do we drive our backs into fences
that old horse comes around singing *neigh neigh*

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this morning I woke up, and I only wanted to tell the truth. like, last night was a total error in judgement; I am mismanaging my life. I'd hire a replacement if one should apply. there are two girls inside me that have been killed. nonviolently snuffed out by persistent doubt and reckless influence. I am taking my laptop into the tub, I am going to write a letter. to my father, I will say, *forget the medals, I went for medals*. this letter becomes a book titled Continual Failure and Disappointment; my editor will rename it, Human Achievements. my father will say, *the gold, the gold*, but really delights in the calculated leap. I stay quiet and swing low. swing low until the sun sets, and I feel free.



Lauren Hunter is a poet, editor and educator living in Durham, North Carolina. She received her MFA in poetry from The New School and is the managing editor for the experimental translation press Telephone. Lauren is the co-founder/curator of Electric Pumas, an occasional reading series/web presence interested in promoting multimedia art by women. A chapbook, *My Own Fires*, was released by Brothel Books in 2011. *HUMAN ACHIEVEMENTS* is her first book.

I am afraid all the time.
I knew the moment I laid eyes on your face
something would happen to me.
so continues this exhausting struggle
to prove something between us.
I moved indoors and flaked on friends.
made myself a beacon,
locked myself in a cocoon for some months.
I thought you knew I'd always come back.
I thought you knew I was just tired.



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