

# ***A Queer Pastoral, Ending In Harry Styles Bathing In A Pool of Flowers***

if desire is a weed tangled in the current of the body,  
a milky lake of pink, i could drown in my ugly,  
ask to be weighed down by an embroidered, silken dress.

my friend says skin-on-skin contact is the queerest thing.  
i think it's the need to be held, pressed against another  
& feel how unapologetic their bones are.

i've only ever wanted to be a good girl  
loved by a good someone. a lamb bleats in the distance.  
a red door is slain with a lilac wreath.

each ewe's cry sounds like a breath underwater,  
so this must be how we came from g-d:  
pulled from ocean silt & blessed with velvet names.

# ***Regina Spektor Spends a Moment With Michelangelo's David, Galleria dell'Accademia, 2012***

I've been on the look-out for the shade of red lipstick that fits me best.  
My ideal date would be to become the next Claudia Kincade:  
for someone to drop me off at The Met & then leave me there

forever stranded in the quiet of that intimacy,  
enthralled by the portraits in gold frames that I almost asked to touch them,  
each one smelling like the last docent's fingers.

My family stopped by to visit & my mom noticed  
the packs of condoms in my drawer since she decided to reorganize my desk.  
I was born into the newest shade of vermillion.

I cradle each marble-cold shame I keep,  
like an artless, sheepish child.

If I had a dollar for every time I was embarrassing,  
I would still be asking for hands.

# On Praising The Body Electric

i climb onto my partner's bed                      for the first time, & feel like a fawn  
familiarizing herself    with the sensation    of having legs.

associating sex with hunger    or    the loss    of innocence  
is trying to ask my body                      to express a new language                      each word

describing desire fits clumsily in my mouth,    like    *touch* or    *here*    or  
*hands* or    *light*.                      i say    *yes*    & tell my partner

they can take my bra off                      if they want to.    they do  
& my body sheds    its unforgiving silver.                      i have never felt warm

against another body    in this way    ask them if it's okay    if we lay here  
instead.                      my partner smiles.    *i don't want to do anything that you don't*

*want to or don't feel ready for.*                      i say                      *thank you*                      instead of i'm sorry  
& that,    in itself,    is the reteaching of a lexicon.

what a gift it is to be held.

what a gift it is to be soft.

# Portrait Of My First Breakup As Laurie & Jo On The Hill

had we met three-hundred years before now,  
my heart would still be a petticoat galloping  
through Boston / clutching a heaving dress  
with rejoiceful-inked hands / my hair unraveling  
from a crown of braids / i would like to live  
wearing a March sister's gloves, die as an oil painting  
in Rome / or maybe Paris, really wherever  
there is cobblestones & a field of sweetgrass  
& junebush to scream about love & nothing working  
except for youthful platonic joy on the porch  
where we danced / our laughter as shadows  
beneath our heels / i should have known  
it would take me this long to accept you were right:  
we were too childish & stubborn / enough to tear  
letters into a river & peal like two forgiving swords  
i hope you know if you need the hand of someone  
to be awkward with at parties, i will more than gladly take it  
there will be a horse & carriage waiting  
i will bring my finest silks