

Segue

online literary journal

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Segue is published once a year in August. We accept submissions of high quality fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction between January 1 and April 30 (closed May through December), and writing about writing year-round via email. Before submitting, please read past issues to understand the sort of work we publish, then read our submission guidelines.

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Hard to love a woman: a poem for cons, hipster doofuses, ex-baristas, etc.

lance

It's hard when you're in the pen and she's eating
fluff
sandwiches cause she misses your hand
tats, she used to be so upper class and she'll be all
fat by the time
you get out. So you carve *Prada* and *comme des garçons*
outfits from your own skin and walk
the runway after lights out.
Hip,
knee,
toe,
elbow,
thrust,
elbow. Again.

baby making

My room's white, no, it's taupe, no, it's actually not
even 3-D; it's a linear plane and you're stuck
on it.
(with me)

Trotskyite

A pickaxe in the eye's still a pickaxe even when it meets membrane, when it
penetrates. A pickaxe in the eye, even when it
wobbles, still stays. A pickaxe in the eye
lobotomizes, sometimes. A pickaxe or
a railroad spike. That's what
she said when she would
talk to me and she was talking
about her heart
maybe.

some kind of metaphysical

You're drinking
Red Bull and Vodka &

she's drinking
Red Bull & Vodka & she deserves
all the ampersands in the world. You lay them
at her feet at the bar in front of
everyone and,
to get another drink, she just
drums them down. There's no sound like it, you swear, *ever*.

generic movie felon
Smoking GPCs. No letter for me. Damn
bitch. I'm going to,
I'm gonna find Jesus in the rye toast today.

auguring
Mildewed bathroom ceiling means success. Hairy
toes means bad breath. Bad breath also
means success. And riches, don't forget
the riches. & the toes. But,
ceiling fans will never make you Mickey Rourke. And bars,
well, bars, you know...

mickey rourke felon
I can't help it, I like to punch, the impact of knuckle. My cell
-mate wears his own skin
at night, sometimes he borrows
mine. Can't you see, he strips
me down; he flows and twirls. I'm
bone; I watch
him, I can't help
it: I'm so
naked
and alone.

To get her through, the PARIAH snorts

up anything not

completely toxic, anything

semi-toxic, or just plain dust

to get her through, she flirts with girl bouncers

to get through, she rents a room but leaves early

in some kind of fog

a fog you can't smell or feel

a cliché fog with some kind of feet

some kind of velvet

Aquavelvet; her hair is so tall

and crusted by noon

to get she does things and those things are done and she gets things done but things are never done and there's always things to get and she's done with plastic or maybe she has so much debt and this is so asthmatic; the pollen goes right the pollen goes left it fills you up it's better than sex

snorting milk giggles she remembers vague cereal and sugars. spilled sisters in lunchboxes

spooning mornings to sun. those sisters were close by

closed by bologna/butter on bread

somehow meat made its way into dairy everything blurred

and they were gone.

or maybe

sandwiches in baggies were always
their fate. Forever ever she carried them

as a child; there was nothing else to be done.

Wherein the PARIAH plans to put her dog down

She doesn't call the vet cause she's not allowed
 a phone plan. She bangs two
 rocks together in some semblance of honeybee dance
 code, but the bees don't care. They're too busy
 disappearing and she wonders what gives
 them the right and how
 does one stay gone. *So long,*
 she says to her loyal mutt then kicks it off
 a convenient cliff.

Falling, the mutt grows wings and stripes
 and antennae and backward knees

and does the beegirl dance through clouds through the Grand Canyon
 above Route 666 over the Navajo Nation and
 the mutt has the audacity to kick up windstorms in Death
 Valley; of course the mutt's on its way to California: rumor
 has it there's oranges just asking to be plucked – they're about
 falling, too and
 sweet sweet nectar and wine. The PARIAH needs
 another shot of something quick. She gets
 out her syringe, but it grows glossy
 wings and fuzzy
 stripes and hovers just within sight
 for a minute before hoofing it up mid-air then
 poof gone, just like those bees no one cares
 about.

Author Notes

Ryder Collins is a poet and fiction writer who lives in Auburn, Alabama. Her work has been published in The Southeast Review, Diagram, Rhino, and Hayden's Ferry Review, among others.

About the Work

I think writing should always be about facing those things within one's self that are frightening. Not that they're necessarily bad; I'm not just talking about the Id or anything like that. It's those things that are large and that hide and need to be made manifest; those secrets that speak to something about humanity, even if it isn't entirely universal. (I'm not sure if I always believe in the concept of universality, sometimes I feel like that's used for normalizing certain behaviors and beliefs).

I began writing my PARIAN series as a reaction to and even celebration of the fear of being outcast. *Pariah*, for me, is such a strong word; I wanted to come up with this strong persona to match it, this woman who didn't care if she wasn't accepted, if she was banished, if she lived on the outskirts of normal everyday society. A persona who could come and go as she wished, who found freedom in her exile. Of course, she's also got some angst, I mean, jeez, no one really wants to hang out with her. That's part of being a pariah, I guess. My poem, "Hard to love a woman: a poem for cons, hipster doofuses, ex-baristas, etc.," is also about facing fears: the fears attendant with love, the fear of imprisonment, of losing freedom, the fear of our government institutions being run by private companies, etc.

Not to make this a manifesto, but I feel like poetry should also be about strange connections—those hook-ups you see taking place in a bar close to last call, the weird leaps between the rational and irrational. Logic can only do so much. That's why in "Hard to love..." I move from strophe to strophe, bringing in babies, Trotsky, *Some Kind of Wonderful*, *Angel Heart*, etc. In "To get her through, the PARIAN snorts," I begin the poem in a visual state of disintegration and I end it in logical and emotional disintegration. The PARIAN's an adult, living in the hard, adult world, but she still carries the childhood memories of those squishy bologna sandwiches and of closeness with her sisters. But for the PARIAN, closeness's not always a blessing.

"Wherein the PARIAN plans to put her dog down" comes out of my bewilderment about the disappearance of all those honeybees in the U.S. Why aren't more people concerned about the honeybees going missing? It's also a reaction to death, which I think explains the almost cartoonish, surreal turn the poem takes in the dancing, flying syringe. Death is scary, it's strange, and there's no way the PARIAN's gonna be the one who figures it out for all of us.

Ryder Collins on the Web

thediagram.com/8_2/collins.html

http://www.thediagram.com/7_5/collins.html

<http://www.glass-poetry.com/volume-one/issue-three.html>