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It's deep n dark n blue

cathe boudreau

This is dedicated to everyone who has ever been
treated for clinical depression and given
drugs
therapy
more drugs
less therapy
long chats with friends about just "doing something"
guilt trips, whether self induced or
from an outsider

this is dedicated to everyone who has
been lonely and
angry

and
didn't see the point

this is dedicated to you
from someone who gives a shit
because I come from where you are
and I hate it too.

Cathe Boudreau

another new years'
on this my 30th year
come May that day will exist
although I wonder if I will
Last night of the year in
my annual tradition
flanked by fido confidante

the night in a San Francisco hill house
the sound of Ocean Beach
ringing in the new
with embraces to land
I stand alone with hundreds of
solitary players
sand bound

Some carrying their lives in a knapsack
others the pain of lonely moments
and me with stupid smile
calling the ocean back to me
willing to be a part of this
grand painting

it is this moment
when james brown is dancin'
in a nearby hotel
and etta james coos a feast

a few blocks east
and the voices in Asian twist
and laughing sounds of
lovers at least for the night.....
it is at this moment
not christmas
not on valentine's
but on this very occasion
I have spent the time alone
for as many years as I can remember
and it is only on this date
that the aloneness
doesn't rip into my
chest with blades and claws
but instead
this time
it's new
I'm new
after years and years of
feeling tortured that I'd never have
someone special
I've been consoled by someone
I forgot was always there.

What it starts like is
burning behind top lid of eyes
as if gasoline has been lit
behind the sockets
with rotting melting flesh
blocking tears

My face melts
softens, becomes
moist to the touch
no matter how many times I wash,
I feel dirty.

The brain loses contact
I place items in the fridge
that belong in the bathroom
the pets get fed
too much or someday
I have conversations
forgetting who it is I talk with
my home number and the date
become one
complete sentences become

motivation to
eat
to piss

to move
to be in the places you love
to write, call, talk to friend
to remove clothes and bathe and change
to leave sanctity of couch and TV
ends

you're too sad to cry
too embarrassed about feeling sadly
too pissed that you're pissed off
so you eat and get mad about getting heavy

you think about starving kids
amputees
cancer victims
wrongly imprisoned people
narrow minded people
street people who get robbed
and everyone else you can't help
but are doing better than
and guilt yourself into
hurting

you make a list on a computer program
of all of the stupid things you have done
to yourself
to other people
by opening your mouth

by sending a letter

by loving too hard
by not loving enough
tolerating bullshit
working for an idiot
overspending and being broke
having nothing
pissed at your own humanness

physically
heart is tied up like a pot roast
stomach is held and pressed by a mud wrestler
like I've ingested 5 dozen raw eggs
my back has nails driven between each vertebra
throat swells with thickness of pillow
eyebrows become part of nose
daylight is an inconvenience
never warm enough
never cool enough

each day begins late and ends early
so that it will be over sooner
been to doctors for it about sixteen years
on and off
they drug me

talk
hypnotize
talk
tell me about religion
expression
my family
talk
explain me
my life
sexuality
talk
and then it always ends as soon as
the days get longer
or the raise comes through
or that guy asks me out
or the bill gets paid

but until then you find that
blackened parchment mind
is preventing humor
from filtering in
you get upset at television shows
you get teary eyed when a promise is forgotten
you blame yourself for someone else's bad mood
you get visitors whey you'd prefer
they'd die

dawns on you that fitting in is
not part of the plan
holidays are thumb tacks on this board
when homes are lit with lights and colors
and you have the flicker of TV screen
when flowers come and go
to other places
and cards seem like a \$2 set back

meeting others is a challenge
get to know if they'll accept you
before you let them know who you are
to compromise you become
leader
in charge

mentor
avoiding peer to peer confrontation
if they don't like you then
who cares?
if they do like you
fine, but who cares?
if it feels okay

so the doc says
blood levels are fine
we've increased your dosage
until you reached maximum
how do you feel?

I feel like someone scooped
my head like a morning grapefruit
my mouth is a loom for
sheep shorn yarn
sahara sandstorm
the roof is chipped
my tongue cracks when I speak vowels

doc says
how's the exercise program going?

well, doc, it increases my oxygen levels
which reduces my stress
but quickens the effects of the drug
which makes me sleepy
lifting weights half my size
builds my strength but
creates anger
I don't know why

Doc says

levels are maxed

I'm a robot doc

doc says
side effects range from
mood swings to weight gain
to weight loss
But
in rare cases
side effects are increased
agitation

when can I stop these?
I feel like I'm being sat on
by a football team
now that the depression is
controlled
I understand what is causing it
and it's killing me faster
than the illness

Doc says
stay until you've leveled for
a while and things go okay

within days the possible
agitations

became high risk suicide
confrontational
paranoid
work was impossible to do
unemployment office
put me on medical hardship
despite the boss pronounced complaints
highly medicated

mother played the game
of button presser
the physical payback from
years of her abuse
given a permission slip
from prescriptive antidepressants
all began with her desire

to change me into something
she could give a damn about
finally a fair fight with
the cause of all of the pain
when the two women could
one on one
and she still denied all of
the scars she left on me
they years of beatings
constant put downs
lies
for the first time in my life

while I was highly
medicated
I hit her back
from that second on
I was homeless
unemployed
and off of the pills

Two days later
as I hunted down
bags for my clothes
information was
that the police will be bringing me
a restraining order
because of what I did to her
right
so drug free
my very helpful loving sister
who branded me an Antichrist
from a diary I wrote at 13
and who still has anger
at me
despite
the thoughts of private diary were in
thirteen year old mind about a ten year old
loving sister
helped damn me

not understanding what happened
yet convinced I was the cause
because of fight we had about
the 13 year old's diary
this past christmas day

doc says
get out of the house fast
sister grabs phone
begins telling her version of my life story
that she hasn't lived with me in 14 years
I know as much about her as
I know about heart surgery
yet she is able to tell the doc
about our childhood quibbles
as if they are in today's news
I pitied her
because she and mom are eternal
victims
never
instigators
after 10 minutes of attack
Doc convinces her to let me leave the house
he was just calling to check up on me

that night I was placed on
withdrawal unit
suicide watch

no place to call home
not healthy
medicated too highly
withdrawals too severe
no insurance
in debt from student loans and
previous illness
feeling less than human
yet emancipated at the
realization that I am now
an orphan and family free

dad began a rescue
bought me a \$900 used car
I rented a one room

living on unemployment
no more drugs
no more cures
no more family
no more attachment to the past
empty as a human
free as a lark

I think I am truly a
homosexual male
trapped in a heterosexual woman's body
not an original thought
but most telling
by any standards

the feminine mystique
in a male body
attracts me faster than
any aphrodisiac
and the old adage of
wanting what you can't have
becomes a remarkable search

the poet male, straight or not
turns my mind into puddles of jello
brain activity but
no clear thoughts

the sculpted
dancer en pointe
avec masculine et feminine
corps
is far more intriguing on ice
than in blood sport

a friend of mine and I would sit for

hours and
woe the insensitive nature
our respective males
my friend yanking his moustache
at memory of morning pain

10:15 in the morning
waiting for buses to come and go
just to have a place to be
for a few minutes
to think this mess through

old woman sits next to me
waiting for the 34 Dedham Line
while she plays with some fruit in her bag
she wore royal blue wool coat
black shoes with holes in toe
her hands were dressed in mismatched gloves
grocery bag of yellow and white clear plastic
clenched tightly at her lap

glasses too large for her face
in grey plastic, slightly darker than hair
bi focal lenses creating two tiered eyes
she looked chilled
had trouble keeping her feet on the ground
her pill box black was beaded black
with slight veil to shade her
from view
without looking at me she would repeat
in thick New England Dialect
"Shuwa cold. Awful. This bus takes fowevah"
repeating this phrase whenever
she sighted another old woman

snugly sitting as a passenger in a car
She must have been alone for years
Her bus finally came
and she took each step up
as if each was a challenge in itself
the tired bus driver called her name
as old friend to old friend
I watched her smile at him
as she shuffled to her seat
clutching that bag as he pulled away

noon
I boarded a bus heading to
Harvard Square from Cleveland Circle
checking with unemployment to see
if my check was there
my pocket lined with eight
different coins
crumbs from an ancient cookie
receipts from years past
there were no house keys

The unemployment line reached
halfway down to Central Square
I listened to a woman complain
that her foodstamps were cut
when she got a part time job
so she was expected to feed five kids

on thirty dollars a week take home pay
a man in a business suit and a cellular phone
gave the appearance that he was
important
far more than the rest of us
but he was just dressed in case
an interviewer called while
he was in line
you see, he said he worked
for this company for 15 years
before the reorganization
and with his skills he was bound
to work soon
this was his fourteenth month in line
the calls came from people ordering Avon

the line spit up into
layoffs, hardships, and medical hardships
line 3 was mine
me
ex Vietnam post traumatic victims
ex mental patients
two guys with full blown aids
we were outcasts even in unemployment
each of us not only got checks
but housing listings

we were the "displaced" poor

given extra counseling because
our self worth was so depreciated
even more than someone else in severe
debt depths
because we had no permanent roofs
as of 9:30 that morning
I was qualified for shelter housing
from 6pm to 7am
at St. Francis House
but only if I made the bus by 4pm
and there are no shelter showers there
because it is co ed
and it was first come first serve

In two weeks I had saved \$150
to get a one room apartment next to
an anti choice office
in Framingham
\$55.00 per week utilities not included
I made \$400 per month
no medical insurance and
the prescriptions were \$36.00 every 2 weeks

In two weeks
I learned Dumpster Diving
in quality restaurants and warehouse malls
I didn't qualify for foodstamps yet
it would take 6 weeks

credit companies unhappy with a \$5 payment
phone limited to 911 and incoming calls
amazed at threatened lawsuits of
unemployed
underfed
medically supervised
woman
self now more depressed than
before meds

for those who have always had food
clothing
support
this will never be understood
I kept explaining to my stepmother
that I had no place to live

she didn't understand why not
because she has always done with
she accepts checks from dad's work
and buys brass items
extra TV's
extra VCR's
extra computers
additional food processors
extra cars
and did not understand that it was
impossible for me to eat that day

because of lack of money
she's never had to hide in bathroom stalls to
sleep for a couple of hours
she has never had everything she's owned
taken away
she's never had to decide between
paying \$5 at the YMCA to use the shower
or to eat for the next couple of days
she never shopped a goodwill
she never traded blood for cash
In 1989 during a hospital stay
the debt I had reached \$34,000
I spent the summer on the streets
because she couldn't afford to help me
when she had to pay for her natural born
daughter's car
the second time was
homeless sting part two
when she couldn't help me because she needed clothes for work

the lessons learned from the first day out
people who say
that doesn't make sense
never make any sense
no matter how hard it was to be on the
streets it's harder for older people to be on
their own

no matter what anyone tells you
god does not help anyone who helps themselves
but the poor will give you their last breath

I don't mean to sound bitter
reality tattoo'd me

I sent it today

o David Nocca in 6th grade
reads
David, I really like you
don't tell anyone or I'll kill you
then felt embarrassed for weeks

to Al Tibiri, neighborhood kid
who I invented a high school cheer for
I had my first "dirty dream"
about him
seventh grade, red for months later

Josh in college
an infatu-friend
who consummated and
became victim of my
insecurity 5lb diet

I sent a letter
a note
a missile of
my wish to
be rejected quickly
instead of waiting for it

tonight the flames in the woodstove

look like your hands
reaching out past your death
you were the only lover I had
who I never slept with
yet you were the only lover I had
who died in my arms

what did this to you
was it the letter I sent
that told you I loved you?

whoever says they don't know about
Vietnam, man
deserves to relive it
spent the night rehashing god's movie
in my head
waiting for the man on screen to
stop hurting
and know
it can't happen
because his friend's forget him
his family left him
he left himself on a mine field
in Vietnam, man

Pity?
Can't pity a sage
just take in his knowledge
and if he is a drunk on
the street
hold him and tell him
he matters

I picture these men as children
and I wonder how old they were
when the loved stopped

I can understand sad
sad is what happens when you've
just finished making love with
someone and feel empty
sad is what happens when you
call all your friends and
haven't dialed anyone

I can understand embarrassed
embarrassed is when you
write your deepest love for a man
and his wife thinks you're sick
embarrassed is when you're
swimming in a hotel pool
not knowing that you've been topless for
at least 10 minutes

I can understand stupid
stupid is when you
break up with someone
because you like him too much
stupid is when you fall in love
and move 3200 miles
to be dumped in NYC

I can understand lonely
lonely is when you fall in love
with a guy who writes books

and doesn't answer your fan mail
lonely is when you spend
no particular saturday night alone
wondering if you can remember what
a man's skin smells like

I can understand fear
fear is when you've become
too close to a person
to let them inside
fear is what happens when
you are honest and

can't tell the truth

Can't understand love
is that when you give so much
you become someone else?
Can't understand hate
is that when you destroy
everyone for satisfaction?
Can't understand happy
is that when you stop
whatever and breathe relief?

I hate being in love
hate feeling weak and small
helpless against my own
lack of resistance
hate being weak
forgetting to relax with my guard down
pretending to be sure of myself
knowing at any moment
my own projected self judgment will
be my ultimate undoing

and to think only days before I was
unattached
a free standing unit with
abilities to stand on my own
think without conference
I could go to the movies without a partner
take myself out to dinner
and never sit by the phone
expecting it to magically ring
by telepathic wish to
a significant other

now I am miserable with
longings to have skin touch skin
breath touch breast
hair wrap around face

back's touching stomach
in midnight slumber

now I make my bed
smelling sheets of two as one
I am complete
idiot
wishing to make another
feel wanted
I am a complete
lost soul
wishing to hold another
close to me

this is the only time
when I become so
vulnerable to pain
that I let it become part of me
more than I am of myself

this is the only time
when I become a
female, woman
nurturer, caretaker
I feel my most beautiful
and my most unattractive
my best
my worst

my most sexual and sensual
my most fearful and judgmental
mostly mental

and then comes the end of the
passion play
the cross road
where it is a
decision of receiving the
pain of loneliness
the gain of loss
the reuniting with self

or
becoming
a new one within a third
unit of couple

love is cruel and unusual punishment
for the crime of being human
alone is cruel and unusual punishment
for the crime of being independent

they tell me that the chase is
the best part of the relationship
I think it sucks

there is no kindness in making
someone who wants you
feel like they
must guess your feelings

There is no sweetness in
feeling insecure enough
to behave in a way that is not
who you are

When you are next to the person
who has stolen your heart
and he is evading the questions
or physically leading you into
believing that he feels all you do
This is cruelty in full splendor
this is not romance
romantic
or even remotely
fun

and it pains me to believe that
to others this is the reason for

chasing another's interest

what starts as a casual friendship
transforms into late nights
wondering what the other
is thinking
while sleeping alone
or with someone with whom
you share no love

so the doc says to me,
what is it you're feeling now?
and the answer is beyond me
I ask him what that means
to feel

and he says to me
you should be feeling some sort of
reaction
to something

it's been months of sitting in a chair with
stupid grin on my face
telling all my insights of self
telling all of my history
well versed psycho-babble
I understand all concepts
yet I do not
feel anything

No, doc, I have no idea
how do you feel?

so he says to me
is your body reacting to being in pain
to sadness
to fear

to love
to joy
in your heart is there laughter
is there tears
is there anger

and I sit there with muffled annoyance
wondering if he understands
I don't feel anything
this is why I am here
I cannot react to
love
to fear

to anger
to anything

Months and months of babbling
months of talking
and he says to me
what brings you pleasure

now this is a different question
this I may be able to answer
yet it is difficult
and I did not understand
it is easier for me to understand
why the sky is blue
than why I am not

I look beyond your eyes to see
who you really are
and I'm not surprised what I find there

we snap together in embrace
like bark to tree
individuals with similar purpose
yet one protects and changes
sheds and escapes
as the other grows
run fluid from root to top
and even if it is a temporary joining
we have both left rings around
each other's experiences

I look beyond your body to see
what you really are
a man
un homme, un animal, un creature
un table avec mon coeur
as dinner for your palate
I wait to be taken in
as a fulfilling meal
mon pet't coeur, sans pareil
tant mieux, et tant pis
ecce homo

the heart breaks when you reach
for a different item on your menu
this limited menu
I don't understand
Žn mon coeur, qu'elque chose
avec
avec
hurt
et tu, allor...
vis†ge de Žnfant
manly form
mon ami, mom amor, dakol
I look beyond your confusion to see
your fear
and fell the fear
that washes you away from
risks and challenges
in lieu
of safety and regret

you tell me you are closed
you tell me you are unsure
you touch me without holding
your confusion before my
petit corps, mon pet't coeur

the instinct is to flee
the call of another voice

chases you into corners
where you breathe quickly
trapped by assumptions
reacting to repulsions
interacting with supposition
that all will be alright
if you do nothing

with nothing as your leader
you wait for all to be you
when I look at your thoughts
I feel your tenderness
and it is only when you

don't watch me watching
that I feel you inside my thoughts

dit moi
what is it that holds you back
from making a mistake
from trying to touch clouds
from attempting what you feel is
what you can accomplish

potential for greatness
shadows in routine
familiarity bleeds you from
desire and blocks you
with iron gates from

achieving every dream you
hide from sunlit faces

and to this
I dare offer mon coeur
j'taime, mon ami
as you are becoming
the god you are
I fear becoming the lover
in your thoughts

we have crossed paths
at this time I am in need
of rescue from total independence
so I can learn to trust
at this time I feel your need
to be affirmed into total independence
so you can be your self
perhaps as I beg for
forgiveness for flirtatious nature
perhaps you beg for
acknowledgment of the unique gifts
you hide from current lovers
in lieu of parental potential

I want to kiss your skin
when I see your brow holding back
self induced mystery

with me wanting desperately to
receive love and secrets
to hold you dear in future memories
perhaps not as the one true love
but as a catalyst to your
coming into your own

I am rabbi
you are student
ecoutŽz,
silly flirting girl becomes mysterious teacher
in a second of your lifeline
and all I want in return is
to have known love with you
mon pet't coeur

today I confessed an undying love
in the back of your car with
the street lights off
and whispered dementia
of calming inertia of body
to body to combustible mind

Today I just messed up
and untied a touch
by stating and claiming
that I really cared
when I never had to and you never
wanted to with reasons beyond
incomprehensible pair

today I blasted you with all of your facts
in the yard and you took one more taste
of the beer by your side looking at me
with eyes cold and distant
uncaring relief
so I bite your teeth

Core of the matter is
the lack of perfections on my part
when I think that I've got my shit together
I realize I placed it in a chancre sore
ground it with fervor
with salt
and let it settle until gang green
remove it all
and the blisters fester with
reality oozing

where do I go from here?
yet another walk down hallowed halls
where men on ridalin and women
on valium
sit quietly
waiting for the next dose
blinded by medicinal coats of arms
where is the cure
somewhere deep within are answers
guard me from these lost thoughts
who lies better
the illness or me?

core of the matter is that
my body and mind forget to share me
equally
I get too ill to think

I think too hard to get sick
and then I forget
to cry when I am sad
to laugh when I am happy
to glow after sex
as I watch me from the outside

Core of the matter is
that the floodgate waits until there
are no other options than to
let tears flee my eyes
escape the mind

dodge the smile and land in my teacup
hours upon days
with eyes swollen solid
and confusion the only clear thought
a bed ridden soul in functioning body

Denver flight was a lesson
become someone suave and daring
urbane at airports
allow gestation of fantasy to hide another
watch the body fool the mind
and realize an illusion is safer than reality