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## Robin Linn

I see poetry as an art of ideas, and as a visual person, I like to use colorful details in my work. I'm quite interested in playfulness, layers of meaning and intentionality in poetry. Probably because of music's importance to me, I'm intrigued by poetic sound play (i.e., Gerard Manley Hopkins, Harryette Mullen, and Atsuro Riley). I've always written with some internal rhythm, whether or not I'm employing a rhyme scheme or strict meter.

I frequently write abstractly, favoring process or journey over concern for concrete destination, but I also enjoy researching for subject-specific works. In this collection, the persona poem, "Embouchure," required my understanding of the trumpet's basic anatomy and being able to imagine its point of view as having been played and part of a glamorous scene, and then being idle and hoping to be utilized again. I believe that poetry can't help but be somewhat autobiographical. While I don't aim to write confessional or even overtly narrative poems, my work is full of clues about my own identity—such as passion and attempts to balance realism with idealism. Regarding artistic identity, I think the practice of poetry, like other fine arts, requires us to bridge and weave some of our obvious reality with a more fantastical reality. In one respect, poetry writing incorporates much subconscious data; in another, the act of creating itself is an escape from the everyday world.

I love poetry's seeming infinity, its multi-dimensionality and how it can elasticize language, as well as its power to engage and transform its readers. When some inspiration takes me into the imaginative world, I love following that, knowing that I don't know where I'll end up or what space might be encountered. It can be perspective changing to go through that process of being open to what internal or external stimuli or awareness might happen to influence my work at the time

## ROBIN LINN

### Embouchure

*for Pam & Charlie*

A glum trumpet I've become,  
post-glam, unmissed.  
I long for studied lips to ply my mouthpiece,  
play the go-between  
for impelled gusts of air that funnel  
rapt through my chambers  
and for long supple fingers to grill  
my valve pistons.

Though I've been subdued  
in a scuffed wooden case, lackluster-laid down  
to rest in pale velvet, I'm still  
a brass dream. Enthralled at least in memories  
indelibly coated,  
invisibly dipped in the buzz of laughing breath  
strewn with sweat drops, cigarette ash,  
dim corners, spotlight-stoked  
pulse of the crowd.

Ice clinks in glasses shone round  
my doing it up with dreamers like me, the great ones  
and those emulating the great,  
sassy, ageless, horn gods of swelter.

My hopes of being revolve around being (as earth  
around sun) possessed, and revived by  
that *someone*: I'm dizzy  
dreaming of repeat.

I can feel future rumbling,  
a thunder of sweet notes sent through me,  
cascading to stir listeners' ears, flutter hearts  
in their throats (bring their feet to the floor).

This time, it's by my request:

*More, more, of the using, the hallowed breath, thing Supreme.*



## **Non-Flight Poem**

My poem's dented by numbers.  
The debt of being alive and anxious  
eats moth-holes in the silk of my cocoon.

Just when I get the urge to lift,  
feel my ability swell, and think I  
really will flap my wings large this time,  
I feel the glass parameters of a jar.

Clover fragrant grasses are my fantasy;  
amidst my possession by earthly  
consumption, I fantasize

about cohabiting with my kind:  
flutterers in various stages  
of rich succinctness, pale grey lavender  
fluorescent-tube pink to thunder sky violet.

My container's unmoved by fringy edges,  
however, and, tauntingly see-through too,

much like this conscious state of knowing  
I have wings at all but can't see yet  
how to break out and loop the trees.

**Ring (for 4:18)**

Theatrical, this sentence to a corridor trod up or down,  
feet motion, body-weight, stir-sprayed dust.

Light circles as a fitful moth (bright tunnel mostly legend):

everyday faith is by feel and fine dust ingested,  
labor of lungs and limbic system.

God is love, we read,  
unconvinced and jaundiced, tossed by winds...

6:07, the town church bell has already sounded  
its Pavlovian clang cueing arise.

From wrinkled sheets lonely bodies unfold,  
creased as flowers in a Bible by pluck and capture,

palmed sediment of parents', lovers', children's sorrows;  
their own hope stirred and salted, tried, Job-like-

revived somehow by spring's delivery, brazen green,  
each lot's painful squeeze anesthetized,  
sweet stirred by half-emerged rosebuds. Then...

God is Love.

4:18, a porch breeze cool and personal reminds my skin of touch.  
Hidden birds chitter-caw, chitter-caw, gossiping.

Another disgruntled believer has fallen  
prey to Bitterness:

his wide-jawed wolf, winsome pin-striped suit...ensuing shreds.

All would-be repairmen: we nurses, poets, father figures, teachers,  
handfuls of cotton, ether, pencils, blueprints, hooks and eyes...

We/they take turns resuscitating Innocence, salvage what's left of days,  
chase fervently the sight-smell-taste of blood away,

flood sickrooms with lavender,

pantomime Hope in relay.

## Horse Catching (for the New Year)

Is it possible to know  
when you've fallen off the horse  
though you didn't understand yourself  
to be horseback to begin with?

Is lackluster a valley one never lows  
for, but falls off their horse there,

wonders why the smell of earth  
suddenly has gotten that much closer?

Space

appears to have closed in, here,  
on the ground, body huddled or splayed  
as something rejected, chucked from the ring.

Is pluck what rouses all pummeled fighters  
back to dance-jab-sweat, rodeo clowns  
back to thwart bulls, working stiffs  
back to the sketches of their own agendas?

Perhaps the question's bruised, blood red,  
some might add "herring"—look  
here—not there—grapple with Newton's laws,

avoid issue of headway, that motion's ceased.  
Cold rain froze overnight, beaded into ice glaze

on the car windows. Off the slippery horse  
someone, at least one, has slid or been  
unwittingly bucked into sand, or better yet  
cactus—

each keen spine a wake-up.  
If you're asking my advice,

Get up, relish the taste of grass and gravel  
in your teeth, lick your scratches and scheme.

The horse, you can hear him snorting, smart-ass,  
teeth-bared, whinnying in glee at your comedic  
delicacy; he'll be by again soon...daring you  
to mount him.

## From the Latin *Retrogradus*

A path runs through the watchful crowd,  
Upon it, fearless, struts tall thin girl

Decked in retro 2010--  
She shoulders a chained and quilted Chanel,

Ladylike purse atop military over-  
shirt That wraps and ties;

Art-deco sequins swirl a tank  
In deep-veed vintage silk beneath.

High-heeled combat boots on tights  
Allure in leather buckles above the ankles

Over laced-up leather shaft...  
Lace up, they say, and buckle in, for glam,  
Flirt coyly, the idea: pin-ups and soldiers all-in-one....

Tall thin girl two on the runway swaggers  
Cocky, her khaki hunting vest shiny with  
buttons

Nods to metal flak jackets,  
While her tweed wool full-leg trousers

Might well salute more than roomy hemlines,  
Sassy yes, and states of some legs that didn't make it home the same...

Announcement! Trending now:  
Skinny sweaters reminiscent of Hepburn,

Satchels, cross-body and ox-blood accents—  
Please note not only costly militaristic interventions of the world,

But also competing turfs, inner-city neighborhoods, art made of rebellion  
As next tall thin girl floats in graffiti-covered pants  
And a patchwork cape in shades of camel, her hair a long bob,

Late 60s style, with fringe, and her lush-lashed eyes,  
Uniform like each tall thin before her,

Determined, straight ahead, beautiful.  
They mean business.

## Fruit

I am screaming, and wonder who  
can taste the avocado anymore  
at the outdoor Mexican café when lusty  
revved engines hustle by, and the smoke

of last year's love affair still cloaks  
the post-intermingled sullen air. Salt  
melts farther down Margarita's glass to oblivion.  
Seems we're less fond of our Ps and Qs:

the need for control plus calm fake smiles,  
the known comfort, conspiracy-of-silence  
outgrown. Ripe words dangle, daring lips to open.  
Deep in her purse, the mirror waits to breathe.

Sliced avocado's lush green so pretty a contrast  
to ceramic plate's sun-dressed cobalt, it attracts

yet another summer fly... Here we are again,  
the same but not the same at all, hearts juiced

like citrus by means of our world—  
train wrecks or snipers, unrequited valentine  
teeters on the doorstep, a toddler  
impatient in its crib screams. For hours

we soap and twist our hands at the sink, hoping  
we'll best only bad germs, attract more hardy  
love, feel good about our deeds, find  
a place to be upright and too, in good conscience,

lay down our heads. I am the someone, like you,  
who still licks the salt, tastes the sweet tang  
and feels the citrus burn into my fine-cracked  
fingers when I squeeze the limes.

**Please tint me**

On high, light-edged clustered heart  
joined to others (stemmed in agape)—

yet a petal alone... and longing for  
a twine to wave with me daily.

Please God in the midst of necessity  
and inspiration, please tint me

rouge-sappy in love all together.  
Motion in sweetness, slow ease,

wise and kind, as sprouts a leaf—  
photosynthesized to ardent see-thru;

dense-webbed and life-forced rich  
from center through veins sustaining us...

Fragrant the leaf of such love,  
cup running over, streamed goodness—

wet erases complications, renews  
ideas of fresh building, fills creases in palms.

Notions take cue to resurge.  
Cruel heaps of debris smoke and burn

separate by their nature's intention.  
Togetherness, meanwhile, other's fine purpose.

**Poem After a Line From Jon Anderson's  
"Quentin Boyar's Grand Canyon Decision"**

In the consequences of your longing,  
ticked-off minutes slouch to fritter, days catch  
flame and fade to ash—for instance  
you blow off the reading of a poet from DC  
at the hip semi-local bookstore due to what you call  
exhaustion, egged on by your shadow, inadequacy.  
Tuesdays into the next, like bananas bought slight  
green ripen, sport brown specks spreading  
into eventual rot. You fancy a new watch,  
like the ones that divers wear, rubber  
strap and rotating bezel, water resistant  
to meters of sea you'll never be found in  
unless you're suddenly swept into wealth or win a cruise.  
In the aftermath of sweaty dreams,  
where you keep almost hooking up  
or you never can quite make out the face—  
groggy frustration settles on your Cheerios,  
which you try to ignore as you gobble  
quickly to avoid the sog. Your boots  
are thick and practical, they keep you  
planted like a tree that doesn't Ka-Ching in coin,  
but leaves high interest plastic, your shrink bills,  
your wishes, truly, to light up, burrow in and down  
scotch-like each milligram of the moon's radiation  
so you might shine or just rest, somehow, satiated.