

MiPO *esias* m i p o

rosanna
lee

Please describe your favorite poem or kind of poetry.

My favorite kind of poetry hits the reader with the clearest of realizations where one would say enraptured, “yes, yes, I know exactly what they are saying, and it’s happened to me, and what a clever way to say it!”

If you could spend a day with a living poet you admire, what would you do together? What might a passerby overhear?

James Tate and I would go to the circus. We would eat popcorn and drink beer. “My rump hurts sitting on these bleachers.”

**Which relationship is more important:
a) poetry and politics or
b) poetry and philosophy? Why?**

Ugh, what a rough question. The question should be, “Would Poetry go to bed with Philosophy or Politics?” And the answer, of course, would be: Philosophy. But Politics would be there in the morning.



If you were able to place poetry in the world where it does not seem prominent, how would it behave there?

The Absurdist would say poetry in a cube of ice on a checkerboard! The Idealist would say to place poetry in the mouths of doctors and lawyers, the messengers spewing forth beauty. And a Waitress in a diner would ask that poetry be in her trailer at the end of a day, in her bedroom drawer with her neatly folded underpants, melting.

Where will we see you and your work in five years?

I will be in Providence in five years with all of my work stuffed under my mattress, safe and waiting.

Tell us a story: what drew you to poetry in the first place? Why did you start writing?

I had this teacher in high school, who loved John Donne, he had muscles and drove a motorcycle...

Do you know what they call avocados?

Moist Halvah texture, sometimes yellow, and sometimes too soft and black in spots.

How it will slovenly crush like silt

in cream striations, deposited behind

your fingernails, like an old habit,

smearing the glass bowl with mashed green

and yellow not quite ripe,

its young heart spread wide.

I almost forgot, that large seed!

Hunking half of the fruit, someone once

told me that gargantuan seed would sprout

a fine, baby moss.

This emollient softens a sailor's

palms enough to cup a woman's buttocks.

How it will learn to cover itself

soon with scaly skin, an alligator hide.

How we crave it's insides

so giving and tender,

it seems unbreakable, only spreading wider.

Sweet butter of the forest.

Irregulars

There is that which the language allows,
and that which is not accounted for:
namely, the irregulars.

Then there is the way you think life will be
and the way it really is.

The disparity stretches.

Irregular words from list, Step 3B:

ballet buffet chalet fasten fillet soften valet

control glisten

exhibit

When you think of a birthday party or a wedding, there
are glorious images in your mind. Curled ivory icing,
paper sailboats lit blue in a shimmering moat, streamers,
strippers, scottish bagpipes, sturdy daisies bold with varnish,
and instead me'dear, you have tense shoulders, have to unpack
the car, have to wipe your nose.

When you think of your future, you see the desert,
or a long lost love.

She catches your eye across the bar, and walks over.

You say something witty, Bogartish, and she spreads
her teeth and laughs with her whole body.

Irregular words from list, Step 4B:

awe crepe haste niche owe whose

approve comrade handsome improve someone

When you think of Vegas, well- it is really a stink whore. The exception.

When you think of sex, or your occupation, lights! Neon!

Perfection, a limo involved,

I must be a model for others, a heroine...and really, you fill out

paperwork, you put it in and out

and it feels toasty and you moan, yes.

When you think of your funeral, monumentous, heralds of angels

singing, play Louis Armstrong, a light rain in the cemetary, you won't

get over me, you won't find another woman to fill your nights like I

have... and some months go by and the arrangements all went smoothly.

Irregular words from list, Step 5A:

buy oh die lie pie tie bye

honest remove woman women

beauty busy pretty

When you think of the weekend, the farmer's market early in the

morning with fresh kale and shallots,

coffee milk and honey, the park, a film, picnic with friends, a long

drive, a dance.

And you sleep in like a slob and watch television.

This is the disparity _____

you must measure it how you will and be on the look out for it.

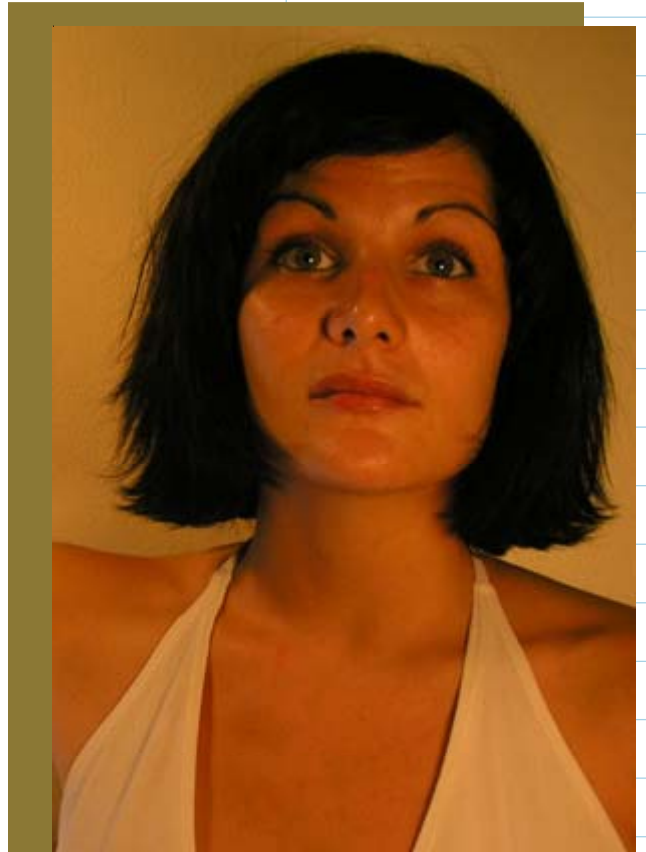
It shows up when you are 23: the jabberwocky, the irregular, your life

as everyone else knows it to be.

Poppanickel

Slowly, she started to find her joy again, and
it was buried in her clavicle,
settled in there with lint from her loved bed
and her father's comments from the window while
jogging,
"You look very athletic."

Her will with her father was always this
wet noodle, flapping toward his heart.
His hands shake so bad now, he can't write his name.
Here, pop, have some beef and ale,
calm your shaking, she will pretend not to look.
your old secrets, your crusted kitchen, She wishes
she could stop in and check on you.
She's made sure to live far away from everyone, including you.
Her old man who knows all the shortcuts, takes her
through the Marriot lobby, like they're royalty at the penthouse,
when instead
they're cutting through to the parking lot, using the
bathroom.
You would call your grandson in a huff late at night,
coming from the bar,
Get your fishing pole ready,
Dig for worms, I'm coming for you early in the morning.
He would pack a bag to go fishing and wait
on the stoop with his fishing pole, propped against the screen door.
You never made it.
Just that once, she remembers fishing with you.
Your lines were cast, worms on rusty hooks and all.
Three gangly black boys sheened with creek water,
huddled next to a flimsy raft, can we pass, mista, pull in yer lines.
Daddy, let's pull them in, so the boys can go by in
the rocky river bed.
He said no, leave the lines cast.
The boys waded through on tiptoe.



Rosanna Lee was born in Philadelphia, currently living in New York. She teaches Special Education in Brooklyn. Her next collection of poems will be released soon, entitled, *Luncheonette*.

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www.mipoesias.com

editor in chief
amy king

managing editor
meghan punschke

print editor
jenni russell

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didi menendez