

Tristise



Jacqueline Valença

TRISTISE

By Jacqueline Valencia



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This chapbook is dedicated to Christopher and Alexandria. They make dreams come true.
- Jacqueline

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1. Rock

This pebble in the playground
was probably a boulder at one point
Its polished unblemished exterior
Hints to age

The smoothest hills are
the oldest mountains

A young mountain
Strong, majestic
with the sharpest peak
snow covered and reaching out for the skies
As if it was searching and begging
for the blue sky's attention
for the loving embrace of the big big Sun.

As time went by
the sharpest peak
and all its attachments broke off
or were worn down by the harshness
of the cold winds that met it
Once in a while the mountain would still reach up
and look for its creator
or stand tall in honour of it...
only to be met by the dirt and the grind
of the calling earth below it.

And so
time went by
the sharpest peak
turned into another boulder
at the mountain's foot
Trees grew around it
and the mountain became a hill
and a cluster of rocks
Separated
from its heap

And then finding itself going through many more cycles
Boulder to rock
rock to pebble
wind, rain and snow
It will still exist even when it is a molecule
in sand
Beyond that it could find itself as part of mineral
being part of everything that surrounds it
part of the whole
as part of a person
as part of a bird
as part of a galaxy
or a piece of paper
where I write about the mountain I put in my pocket.

(July 2006)

2. Nothing

I am nothing. By being nothing I affect change into the world.

There is nowhere to start from and nowhere to end to. I am neither here nor there.

By existing nowhere I affect change into the world.

I am neutral and less or more so where there can be looking ahead, behind, above and below.

By being here and not, I affect change into the world.

I am neither concept nor an idea for I have always been. Too many days of being left behind, put aside and growing big to be a potential. I was nothing then either. Too many days of being called upon, set forward and growing small to be something. I am nothing now as well.

The big zero rather than separating the 1 or the negative world it identifies itself outside of every other number. Add it to some other number and that number stays. Multiply by zero and a number is obliterated. Divide by zero and you get impossibilities or meaningless expressions. Errors which bring nothing. Zero either ends negativity or starts positivity or is it the other way around? Little zero, big zero and by being unassigned, I defy and affect change into the world.

I am nothing and am blessed with nothing to give you. I ask of you nothing for I have no voice. I am action in my inaction and define everything else from my non-existence. Encapsulating and holding nothing within my parameters, you can not define me for your purposes. I have no purpose and with that I affect change into the world.

From the little ant you blissfully were unaware of crushing underneath your shoe to the word you passed over on a page, see, to the squeal you made that no one heard in an empty room to the blown out candle at a restaurant, I am nothing like many things in this world. Within zero's shape, stand, placement and use it brought about this thing I'm writing electronically on and the thing I heated my coffee in.

With my thoughts, words, green hair, tattoos...and without the things the world analyzes me to be...

I take no credit for my offspring's talents, ideas and opinions. I am not a philosophy. I am not a political theory. My children will not springboard from me. I celebrate them coming from my zero shaped belly to become a fire all their own. I was not their creator. I love them because they are nothing as well and I love them because they are my something too. I am mama to them, but they will affect their own change into the world.

So we get back here where with physics, chemistry and theories I have convinced myself that I am nothing. I am neither putting myself down or playing myself up. J is zero in braille, so even my name starts at nothing. Put on clothes, take off shoes....

How, by being nothing by defying definition, do I affect change into the world? If I were to end this sentence with zero would I be defining myself as the space after this sentence or as the zero?

(November 2008)

3. Mime

The mime sat on the bench by the lake and stared off in a daze.
His makeup smeared by tears and his hands drooped at his sides.
A poor little subspecies of clown he looked sad,
but it was hard to say if it was part of his routine.
Just slap on some polka-dots and he'd be Harlequin or even worse, Pagliacci.

The sun shone high in the sky
and it was at the very busy corner
of the Queens Quay terminal where high class
and homeless often congregate in the summers to buy
or to beg.
I was taking photographs by the tourist pit stop that is the coffee shop there.
It was a hectic time at that corner
and I decided to take my new camera for a spin on my lunch hour.
I had seen the mime before, but this is the first time
I had ever seen him so still and so sad.

I felt that if I poked him in the shoulder
that he wouldn't budge or blink.
He seemed absorbed in his tragedy
that even his black outfit seemed blacker and tighter on his frame.
I wondered if there was a store
somewhere that specialized in mime or clown wear.

Hunger drew me to the market
and I settled on a pint of strawberries
at one of the nearby concession stands.
A tiny young lady delicately gave me my pint,
some homemade whipped cream in a styrofoam cup,
and a large bottle of the latest in vitamin-enhanced water.

"Pardon me. Sorry. Thank you. Excuse me.
Oops. Thank you."
I recycled those words as I tried to get
myself through the many groups of people
fending their way for a better look at the giant cod
that floated dead in the water by a water taxi.
When I finally found my way to a bench,
I ended up sitting next to the sad mime.
He looked even more pitiful up close.

What unusual effect the stark white makeup
looked on his ebony skin.
Red lips drawn into a smile, now looked menacing with his frown.
The pores of his skin showed through
and made him look more human and
less cartoonish as he was made up to be.
Beside him lay a black and white umbrella,
A beaten up old doctor's medicine bag,
and a plastic flower that I think may have fallen
from his hat.

My tummy rumbled
I reached for my first strawberry
and dipped it into the warm whipped cream
that was melting fast in the sun.
Underneath the cream, the tiny seeds

embedded in the red skin of my strawberry
clung to their home.
So orderly, so perfect in their place were these seeds
that stemmed from something so fantastically wild as a weed.
Their home so wild and real, were they given their order,
their place or did they find their place at conception?
I tasted the sour, the sweet, the soft texture
of its inside juices
before I took the first bite.

The crowds were starting to thin out
as lunchtime drew to a close
and everyone went back to their offices
or the events beginning at
the Harbourfront Center close by.
All of a sudden, there was a bit of calm
and the Mime fixed his makeup quickly
and gathered his things up
Setting them up
Him up
and smiled at me.
He stood up, turned away
and started his routine with "trapped in a box".

It then dawned on me,
I had never actually
seen him perform for anyone.
That afternoon he was miming
to the giant dead cod by the water taxi.
I was late to get back to work,
but I watched him that day
and I ate each strawberry
like it was going to be my last.

(February 2010)

4. Army

You don't know you have this army behind you.
You only know when you wake up.
It takes a great strength to ask.
The same amount of will that keeps you quiet.
When you are in that moment where you think you can't get out.
You either see the light.
Or you choose to ignore that you're even in a tunnel.
And there is no right or wrong way to fight or even surrender
No one has the right to tell you to take on the fight or surrender.

You don't know you have this great army behind you.
For whatever you choose to do.
For whoever you are.
How alone you feel.
They raise the flags of the colours
that symbolize the person you decide to be.

Why are all these people behind you?
Why spend so much on artillery and wear?
They found something in you
They've found in themselves.

For no other way can we find the heros outside of us
that challenge and lead
Even when we choose not see them
those heros are all within
Inside us
For us
just like the one in you.

There is an army behind you.
They can be annoying at times.
They squabble and they forget each other
with their own little wars and military campaigns
Some choose that fight with themselves
Which is the biggest battle of them all.
We all get our own 1945

There is an army behind you
But there is an army behind you
when you choose to look back
so you can go forward
And they will stand in front of the tanks
and dance like clowns if you want them too
but the fact is
they are behind you
sometimes in front of you
and they give us company

that is all you need in the fight
there is no right or wrong way to do it or even to surrender
There is an army
because we always will have the fight
There's no easy way to say it
There will always be the fight

No call to justice
No comforting cries to bear arms
No dedications of love or pledge of allegiance
Just soul. Just existence
It's only when protestor takes a stance and realizes
there is no peace
until they realize that there will always be the fight
until we realize that there will always be the fight.

Fighting battling biting
On and on.

No one has the right to tell you to take on the fight or surrender
just you
just you
just you.

(May 2008)

5. waves

Shhhshh...Aoshhhwaoshhh...
We are waves in a memory
Hola...ola...ool...wshh...
ever expanding-being stretched by the flow
preserving our changing faces, lifting
our voices...as a colour of crab-like language
pours into the air...aoh...ahh...
through the white gurgling crest...aoshl..expel the words...
the more mouth you are, the farther
away you are from the ground...Knowledge can kill you
and numb the rapids...these infinite amounts of recall
..have their purpose...aoshh...

grab hold to something solid
...letters...ABC...The earth we protect and kill
each other for...there is never enough
of it to stand on...We belong to this soil...
and the waves that carry it...
purify the crevices of our souls.

I am drowning in this sea of memory..entirely you..we are w..wahh..terr..a.gua. Now we...I..I am
vanquished and dry.

(March 1997)

6. Blue

the blue haze
of twilight
things are always the same
blue flashes from the box
with wire-fixed eyes
in a menacing grin
Maddie finds questions
fuel to her eternal blue flame
newsman says the time
idols try to rhyme
no, the matches of an ideal
are not part of the explosion
decorations
part of the heartburn
of yesterdays meal.

solid in the mind of Maddie
are blue connections
physical, electrical, and powerful
like maddie's dolly
whose blue eyes sparkle with contentment
from the light of her hit TV show
....blue dress, blue shoes,
don't step on them, blue
nylons, the blue do's of that
funny lady on the tube
....aching blue, aching hue,
Maddie inside is still the same
with the sky....her mind
the TV blinds her
but she is composed
and blue finds its new shade
to fall under
never changing
basically, entirely, and always
blue.

(February 1997)

7. desire

desire
sealed in the vaults of fear
it's like being stitched up in a gigantic heart
belonging to no one and everyone
the heat we all yearn for
("Indeed, proceed...")
gathered among this endless aching
of want...
i wander alone.

you are the seed of my deeds
("PROCEED! PROCEED!")
like birds these thoughts of you
fly far off to be captured...
("The need to succeed. Please, proceed...")
through familiar sights and sounds
i was driving, walking or tripping
knocking you down
("I bleed, indeed, proceed...")
i find you there
angels in my eyes.

the puddle i tread in
cools my fever for you
in that tree ("I see...proceed, proceed...")
i see you
back inside me
that beast churned
my creation longing for both of us
me to you, you to me
("Again, proceed...")
but...
i guess you will always leave
the words for the air

you never show much of this to anyone
your backstab creed ("Indeed...")
baring thoughts, exposing emotions
soon to be rotten
why can't I be found in my own
thoughts?

around, round i turn
i get up and find
the prisoner locked
inside of me ("Indeed...I)
that craving creature is you.

(April 1995)

8. Blue 2

There once was a time where she saw the world as black and white and then like day turning into night, all around her turned grey. Born out of nothing she was part of everything. There she was on this barren land where all that she could see were infinite rolling hills:

"I've left the other piece of me in old world perspectives. I am entirely here... my two arms, my two legs, two eyes, one mouth and all the rest."

She recognized this place. A valley of lush green and a bright blue orb which followed her lonely silhouette. The ground beneath her was pulsing and warm, but she walked on to the hushed hum of the breeze.

"That covers me," she said pointing to her head.

This child of reason...this child of pure Truth, now stood face to face against perfection.

But not her. No, she was not a fool. Equal to all, but above all others.

Here she stood her ground. Fallen to the cries of heaven because she knew the grey now. The heart of the grey was transparent and never changing. Grey was here. Complete. Everything would end up in it and realize that the answer was right under their noses.

She saw no horizon, no place to go. This was the end of her and a beginning all at once.

The blue orb travelled closer to her. She looked at it curiously and soon found out that it was that missing piece of her. A part that she must get back. Grey made it possible for her to see it, to perceive it and now she could attain it. Smooth and light she felt it as she took it into her arms.

She continued against perfection. The blue orb went inside and became one with all her being. The rhythm of her heart changed and, no longer alone, she made the heavens bow down to her:

"Often times it's the endless bitterness that holds
You to taking that step one after another
A walk as a purpose
Like knowledge
Knowledge- a language well misunderstood
Do not stand in panic
Walk your endless talk
Breathe that easy breath
No one should give a damn to your preaching...
Walk
When I love by music
Feathers carry me, light feeds me
Passed on from one to the other
Endlessly to the soft cradles of the heavens
Warm is the love of angels
Tough it is for me
To accept their caresses
The intricate entanglements
Of my masters
Praised by the music
Painted by the music
Eternal are your words of sadness
Leaping from despair to glee
Hearts may be reaching out
(not to miss you)
A hundred and thirty more

Are left in a flask of gold
I am searching and sharply cursed
Called by Art, pulled by pleasures taken
By blood
Stung by His name
Mock fantasy
That is this moment
Shelter may be the Earth
Notes are the cradles
Rests are my angels' sighs
Praying for our return
Grey...Dusk...I will not fade out in you
I will now turn to pure Blue."

(September 1997)

9. Speaking

Without you, I cannot make a sound
The world continues to turn
but I am lost in its movement
I remain
Because You are the source of
my living
Yet when I speak
no words respond
From the One I truly have
faith in
God does not exist in a world
of inexperience
Suffering brings out
true love
And love comes out
of an interaction
Why do I breathe if
I cannot see?
The Truth is, pain
(in happiness and in sorrow)
draws me to you
An irresistible pull
Believe me
I've tried to wrestle You
out of my heart
But what is the reality
of my virtue?
It can only be me
living in You
Thus I turn to face the walls
that I must climb
And Your smile
takes me to that first step to
You.

(July 1997)

10. star

We should all make that journey
to the deep recesses of the brain
Where shocks prevail and breed
torrential thoughts that exceed
logic or comprehension.
It is where one idea, one explanation
is given for the eternity of living....
Open Your Eyes
We are still blind: even after the Fall
Every one of us can acknowledge
each other's faults and beauties
but not the True Individual
May I seek to explain this to you.
Your lives are not solitary
Neither are they common
Among us there is always something
to reveal
A loneliness, a core, a soul to tell us
Why there is Desperation
This outer tissue is not you..
Whether we are happy or in sorrow
We are constantly searching for comfort
for a pain
Make yourself a comet's aim
Start this stellar journey in your
Inner Cosmos now
Your mind is your heart
Your heart a path through
the constellation that dwells
inside of you.

(May 1995)

11. Coming

There was contact at some point
just talking there
volumes increased with the mounting
heat
the complexity of your delivery
there was contact at some point
I know there was
my withered hands were old enough
to remember.

There was contact at some point
we never talk
sure we do
we're talking now
no we don't
and yes we are
we don't SHARE
my leg hurts from
all this running after you
and all you are doing is
skimming the page
the idea
me.

There was contact at some point
you had gone for a walk
it got so quiet when you put on your coat
it got cold
the simple pause of taking yourself away
there was contact at some point
I didn't know anything
the new bile in my throat
knew
you were gone a long time ago.

(October 2010)

12. I d e n t i t y

Do you ever wonder if this was the
Way we were meant to paint the sky?
All these colours our eyes perceive
They are all different
Where your eye shape sees
Opaque green
Mine might see bright yellowish
Green
Or maybe a bit bluuu-eish.

We paint with brushes predetermined
And nurtured.
I can not argue with your red
You stand apart at my definition of maroon
Was this the way we were meant to
Paint the sky?
I solve my puzzles by closing my eyes
Obliterating outside wills and opinion
There was only black, I see
I tighten my grasp
And squeeze all of myself
Into a little dark room
Where there is no noise
No Plato, No mother
No one on the street
No cat at the right time
To give me the scratch of realization
Rrrrrah
There the sunlight manages
To reach me slowly
It always does
Enticing pinkness
Red
Through my slits
Pry
Pale lemon yellow
NO
This is mine don't....
Warm orange, pale skin and
My pupils di-a-late.
Hello burnt sienna tree
Hello steel blue canvas
Above
Without me you are not there
Come now, how can
I define you, describe you
Without____

(October 2010)

13. Fine

Our dances are made of light born
Magic
Steamrolled floors dusty with outside
Intrusions and pollution
Adding to the flare
The illusion of smoke rising
From our chaos.

Our tantrums are made of drama tide
Magic
Screamed emotions moist from the inside
Mingling and tingling
Smashing into the air
The reality of our rage shining
Out above all others.

(October 2010)

14. Tristise

Here is my offering
Dear muse
I owe you thought, sound, and the bloated
Words
That create this world
Onto old pages
Of my music
My favourite little people in the world
Uncradled
Unbridled
They jump ahead
Too far ahead for me to reach.

Here is my offering
Dear muse
I owe you my feedings, my nutrients and the contorted
Six months afterbirth where I felt nothing
An empty space
With no feeling
My favourite little people in the world
Hampered
Pampered
They enclosed me like walls
I couldn't breathe .

Here is my offering
Dear muse
I sacrifice myself now
I owe them my all right now
These new pages
In my life
My favourite little people in the world
Celebrated
Independent
I never want to let them go
On their own
May
Be.

Here is my offering
Dear muse
My offering
a consolidation
reconciliationemacipation
I am woman
Motherchild
Lovingspirit
Maniacal activist
Rebel word
Peacewarrior
Standstancestanzaplotter
Femalealien.

(October 2010)



photo by jennifer valencia

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