Sestina for My Chef and Sixteen-Year-Old Version of Myself

Alicia Banaszewski

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/laureate

Part of the Poetry Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/laureate/vol9/iss1/32

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by the Lee Honors College at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Laureate by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu.
When we naively planned our lives together it was a mutual decision: we were going to be poor
And it was going to be wonderful. Poor and happy. We were never to be alone, we were to be the pair,
So young and in love, sleeping in the back of vans, traveling until the end of time.
We would go out to dinner and sneak too many mints
And kiss and kiss and kiss. Then breathe deep and soak in the scent.
I would giggle, you would kiss my nose.
Photographs I can't, won't dispose of. One of us as little Eskimos, me with my rosy cheeks, nose to nose,
Mid-laughter. I would tear you apart and put you back together, down to every pore
Of your golden brown skin. Whenever anyone speaks of love, it makes me think on all of the letters I've written but never sent
To you. With your fancy, new knives you taught me how to pare
Chicken breast, not that we ate it. You showed me how to mince
Garlic correctly and how to identify thyme.
Always picking fights over little nothings that I could have sworn meant something at the time,
They seldom did. You don't, but everyone else knows
How much I regret, how much I've changed. Sneaking mints
Is lonelier a task than it should be now. Something so mundane should hold no significance. Pour
Me another drink and I will tell you all about it. I will ramble about how to tell the ripeness of a pear
And the corresponding numerical code from the grocery store I worked at to impress him, wanting to make him proud, the perfect cashier, counting every cent.
All letters I've written but never sent
To you, all of my confessions. Do you remember that time
When we were fourteen and it was so cold I couldn't breathe. We were only in tee shirts and you held me so tight, protecting me from the cold like you protected me from everything. I hid my face from the wind in your chest, looked down and saw
the snow and your pair
Of black converse. They, among other things about you, made me crinkle
my nose.
Did you know I don't do that anymore? Every word I write screams, “Poor
me, poor me” when it was all my doing. I'll have you know it was all my
doing. With my fancy culinary skills I knowingly take my heart and cut,
slice, mince.
Remember when you used to cut? Cut, cut, slice, mince.
She told me the scars bring her pain, and I quake. There are no words.
Forever I am holding onto all those letters I've never sent,
What are you waiting for? Pour
Me another drink and I'll tell you about the time
We saw a shooting star, cuddled close. An intimacy no one knows.
The perfect pair.
You have always had the deepest pair
Of soft, sincere brown eyes of anyone I will ever meet. I swear I saw your
soul smiling back at me through them all the time.
I wonder if she notices, I wonder if she knows.
I wonder if you're accustomed to her scent.
Memories. Yours will be with me forever, mine will fade in time.
Remember? We were going to be poor.
Poor girl, that poor, poor
Girl. See how she digs her own grave? She and her pen, they make the
perfect pair.
I miss you all the time,
All the time, I still sneak mints.
I'm sorry. You're still in my heart, I always wonder, I hope she's better. All
the letters I've never sent.
Everyone knows.

— Alicia Banaszewski