

THE MINISON PROJECT  
PRESENTS THEIR

# Sonnet Collection Series

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# Sonnet Collection Series

The Minison Project



**volume 3 sonneteers:**

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*THE FIRE IS WATCHING US, TOO*  
*for Carolyn Forché*  
*by Meghan Kemp-Gee*

On the train away, they are raising fares  
due to system maintenance. On the train,  
everything is intransitive: we *just*  
*let go* and *dance off, slowly*. The fire won't  
go out. We can't stop watching. The fire  
is watching us, too. The train is leaving  
on schedule. The train carries away. We

get carried away, things cost too much.

In case of fire, we are watching our  
budgets, our figures, we are getting  
carried away. In case we are not  
being watched, in case we are being  
left behind, we are watching the fire,  
we are raising fares for everything.

*When you wish I had never been yours*  
*by Kathryn Lee*

Think of me, cough before diving into  
the Lethe, lights fading on your creation,  
nights hidden, flesh-knit, whispering to you,  
let me be—time slurs—anew your fiction.  
Orpheus's thief gaze, fool to mourn ere  
loss; call me a fool, my Eurydice,  
let me hear your echo, pick my bones bare,  
I will drink us to our color-leached lee.  
Young flaws fatal, I've carded my fingers  
through the contents of your library soul,  
stole your thoughts, copied them mine; he lingers,  
that boy archived who wrote and wrenched me whole.  
When the silver waves kiss over your head,  
look down, and see the ankle asp-bite bled.



## *Canyon Echoes*

*by Thomas Zimmerman*

Tonight, I duel life—to prove my love  
for it. The sonnet is my sword of choice.  
Meal cooked, a second beer in front of me,  
my wife upstairs on Zoom. Beethoven on  
the playlist: middle string quartets. Above  
those violins, viola, cello—voice  
of gods, or human striving. Form can free  
our arts and deeds from quick extinction. Dawn  
breaks anytime. The light shines brighter in  
this dark deluxe sublet called middle age.  
No kids, no heirs. But thinning hair. Begin  
and end in gratitude, today's blond sage  
might offer. Canyon echoes, the belief  
that feelings matter. Love's full price is grief.

*I was told to not write sonnets because it leads to melancholy*  
*by Emma McCoy*

You should know I am lonely without you.  
I love you as I love sad street music,  
the kind that pulls on me, pulls my heart through  
to my work. You always did accuse it  
of pulling us apart. I didn't see how  
the bizarre can wreck the beautiful,  
couldn't see it then and can't see it now.  
I write my poetry as usual  
but the higher notes fall flat on the page  
like rain on a rock in a cave somewhere.  
Know I am lonely. A bird in a cage  
still sings a song but it can't be compared  
with street music. A sad sounding guitar  
pulls me, the beautiful, and the bizarre.

## *Gargoyle's Egg*

*by Tiel Aisha Ansari*

A windless storm. There is no open sky  
above my head; just heavy opal swirl  
and feathers drifting back and forth, as I  
become a pigeon trapped inside a pearl,  
an embryo in egg. I'm not the girl  
I used to be, but then who is? The times  
unravel us, set knit adrift from purl.  
The goblin shadows haunting Dickens' Chimes  
remind us of our little, heedless crimes:  
omission and commission.

Let me be  
a gargoyle spouting rain instead of rhymes  
unburdened of all human memory.  
I'll hatch on some cathedral roof, alone  
and free. My egg is glass. My wings are stone.

*Today, It Begins.*

*by Olly Nze*

Dream of all the things they said would not yield,  
And let once more your weary heart ignite.  
Let the scars you have carried here be healed,  
And from this endless night, your heart take flight.  
Let daylight have dominion from this day  
And choose *here* to break the cycle of doubt.  
Think of tomorrow and let come what may,  
let bare the blossoms this magic can sprout.  
Dream far: beyond fallen foes embracing  
And the sight of comrades atop gallows:  
Faces sallow, maladroit, and wasting:  
Fear seeping down to their very marrow.  
What is this pain? But regret in transit.  
What are ghosts? If not angels candlelit.



*Death Be Not Proud, J. Simpson  
(Inspired by John Donne's "Death Be Not Proud")*

*Holy Sonnet X: Death, be not proud*  
*by John Donne (1571-1631)*

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee  
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;  
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow  
Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.  
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,  
Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow,  
And soonest our best men with thee do go,  
Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.  
Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,  
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,  
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well  
And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?  
One short sleep past, we wake eternally  
And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

## *Early-Onset Dementia*

*by James Scannell McCormick*

*I work today*, she texts – a fact, the kind  
Of “news” that friends of forty years (and more)  
Will swap to brace against the wrench and grind  
Of work, loosen the pinch of distance before

The day begins. *At two*. She’s told me so  
Already. Three times. And it’s not yet eight.  
She’ll often repeat – as if I didn’t know –  
*When you drive, you have to pull aside and wait*

*For squads and firetrucks. It’s the law!* She’ll claim,  
*The day that we moved in, you weren’t afraid –*  
*You walked up our driveway and said your name.*  
It never happened. We met in seventh grade,

Our desks together by chance. On my phone, a few  
Moments later: *I work today at two.*

## *On Genetics*

*by Tracy Hyland*

My mother's mother wore those mini skirts  
She bought off clearance racks for teen-aged girls,  
Went off to dance in veteran's halls with flirts:  
Old keepers of the steps that thrill with twirls.

Quite mystified - myself not yet consumed  
By pleasing rites of beauty age reveals  
I watched her - earringed, nyloned, and perfumed -  
As toes slipped giddily into high heels.

Before her mind had fully faded out  
Her body was an engine fueled by lust –  
For life? For adoration? Without doubt,  
Her poetry was vanity turned dust.

The dying men all loved to watch her sway -  
Their priestess who did teach them how to pray.



*Shadows of the Spruce*

*by Thomas Zimmerman*

The wine last night has morphed this morning's bed  
to stylized crime scene, much like Fox TV.

No violence occurred, unless we count  
too much shop-talk, or that new rap CD,  
wolf-wild at first, and then a hare that fled  
the speakers, scared. The dogs lie back asleep.  
Still dark. And still our work is paramount.

Let's leave it all, switch off the lights, and creep  
back up to bed. I've thought ahead: reset  
the coffee timer. Days can't be so long  
that lovemaking won't make them lighter. Bet  
that bird outside rehearsing—getting loose  
within the bluest shadows of the spruce—  
undaunted, and with time, perfects its song.

*The Mortician's Son, on the Custom of Burying Bodies Barefoot*  
by Tiel Aisha Ansari

If you've been to a funeral, you know  
the body's buried fully dressed. *Except*  
*for shoes*. Once, while relations keened and wept—  
you understand, I was a kid. A show  
was all it was to me. I'd yet to grow  
into my own griefs. Anyway, I crept  
behind the coffin where the corpse was kept,  
pulled up the satin to reveal... a toe.

I screamed. The family rushed in from the wake  
and father smacked me. Later on, he said,  
"I wouldn't have you think we rob the dead.  
Tradition says the shoes are ours to take.  
They're clean. I know that you're afraid of germs."  
"No Pa, I thought that corpse's toes were worms."

## *The Starlit Depths*

*by Nick Dix*

Below the edge of darkness, hatchetfish  
swing up the water column, chasing gloom,  
their prey, the ease of pressure, thinnest wish  
they'll steal through moonlight to where plankton bloom.

They cut the water down before the dawn  
to unseen blood-red quick and leave no spark  
of bioluminescence where they've seen,  
save photophores that gird against the dark.

And should someone come sinking from the air –  
with lungs, weak eyes, warm skin, an unwebbed hand  
to swing the transect net – she'll catch her share  
of nothing: scintillating, small and grand.

For us, net no more than a silver lode  
of memory to share sea's lucent code.



*loveismysin, darkreconstruction art*  
*(Inspired by Shakespeare's Sonnet 142)*

*Sonnet 142*

*by Shakespeare (1564-1616)*

Love is my sin, and thy dear virtue hate,  
Hate of my sin, grounded on sinful loving.  
O, but with mine compare thou thine own state,  
And thou shalt find it merits not reproving;  
Or if it do, not from those lips of thine,  
That have profaned their scarlet ornaments  
And sealed false bonds of love as oft as mine,  
Robbed others' beds' revenues of their rents.  
Be it lawful I love thee as thou lov'st those  
Whom thine eyes woo as mine importune thee:  
Root pity in thy heart, that, when it grows,  
Thy pity may deserve to pitied be.  
If thou dost seek to have what thou dost hide,  
By self-example mayst thou be denied.

## *The Reverend's Death*

*by James Scannell McCormick*

*Everything is what it is and not another thing.*

*– Butler*

*Like a terrier, Mother, grim, would sigh, with a rag.*

She meant when I'd get a "notion" involving tea,

Schumann... But Father's ending didn't drag:

He died young, away in a clinic. And she?

She remained unmarried. So why compare?

I learned that Alzheimer's starts with endings, grows

By loss. At first the Reverend couldn't square

His *where* with *why*. Then *who*. "Do you suppose

It must be like..." my daughter would begin.

"It isn't *like*. It *is*," I'd have to say.

His body betrayed no sign of giving in.

He'd have lived and lived. And so I found my way.

Of those who will want to damn me for what I've done,

Of this I'm sure: My husband will not be one.

*Let There Be Rain*

*by John Barnes*

Squeeze hard, upon the charcoal seeded clouds  
Let poetry drip in your open mouth  
Succor the images that fall in crowds  
Taste them, speak them limn them in your house.  
Suck the flavor from a poet's tome  
Infuse your brain and graft a hardy sprig  
For beauty's sake in fertile soil grown  
Harvest the flowers that you plant and dig.  
Toil the quill, adorn this garden bright  
Upon the parchment of your fragrant soul  
In pregnant dreams the poetry is flight  
To raise your consciousness above the toll  
Of darkness mixed with cold cacophony  
And yet in this dark world these eyes can see.

*A Sonnet for My Most Beloved*  
*by Matt Hsu*

Thine ruby eyes; I bow before thy gaze,  
And twinkle at the bloom upon thine back;  
Thine synthesis could bolster me for days,  
Whilst solar beams rain down in perfect stacks.  
Thou speaks sporadic English; this I know,  
Yet words from emerald lips I treasure dear;  
For years I'll sit beside and watch thou grow,  
As all thy swagger strips away my fear.  
With vines and petals munching on our feet,  
We march atop a grassy, sun-kissed hill;  
If foe doth try to stab me in my sleep,  
Thou razor-leaves shall shield me from the kill.  
Now, I have many friends whom I can call,  
But Bulbasaur, I love thee most of all.









