

Poetry Series

Estel Lyons
- poems -

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Estel Lyons()

Estel Lyons was born and raised in the Bronx. She attended Fordham and Columbia University and spent several years as a registered nurse in Pediatric Rehabilitation and Neuro Developmental Medicine. She is the founder of the writer's group, The Dash. Her work has been published in the literary journal, Red River Review. She lists her literary influences as Tennessee Williams, Ernest Hemingway, Charles Bukowski, Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton and Hubert Selby, Jr., among others.

Dear Poet

Your words...

enter my skin
like warm sun

like fine bourbon
they roll across my tongue

they open me
feed and deplete me

I am seduced
by the fragrance
of your words

ivory roses
held close
trailing petals
to my heart

Estel Lyons

Empty

You empty yourself inside me
then drain me with the words

'I don't love you anymore,
not with my heart
I don't look forward to seeing you
I don't want to kiss you'

Spoken with the detached coolness
of one
who no longer
has a stake in the game

You adjust your buckle

And it is done

Left, I grip the cold metal railings of the stair
like a mother refusing to relinquish her dead child
wind offers the breath of life
but my lips are clenched
afraid of the wail that will
empty my soul
should they part

The wind is persistent
hollow, I know not where I will land
in the bay, gutted and tossed back
to die slowly
or on the sand
a shell
emptied by a predator
moving on to his next meal

Estel Lyons

Loneliness

Loneliness
clings
as children play
and couples lean close

Loneliness
sits, arms folded
waiting

for the nod to the jailer
the jolt

when it leaps on your chest
and watches your face
with dolls' eyes
as you struggle for breath

then tumbles away, smiling

It walks behind
on tip toe
translucent
the color of diamond

slips a garotte
'round your throat
and twists
'til one heartbeat from dying

Loneliness
waits
in bed
patiently

pins you to the ropes
at quarter to three
and pounds away relentlessly

Kisses your black eyes awake

adds bile to your tea
extends its cold hand
and says 'Come,
start your day with me.'

Estel Lyons

Lost

I kneel at my confessional
a bedroom window spattered by sea
October wind my deity

The storm offers final absolution
tides threaten, violet waves beckon
but I am not afraid
for the ocean envies the depth of my sadness

and I have learned

fatal errors occur
when the blue of the sea is mistaken
for that of the sky

when truth is denied
for the promise

The swell taunts and menaces
but I am bored with its antics
disappointed in its retreat

Head lying sideways on folded arms
peeling sill my pillow
sunset paints my face
burns my lids red
and all goes black

I awaken to a maze of yesterday's footsteps
crossing the sand
and realize
I have lost my way

Estel Lyons

Passing Storm

The wind roars its arrival
demonic angel denied entrance to heaven
pounding loose panes
crying real tears

'neath layers of blankets and yard sale quilts
we clutch
windows rattle in fear
steadfast, entwined
there is no refuge here

Lost soul relents
wanders further down the beach
bowing trees and hurling limbs in spite.

A steady hush now
arms and legs release, but still we touch
your breath grows slow and heavy on my neck

We are safe
the wind a whispered lullaby
sweeping us tenderly into night

Estel Lyons

Rubric

Love is energy
confused
it goes in circles
without you
it has no purpose

Estel Lyons

Summer

You carefully select a summer plum
and offer it to me

Our eyes lock
you study my face
as I bite
tenderly
breaking the skin

Ruby red
Sugar sweet

I throw my head back and smile

juice drips down my chin
my neck

you grab my shoulders
and stop it with your tongue

Estel Lyons

Sweetie Pie (A Jilted Woman's Christmas Poem)

I ate the pie I made for you
and didn't share a bite.
You were busy, had things to do
that snowy Christmas night.

I held the tartlet to my mouth
and bit the pastry crisp.
The insides oozed warm cinnamon
upon my waiting lips.

The sweetness rolled across my tongue
It lingered there awhile
I licked the last flakes from my thumb,
leaned back and had to smile.

No guilt had I, that peaceful night
for my contentious deed.
No broken heart
This Queen of Tarts knows better now you see

That's how quick with just one lick
I did you in my sweet
Alas, another suitor mincemeat

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Tennessee Strawberries

Driving through Shiloh
on a hot Spring day
we stop at a roadside stand
and forge together our coins
for strawberries
still warm from the sun

the farmer greets us
drawl thick as the honey he sells
Hank Williams yearning on the radio
bare feet out the window, keeping time
toes painted the color of the juice on my lips

I offer up a ripe red jewel
you turn, lips parted to accept my gift
sunlight flirts on silver hair
the white of my smile reflected
in dark glasses

Pure joy

Nothing in front
but the heat of the black top

Nothing behind
but this photograph

Estel Lyons

When

When I see you
I will drink your lips
like a parched field a summer rain

I will claw you
like a famished infant a mother's breast

I will swallow you
like the first gulp of air
after a long, deep dive

I will eat, eat, eat
until my soul finally sighs

But for now I lay
face down
splayed
on fresh tilled earth

Head seeking comfort in the cool of the stone
cheek in the chill of the soil
fists clenched, fingernails etch
an epitaph in my palm

And I pray
that we will laugh one day
at this nuisance
this love delay

and the next beginning will have no end

when my love, I see you
again

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Words

I want to hold you
in a wordless embrace
one last time

I want to reach in
and grasp the beauty
that showed
through flashes of fury
and the raised whip of your words

I want to hold you
in a wordless embrace
one last time

and taste the love meringue

the fragile confection of colorful sweet
swept with the gentlest of wind
dissolved with a touch of the tongue

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