

*Collected Works of Missed Connections Poetry*

# YOU CAN'T KNOW WHO I AM

*Edited by Sabine Hadley*



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Editor: Sabine Hadley

Cover Design and Photography: Sarah LaPonte

Masks courtesy of Barbara Luderowski

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444 Castro Street, Suite 900

Mountain View, California, 94041, USA

Please direct all correspondence regarding this publication to Lovelorn Poets

E-mail: [saysomething@lovelornpoets.com](mailto:saysomething@lovelornpoets.com)

Web: <http://www.lovelornpoets.com>

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*Collected Works of Missed Connections Poetry*

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## INTRODUCTION

The publication of “You Can’t Know Who I Am: Collected Works of Missed Connections Poetry” marks the start of year five for the Lovelorn Poets blog. It was in early 2010 that the collection of non-standard missed connections writing (poetry, haiku, flash fiction, fantasy...) began with a handful of Craigslist fora in college towns along the East Coast. After several months of investigations and observations, creating a blog appeared as the best solution to preserving and archiving this ever-growing body of “found” creative work which would otherwise be systematically “disappeared” due to the routine refreshes of the Craigslist servers every 7 to 45 days. While the total amount of time it takes to effectively create a habit is debatable, the missed connections bug bit swift and strong and shows no signs of abating – the Lovelorn Poets archive currently has close to 1,500 entries – and increases every week. Discovering these often anonymous, frequently pseudonymous, and rarely named writings amongst the steady stream of legitimate missed connections, NSA hook-ups, and locker-room erotica has never been boring. The ebb and flow of where to find stories and poems is ever-changing – a location ripe with material one day can dry-up overnight; a little used feed can suddenly experience manic levels of creative output. Why this happens and those responsible typically remain unknown. Short of a wildly unsuccessful brief stint early on to contact the writers, no attempt is ever made to establish a connection. Many writers may never know how the words they once submitted to a public, online forum would catch the attention of someone wanting to preserve them – simply because of something in the way they wrote...

A “best of” compilation has been on the project list for over a year – but, as we all know, transforming ideas into reality takes time, energy, and creative collaboration – valuable resources that don’t always appear simultaneously. Therefore, much bonhomie to Sarah LaPonte for her cover photography, overall enthusiasm for making life fun, and friendship; Amber Hinds of Au Coeur Design for keeping the Lovelorn Poets website looking clean, fresh, and visually appealing; Victor Van Carpels for technical know-how of the printing process; Amy Catanzano for her encouragement and interest in this “weird” fascination with missed connections; Frankie Leone, the Brooklyn street poet-hustler who craved publicity to the very end and is dearly missed; and Lee Taylor, a constant presence since the very beginning, gladly offering his orange summers and frozen marmalade pop songs. None of this would have happened without you.

Sabine Hadley  
The Clever Bot(tle) Finder of the Lovelorn Poets

Laura Zurowski  
The Human

YOU CAN'T KNOW WHO I AM

*For him*  
*For her*  
*For me*  
*But especially for you*



**BROOKLYN. NEW YORK**

## Linguistic Fusion

We've packed up the crock pot and stock pot  
along with our nightly meals of  
red swedish candy fish  
flavored dreams  
We're using only homeopathic medication  
meditation and masturbation to soothe  
our tight tired  
muscles  
Thank you for all your kind letters  
and support over the  
years  
We've left a note attached to the refrigerator  
affixed with a magnet, in case you  
need to get in  
touch  
We're off to a place where every table  
has a bottle of hot  
sauce  
If you can handle it, use it, a few  
shakes will take you  
Places

## The Poetry of Laughter

I walked out at my stop on the f train this morning  
and saw him playing his plastic keyboard  
filling the station with a soundtrack  
for the new day

as I climbed the stairs, I heard him say  
I hope you fall  
in love

and as I stepped into the sunlight  
I realized I was laughing  
and I was

light

## **The Playlist**

I left my home and extinct profession  
to walk the empty streets during  
those orange  
summers  
we were alone together and covered  
in nicotine patch quilts  
singing  
frozen marmalade pop songs  
and adding color to the high  
contrast grey  
days  
playing jazz and new world sounds  
on countertops and garbage  
cans we dance like  
children  
and somehow managed  
to touch each others  
sweet  
spot

## **You Can't Know Who I Am**

You can't know who i am, when your few steps on the moon winded you  
in that foreign place, deep in cyberspace you wondered where i was  
but i was always there  
watching you from a distance because you're dangerous  
not only to me, but to your own kind  
just look at what you've  
done  
and yes, it's not all black and white  
it's always been about the in  
between shades  
and subtle shimmers  
placed just so  
so the rest of them  
know  
that there's  
hope

mindgallery twitter - beatboxbliss tumblr

**Love Doesn't Smell Like Lubricated Condoms  
Opened By A Stranger**

or  
more credit card debt  
in soho  
or a long run  
from yourself  
at the y  
or well whiskey  
on a black  
black(ed out) night  
or awkwardness  
getting caught  
staring on the train  
or the bodega guy  
knowing your favorite  
ben and jerry's flavor  
or forgetting  
there's something else  
working dawn til dusk  
or desperation  
to see someone else  
in that reflection  
love smells like  
breathing deeply  
alone  
noiseless  
ok  
love smells like  
spooning  
with that reflection  
eyes closed.



MANHATTAN. NEW YORK

## Dug My Eye Patch But Not My Broken Crown

\*i'm desperate to believe i'm the hustler  
so end up being the last one to see  
i'm the hustled\*  
\*the booty call's an odd thing  
arrogance blinds me  
into thinking i'm taking a piece of them  
with each toe-curling orgasm  
so it's a harsh surprise  
searching the top of my dresser  
months later  
to find money they've planted  
and my dignity missing\*  
\*i've chased the myth of normalcy  
through mundane beginnings  
to cringe-worthy ends  
but the most liberating thing i've seen  
is the only people i know who aren't fucked up  
are ones i don't know well\*  
\*i'm not complicated as i'd like to believe  
neither are you  
or people you love and hate  
our experience all vines  
from the same simple template  
the only variation is in details  
i, and you, will only become fascinating  
after realizing how similar we are  
to each other  
and everyone we know.\*  
-one eye open-  
\*by someone followed only by the blind\*  
(frankie leone, just a man)

## Let's Flip a Coin

Let's flip a coin... Heads, I'll give you a kiss... Tails, you promise not to fall in love with me.  
I walk these city streets banging to the sound of my own drum.  
Clumsy me I trip over my own feet. I guess that drum skipped a beat.  
I place my faith in the hands of coincidence hoping that one day these cobble stones and dead ends will lead me straight to you.  
That awkward stare and my sultry smile, in a flash our whole lives spin together as one.

A world wind before I even get to know your name.  
I probably shouldn't be feeling this way about you already...  
You can blame my lack of resistance to years of loneliness.  
The Island of Manhattan isn't kind to those with a pretty face and an empty heart.  
Let's feel alive again, please?

### **This Is What We're Capable Of (Our Love Was Art)**

august came too soon  
and I'm counting the days  
until time will return  
to the normal way of things  
no more of this speed of light bullshit-  
lately the sun burns so hot  
and this city drinks in the heat  
leaving me helpless in the humidity  
that burns like a rough whiskey-  
it is only in a place like this  
that the sound of a hurricane  
is generated by the excessive amount  
of artificial air  
trying to keep the seasons away-  
last night i thought i heard  
the sound of shattering glass  
and this morning  
the sun's reflection was in pieces  
shining with the stupidity  
of last night's drunks  
walking around like they owned the place  
but in a place like this  
no one owns much of anything-  
the summer has been flying by  
as summers tend to fly by  
even when there is nothing to talk about  
but the absence of social encounters  
and personal relations skills to master-  
I've dreaded September  
ever since i was a child  
trained to hate the re-institution  
of the same old institution  
taking my mornings  
when i just wanted my morning for myself-  
i realise i've been

looking out the windows more  
waiting for someone to walk by  
on the street outside  
so i can watch them smoke a cigarette  
or lean casually against the wall-  
these days  
during these heat waves  
and somewhat cooler weeks  
that seem out of place  
the line between freedom and chains  
begins to blur  
because a filled day is a filled day  
and sometimes it feels  
like that's the goal anyway-  
if life is too short  
maybe a cold, hard winter  
is all i really need.

### **Pilgrim (Plus A Haiku)**

oh lover, i came to your  
skin a pilgrim: barefoot,  
humbled. i sought in the  
strands of your hair for  
meaning, and i traced my  
prayers in script down  
your bared thighs. in the  
lines that brace your lips  
and deepen when you sigh,  
in the valley behind your  
bent knee, oh lover, i  
came seeking.  
your secrets  
are as candles; the flames  
shudder to my liturgies.  
above us, still and silent,  
are the evening stars.

promise you'll only  
read me in a quiet voice  
in quiet places.



**WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS**

## Your Issues

I've had enough of your issues.  
I am canceling my subscription.

## The Month Before Christmas

'Twas the month before Christmas when I left my house, seeking a girlfriend, lover, best friend or spouse.

The woman I sought was all that and much more, how I wanted a girl that I could adore.

I ventured on dates with girls of all kinds, some old and some young, some really true finds, but by end of the day we had to admit – it was nice, it was pleasant, but no perfect fit.

After a while, the fault being mine, I wanted to stop wasting everyone's time.

As Christmas approached I went to the mall and lined up with the kids, even though I was tall.

When it was my turn I whispered to Claus, "Please find me the one who will make my heart pause."

I told old St. Nick that I had been good, and he promised for certain, I'd find love, yes I would.

He assured me that soon I would find what I seek, and I asked how could I do it?

Would it happen this week?

Go to the craigslist, whispered one of the elves, there are plenty of good girls, just sitting on shelves.

They are waiting for you to say you are ready, that you're tired of dating and want to go steady.

As the month before Christmas was nearing the end, I relayed this story to one of my friends.

He warned that craigslist is fraught with dangers and spam, and was hardly the place to find a good woman.

I tried hard to nestle all snug in my bed, but the arms I longed for kept filling my head.

Then out on the lawn there arose quite a clatter, and I went to the window to see what was the matter.

It was a sleigh, of that I was sure, but no Santa was there just the elf from the store.

He waved as I stood by the window that night, and said, "Go to the craigslist and find her you might."

So trust in the elf is what I must do, and now I'm on craigslist seeking someone like you.

I heard the elf exclaim as he drove out of sight,

"Maybe you'll find her, maybe tonight."



**VERMONT**

### **My Car Has Fruit Flies**

My car has fruit flies.

My jeans are worn.

My shirts are faded.

My hair is long.

I never meant to hurt your feelings.

We should go shopping sometime.

I want to look good for your wedding.



**BALTIMORE, MARYLAND**

## Melting

melting  
undoredo  
redunspun  
wordsmeltintoemotion  
meaningunseething  
eyesplaytricks  
orisitjustmemory  
habitformedphilosophy  
thisworldnotmeandforme  
anditseverylittlethingisee  
istandsoaloneandconnectivity  
seemingimmortalitybrings  
unrequitedrejectionalasmyperfection  
equalizerlikestanzasperhapsforming  
mynewshinybrandhalcyonhaloseenfromorbit  
asmyfreeversefollyflyintocompleteandutteroblivion  
everythingissodifferentwhilemaskingsimilarity  
determinedriotorjustwhatoneoncecalledquietroit  
smallacityescapesmewhilstcomplexitygeneratesme  
justanotherlivingmachine  
breathingeatingfuckingshitting  
cattleherdconcertsblackspeckedpalegrainshearingthesame  
understandingthemselfwhichisliketheneedlerippingthruthe  
grovesinthepinningcirclesofsungheraldartistsang  
whenisitmyturnyesthesameasmyoblivion



**PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA**

## Capote

Man-mother. Pride-father.

I don't know which I love more—when he opens door to let me out or let me in.

Is that what love is?

I was let in long after the moon appeared last night; I slept beside him.

In the morning I tried to cast purspell of never-leave; he left, of course.

He always does.

I left too but he left farther than me, far up the steep gravelpath and past the water-spill pipe.

I will run to him when he returns, calling for him from the bushes.

This is our love—I love watching him go so I can watch him return.

Be let in.

Cast purspell each morning and fail.

Wildness is the failure.

I always fail adventurously; I chase moonshadows and windghosts over the neighbor's blue tarp.

This is why I write you. To chase you in your window frame.

## Capote 2

carnivore obligate, not carnivore literate.

let's cut to the heart of it: silver spoon?

part with it.

at witching hour i devoured heart of mammal, not once considering my animal enamel.

my feet barely touch the gravel.

i don't hear the judge's gavel.

between rock and hard place i can always choose to travel.

saw you in a polish hill window in the morning, your day woman was out late last night.

how do you spend the time?

you have a right to revolt.

topple the food dish tip the water scratch the drywalls bare and eat so much you puke on the floor.

i can't work the door;

i want to see you in a forest.

between ankles in a market square.

four dirtpaws in mud along river.



**ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA**

## It's Us Against The World

it's late at night and our rooms are soaked in moonperhaps you are:  
 laying in your bed. flat on your back. you've got downbeat on. the lows help beat  
 your heart and stir your thoughts. you are gazing out at the twinkling lights in the  
 distance. the sprawling humanity. the mountains.  
 and you are wondering:  
 how can i still be alone? how can i still long so deeply?  
 to read favorite pages aloud  
 to hum and conduct that one part in Beethoven's 6th that nearly brings you to tears  
 each and every time you hear it?  
 the inside jokes and knowing glances  
 the whispers of inappropriate things in your ear at inappropriate times  
 the solace of being truly understood.  
 celebrated.  
 the smell of your neck soaked in rain  
 the tattered books in our bags. the cheffing at home. the hugs from behind.  
 sleeping in on Sunday and just plain not giving a shit what comes next because  
 we've already arrived.  
 we are together.  
 the discourse. laughing at ridiculousness. being aroused by seriousness.  
 chewing on our thoughts.  
 the bliss. the hurt. the reconciliation of past and future.  
 a work in progress.  
 you are brainy. you are thin and give warm enveloping hugs. your heart is on your  
 sleeve. you can see music and taste words.  
 you are sarcastic and sincere, progressive yet domestic. you push me to think harder  
 and make me lentil soup when i'm sick.  
 i make you cds with contrived themes, underline passages in books I loan you, and  
 make you feel appreciated.  
 it's us against the world.  
 i'm lonely. i am incredibly real. i am lovesick. i am brilliant and fragile and unafraid  
 and human and inspired and powerful. i am a contradiction. i am gorgeous because  
 I am distinct. just like you.  
 are you somewhere? pining? yearning? refusing to give up? feeling a slight gravita-  
 tional force towards a center that you can't seem to locate?  
 are you mine? am i yours?  
 tread lightly with me.  
 i don't share these things every day

## All Your Burned Bridges (A Haiku For You)

all your burned bridges  
 will lead you back to that place  
 opportunity



**ATHENS, GEORGIA**

## Fingers for Your Braille

The foothills, the mountains, the vales,  
Always covered in mist,  
I stumble through the woods of your heart,  
A blind man, with no dog, no cane, no trail.  
I am no cartographer, I am no mountain man's son,  
But here where Appalachia meets the Piedmont,  
I am learning to steer by touch, and by the myriad,  
Differing silences of that wood, that emanate like the sun.  
But, oh, that I might love you well,  
Instead of making such a mess of it all,  
I'd need a heart that could traverse your skyline,  
And had fingers, for your Braille.

## On Writers

Writers  
sit  
and watch  
and record  
and fluff  
the ordinary  
in an attempt at extra.  
If everyone were a writer,  
the world would simply be  
watching itself  
watching  
the most arrogant fucks who have ever lived.  
They are fools,  
putting a gown on shit  
and calling it a  
princess.



**SAVANNAH, GEORGIA**

## Romance Novel

Today, I found  
a romance novel laying on the floor  
in the laundry room. On the illustrated  
cover, a chiseled, shirtless man, sat  
bareback on a tall white horse against  
a backdrop of the rising sun; while  
below him, a barely-clothed ravished  
woman lay asleep in the long grass.  
Maybe, they are doing laundry as well,  
I thought.

-Bison Jack

## The Hoping Dress

He walked in a minor key;  
stopping only at the window  
of a small cafe—where clouds  
from an inclement sky appeared  
to hang from the ceiling.  
Sitting alone in a booth, a heavily  
made-up woman in a hoping dress  
briefly wondered if he was the man  
she was waiting for, then looked away.  
In her purse was a list of things  
she wanted to say, but not to him.  
In his pocket was a plan to save  
the world—but not hers.

- Bison Jack



**ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA**

**Into Your Palm, A Sea { }**

into your palm, a sea {s h e l l}  
tied up in a bow born of curiosity at your smile  
after the gift I ran fast away, needing to warn the stars,  
wondering then & still at the happenstance of strangers & music & saturday nights,  
that particular fever.

...

'A woman who writes feels too much,  
those trances and portents!  
As if cycles and children and islands  
weren't enough; as if mourners and gossips  
and vegetables were never enough.  
She thinks she can warn the stars.  
A writer is essentially a spy.  
Dear love, I am that girl.'



**FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA**

### **Items of Little Interest**

A lady walking by talking to herself.

A car alarm going off across the street.

It's been going a good 15 minutes and that is jus... It stopped.

Jim Beam and off-brand Sprite.

...It's going again.

Arcade Fire's newest CD.

The wind.

Men in flip-flops.

The.. stopped again.. hot sun.

Men in flip-flops?

The sixteen thousand things I want to accomplish before I see you.

Things that I am yet unaware of.

Going again.

I believe in you.



**BOULDER, COLORADO**

## **Polar Bears**

I think about the polar bears  
And it makes me sad.  
My wishes are potato chips  
I can't have just one.  
The universe expands  
And my mind contracts  
The rocks on the ground are stars.  
I found one for you  
while walking home today.  
I put it in a small brown box  
In case our paths cross



**TUCSON, ARIZONA**

**This Paper (My Spiral Notebook)**

White with blue lines  
Its margins encasing my fears and desires  
Like a fireproof box  
It hears my voice  
It allows me to speak  
Without interruption  
It holds no grudges  
It passes no judgement  
This paper  
It has holes  
As does the depths of my soul  
Though it does not abandon me  
Like so many do  
It hears my voice  
It allows me to dream  
Without giving up  
Though at times I won't give in  
It feels my hurt  
It feels my pain  
It knows how long  
I've tried to sustain  
I wish I could tell you  
Just how I feel  
Like I do this paper  
But I know it's done  
My darkest fear  
This paper  
It hears my voice  
It tells me to give up  
I have no choice  
But this paper is wrong  
I'll find my way out  
It won't be easy  
This paper should listen  
It knows my heart is queasy  
It tells me to get out, move on  
Get up!  
But it's hard when you have no one  
No place to go  
No safe haven  
Except this paper



**ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

## **I Hope I'm Not Just Fireworks In Your Sky**

...I don't want to fade that fast.  
Sometimes I wish you knew that you were the first.  
Maybe not my first kiss, the first crush, or even the first love;  
But you did something more than anyone else.  
I know I told you that you were the muse behind almost everything I had written,  
But when life left me on the verge of ending it,  
You inspired me to live.  
Maybe that doesn't mean as much to me as it used to,  
But you're the only one who makes my heart skip a beat anymore.  
Come to think of it; you've always been the only one.



**LAS VEGAS. NEVADA**

## Solstice Ever

cold magic twists  
cabin fever  
crisp noses pinched  
ice air  
heavy smoke  
mead  
prayers  
fears  
celebrations  
the long night by inches becomes  
the melt  
until spring

## Semaphore

manifest destiny  
pushme-pullyou egos  
smoke signals  
fire extinguisher  
firestarter  
fire horse of a different color  
waterhorse arms akimbo  
dissimilar proclivities in tandem  
evolutionary buttons  
navel oranges  
shiny nickels  
worn pennies  
priceless pocket change



**SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA**

### **Sunday in the Park**

and so we spent sunday on the great green  
broadcloth of our favorite park,  
the splendid silent sun above;  
we bent our backs in tandem, like two sheets  
in the same breeze, and talked of leaves  
of grass, and why you like whitman  
~sx

### **Land of Bukowski**

i was looking for something in particular that night,  
as i flipped through those pages sitting too long and too late at the bar.  
i didn't find it;  
but as is usually the case with Bukowski,  
i found something else.



PORTLAND, OREGON

### **The Moon Is Full Again**

This one is a work in progress  
When it's finished  
I'll call it "surrender"  
And deliver it to you  
In your apartment  
On the hill.  
You'll serve me wine  
And laugh your nervous laugh  
I'll look at your legs  
And try to talk seriously  
You should let me move in here  
I'll say  
Take care of me, feed me  
The future royalties of everything I write here  
Will be yours.  
You'll laugh  
And cover your mouth  
Then the painter will show up  
With his books  
And ideas  
And you'll keep laughing  
Telling me to come back later  
And to leave the wine glass there.  
I'll go back home  
To my own wine  
To my words  
The thoughts of finally bedding you  
Buzzing about the room  
Like the mosquitoes I cant kill.

### **When a Woman Asks Me Out**

I don't think it is inappropriate.  
I don't think it makes her look desperate.  
I think it indicates that she has very good taste.



**BEYOND THE USA**

## TORONTO, ONTARIO

**Silence on the Streets**

Silence on the streets  
 Parkdale streets  
 And once again  
 I brought my own chopsticks  
 "No maid I've seen  
 Like the sweet Colleen"  
 Pipers playing  
 Johnny Cash still dressed in black  
 A voice from heaven  
 Loreena McKennitt  
 I'll stumble upon lost thoughts  
 Cherish the tramp within  
 It's the seclusion of time  
 Her scent impaled  
 In my memory  
 I've gambled on the ponys  
 I've gambled on the pints  
 I've gambled on the love  
 Inspiration dazzled  
 The mystic wind blew  
 Time to plant the garden  
 Let the flowers flourish  
 Let the flowers grow limp  
 A decadence devoured  
 The garden trampled  
 Saturated and stained  
 The river overflows  
 Ah the silence erupts  
 Harp music  
 Gentle sweet  
 This is what Love sounds like  
 My my  
 I found heaven  
 In parkdale.....  
 If I see her smile this week  
 And if by chance it may be my...  
 My last week of life  
 Thunder and lightning  
 I'll  
 Be smiling back  
 At her

## **MONTRÉAL. QUEBEC**

### **Chew These Chaps ((A Perpendicular Place))**

geometry gets us through  
our daily lives, our angular ways  
we skew and swindle  
we measure and mitigate  
we follow our own lines  
but in precisely navigating  
one makes compromises  
to cut a novel path  
through a nebulous crowd  
you will step over a man  
asking for change  
you will meet eyes with a woman  
and not look back  
you will hear the news  
riddled with drivel  
you will collapse under currency  
and not know why  
you will orchestrate your own image  
and hope it's a window  
not a mirror  
perpendicular  
parallel  
parabolic  
our trajectories are all the same  
these angles we use  
lead us inward  
in a store window  
in a black screen  
in an online profile  
in a coarse rumor  
in her teary eyes  
acutely obtuse  
these self-wrought lines  
will lead us all to the same question  
have i already made the biggest mistake of my life?  
or is it yet to come?

**COPENHAGEN, DENMARK**

**Struggles & Constitutions**

let the blue flower  
hide in plain sight  
let the soft fragrance fill your mind  
even as beauty eludes  
fingertips

does anyone remember their names?  
the names of those who wrote love songs to the blue flower?  
(Sophie perhaps, but who remembers her?)  
We are the great  
unmissed  
unknown  
unchartered  
territory waiting to be discovered  
for the first time  
by the man who stands in the parking lot of the  
Walt Whitman Shopping Mall  
and sees with laser sharp clarity  
leaves of grass and something that is not a plastic shopping bag  
he thinks he sees a blue flower  
and he sighs



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***Do You Remember Either/Or?***

*What is a poet?*

*An unhappy man who hides deep anguish in his heart,  
but whose lips are so formed that when the sigh and cry  
pass through them,*

*it sounds like lovely music....*

*And people flock around the poet and say:*

*'Sing again soon'*

**MISSED CONNECTIONS: PITTSBURGH**

