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Performance Poetry by Megan LeAnne



To the Curly-Haired Barista on East Main Who Asked If I Was Religious

Did you know that Appalachian honey tastes
a whole lot sweeter when you don't have to consider the bee
or its stinger?

Or the fact that Andrew Jackson forced the Cherokees

west of the Smoky Mountains so
we could trample on their stillborn babies' graves, meaning:
I was thoroughly enjoying the thought of your lips until you brought God into this.

Yes,
when I asked about your tea selection, what I really meant to say was
Goddamn you're pretty,
and when I chose Vanilla Almond Chai, what I really meant to say was
Goddamn you're pretty!
And when I said keep the change, what I really meant to say was
Goddamn
I could twist the tips of my wasps in your honeycomb locks for hours
and I am ready to be lost!
So, perhaps I was sending mixed signals.

When I said that God feels far too big for a girl this small,
know that I don't normally use my size
as a church crutch, but
when was the last time you felt right?
I mean *really* right?
I mean filling-your-gun-barrel-shoes-with-hot-blood-on-a-land-that-is-not-yours-
because-you-are-right right—
in the name of a man you've never met, but
who told you to love thy enemy?

When you said that God told you to ask me that question
right there,
landlocked in the middle of the one time I had the nerve to flirt with a stranger,
I can only assume you were referring to my lack of a Bible Belt
holding up my pride or these hips
that have known love and have known not love
or these puncture wounds in my skin I've decorated
with reminders that healing has every right
to be beautiful.

I wonder
what your God says to the landfill?
Does He plant posies down the side of the garbage slide with his holy light?
What does He say to the swollen bellies of sweet babies in Zimbabwe
who are not required to give a shit about His name, only
how long the hunger will keep them from sleep tonight?
Does He tell them their stomachs are pillows?
Does He know that clean water is not an infinite resource
but that clean love is?

Love,
it takes a whole lot of time to make love to an Earth this heavy,
and how selfish for any God to think
He should carry the weight of it all.

Boy,
it is embarrassing to ever think you are right.
But God,
if He could give us a sanctuary from the knowing
of this much pain

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and the knowing that tomorrow will still come heavy
without forgiveness:

It is the grass blades slicing through cement sidewalks.
It is the moment when the sky finally gets to breathe again,
releasing legatos soft in the soil.
It is forgetting your umbrella on purpose.
It is skin hunger satiated.
It is a community garden and dirt under your fucking fingernails.
It is gracing the sunset with your undivided attention.

God is when your bones are baritone saxophones,
vibrating in the lovely of it all when it all is not
so lovely.

We can stutter-step around doctrines for the rest of our lives, or
we can press our toes in the mud and know that this
is a God worth believing in.

Art Information

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Megan LeAnne is a writer and teaching artist specializing in poetry and spoken word, prop performance, and movement arts. She currently resides in Nashville, Tennessee, and serves as a poet mentor for Southern Word, a Nashville nonprofit that spreads literacy and performance skills through the vehicle of spoken word.

Megan's work has appeared or is forthcoming in *The Write Launch*, *Pithead Chapel*, Middle Tennessee State University's *Collage* (winner of best poem, Fall 2015), and *Meat for Tea: The Valley Review*.

For more information, visit [Megan LeAnne's website](#) [5].

Source URL: <https://mail.talkingwriting.com/curly-haired-barista>

Links:

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