

Middle of my mid-twenties: Beauty

A collection of free verse poems by Caitlin Lawler

The middle of my mid-twenties

It's the same patch under the ensuite sink that the bleach, dustpan and mop can't reach.

It's the same pant leg of those promising blue jeans that creeps out of the laundry basket teasing my OCD.

It's the same morning routine, racing the kettle to scrub my teeth.

It's the same 3-hour conversation about almost men broken by heavy, expectant architectural dreams.

It's the same species of apple carved into the same eighths using the same knife with the weathered handle.

It's the same saturation of white sneakers littering the doorway, hallmarks of comfort and uniformity.

It's the same drop in energy and increase in judgement when a mirrored image reflects my textured, speckled face.

Same old same old. Sun rise sun set.

If I don't wipe tears from my face, do they just absorb and reset?

I wish I could love the image of me eating a croissant as much as I love eating croissants

The inners of my right ear are crusted with oxygen and blood

And the bakery at the end of the street is all out of cinnamon scrolls

4 mirrors wide

The end of my good sleep streak

Who needs carbs when you can be satisfied with

A double chin instead?

Or the imprint of a jean button south of my naval

Or body confidence held together by an imitation silk sheet.

Sugar and flour, sweet treats and cuts that run deep.

Revolt

Breadwinner and apron wearer. Beard hairs in the sink and a double shot in my drink. An office won't contain your ego and your mother tells me fuchsia is not pink. The first course on the menu tonight is my eagerness to please, followed by a hearty dish of expectation and completed with

three scoops of claustrophobia. Right before the dish soap hits a greased pan, you tell me mushrooms are revolting. My vegetarian pride takes a private punch, but I can't ignore the leftovers on your plate.

How much heat can be contained in a one-bedroom apartment?

I've tried to convince myself that one-bedroom apartments are a good idea. But then, reality takes the shape of an absent smoke alarm and two mock-meat patties in a stranger's frypan. Two fans create a wind tunnel, pushing beads of sweat from the left side of my forehead to the right. No matter what deodorant I buy, two yellow rings of sweat decorate my favourite, white shirts. My feet treat shower water as lava, a cleanse by fire. One-bedroom apartments heave, they swelter. Aircon free and trouble steeped. Left alone in the company of heat.

Writing is finite and I am tired

Stay away from the kitchen table
Stay away from the bed
Loud moans and paper cuts
Where can I go instead?
The blood of all those collected in the past
Stain and pull at your crisp white shirt
Your box of tissues won't clean up my mess and my hurt
Red is the colour of strawberries and sweetness
Rage and incompleteness
And the whites of my eyes are littered with red tired sighs
As the keys smack the paper
Hands bruise my skin
Writing is finite and evades instructions

Mid-week wine

Take one bottle
And pour it from the base
Haste
I empty myself into you
But there are holes in your vessel
And the wine leaks down and out

Staining my fingertips

My lips

My memories

Bleached red

Being in a happy relationship makes for crappy writing

Bees / Trees / Scrambled eggs / Pillow

Window / Inflatable pool / Cold cups of tea

Lipstick decorated rim / Tissues

Six pairs of shoes / Cables across my room

Whispers in the apartment carpet / Iced coffee straws

Pimples / Displaced hair snakes on the bathroom floor

Marriage question mark / Morning and night

Loneliness / Bed / Desk / Office chair

Instagram likes / Exes with curly hair

Things that go Zoom

Race car down a race track

Overexcited rescue dog kept indoors too long

My second-hand blender with a failing motor

Police cars in south-west Sydney under the guise of "protection"

Clouds rolling across a clear, blue sky

All my meetings and Sunday afternoons

Life churning through hours

Who needs society

When you've got Zoom?

BRB, WFH

Here lies 4 isolated beard hairs

There lies a sculpture fashioned from tissues

The next room showcases weeks of dust

The dining table displaying dirty dishes in full view

A museum worker is working from home

And sees a nostalgia in everything

Collecting insignificance

Curation in discarded gym equipment

Exhibiting coffee rings on the countertop

This week the mail man brought 3 new acquisitions:

Skincare, bedsheets, and heated towel rack

A museum worker is working from home

Let her back to her endangered habitat

Fine lines and wrinkles

I'm sorry I'd like to return this eye cream I purchased last week

Yes, I'm very dissatisfied

Don't you know I'm turning 25?

It's the age where society starts turning against you

Fine lines and wrinkles

I want to buy a bottle of airbrush

Using the guise of beauty to make quick cash

You don't have that do you?

What about some tools then?

To dismantle, to give respite, to empower.

I search for them in every screen imaginable

And each time I come back, soured.

Don't you know I'm turning 25?

Someone help me -

With beauty and longevity.