

Ode to My Socks

Maru Mori brought me
a pair
of socks
which she knitted herself
with her shepherd's hands,
two socks as soft
as rabbits.
I slipped my feet
into them
as though into
two
cases
knitted
with threads of
twilight
and goatskin.
Violent socks,
my feet were
two fish made
of wool,
two long sharks
sea-blue, shot
through
by one golden thread,
two immense blackbirds,
two cannons:
my feet
were honored
in this way
by
these
heavenly
socks.
They were
so handsome
for the first time
my feet seemed to me
unacceptable
like two decrepit
firemen, firemen
unworthy
of that woven
fire,
of those glowing
socks.

Nevertheless
I resisted
the sharp temptation
to save them somewhere
as schoolboys
keep
fireflies,
as learned men

collect
sacred texts,
I resisted
the mad impulse
to put them
into a golden
cage
and each day give them
birdseed
and pieces of pink melon.
Like explorers
in the jungle who hand
over the very rare
green deer
to the spit
and eat it
with remorse,
I stretched out
my feet
and pulled on
the magnificent
socks
and then my shoes.

The moral
of my ode is this:
beauty is twice
beauty
and what is good is doubly
good
when it is a matter of two socks
made of wool
in winter.

Credit

"Ode to My Socks" from *Neruda & Vallejo: Selected Poems*, by Pablo Neruda and translated by [Robert Bly](#). (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993).
Used with permission of Robert Bly.

Author

Pablo Neruda



Born Ricardo Eliecer Neftalí Reyes Basoalto in southern Chile on July 12, 1904, Pablo Neruda led a life charged with poetic and political activity.

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"Hope" is the thing with feathers

BY EMILY DICKINSON

"Hope" is the thing with feathers -
That perches in the soul -
And sings the tune without the words -
And never stops - at all -

And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -
And sore must be the storm -
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm -

I've heard it in the chilliest land -
And on the strangest Sea -
Yet - never - in Extremity,
It asked a crumb - of me.

Notes:

Note to POL students: The inclusion or omission of the numeral in the title of the poem should not affect the accuracy score. It is optional during recitation.

Originally titled "'Hope' is the thing with feathers - (314)"

Emily Dickinson, "'Hope' is the Thing with Feathers" from *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*, edited by Thomas H. Johnson, ed., Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University press, Copyright © 1951, 1955, 1979, 1983 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College. Reprinted by permissions of the publishers and Trustees of Amherst College.

Source: *The Poems of Emily Dickinson Edited by R. W. Franklin* (Harvard University Press, 1999)

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THE DOCTOR TOLD ME THE SHOTS WOULD
MAKE ME SPIN SILK

Along with muscling out my shoulders and dropping my voice,
they'd let me hang by my own fibers,
invade distant islands with my gossamer webs.

If I didn't want to ask for directions, I could leave a trail
of silk by which to find my way back. Along with
narrowed hips, caught flies. Along with increased sex drive,
anchors. The doctor said my silk would be

as strong as high-grade steel in six months flat,
that *man* would not be right—I might
covet my neighbor's grill, and I'd still
burn toast every time, but spiders would begin
to read me as themselves and expect certain things.

Humans prone to arachnophobia
would come at me with wads of newspapers,
even a vacuum, while I dangle in my own abode.

Do you understand? The doctor asks. Do you still consent
to the shots? Yes, I say, comes with the territory.

I already know what I will want to catch.

HIJRA

Sleepwalkers, uterus dust, you heard the gunfire

and folded into clay. We begged our bodies for
alchemy, death into new lungs; we fed bread

to the *jinn*. The clouds followed us, a scrap
of summer moon as gazelles made a meal of ash.

We became seamstresses, mapping departure
into our eyelids. Allah's calligraphy stitched

our vertebrae. We wrote their unsaid names
on parchment, buried them in boxes, gave birth

to our daughters in caves. When our breasts wept
milk for months, we drank it ourselves.

HAIL

Mother & father have ten children before saying a word. When Jon is born, mother sets him in a dresser drawer to sleep. Then a storm comes & sprays the farm with hail. Mother goes out to the field to find father. She makes a pretend string of pearls with the cold balls. They laugh, & when the hail gets bigger & falls harder, they laugh more & more. Father holds two pieces up like eyes. The breaking barn laughs. The cold cows laugh. The house in the distance opens its new, toothless mouth.

WHAT GOD GAVE ME OR
INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO LIVE A NOMADIC LIFE

Fighter planes carrying American
cigarettes, and sugar in its
diabetic variations: penny candy,
Wonder Bread, and cases of generic
beer. Convoys of trucks bringing fire
water, hundred proof. Antlers, missiles,
clusters of wire, crosses, and rope.
Spurs, skulls, crossbones, and the white
fox of death, stuffed with ripped twenty
dollar bills marked counterfeit. A frayed
rayon tent. War paint, just in case.
Bison leather, horsehair,
a blue tarp, an eagle feather.
A handbook on exile, every page
burned out.

Out of the Woods

On the way to water, I think, low
moan, heat too deep for me

to reach. A new noise
from a vent in the paper palace. Before,

I bounce off brick
wall, begging for a change;

the door swings open and unhinges
me to the nail. I heard *ssssSMH* behind me;

you not ready. As it turns out, ticks,
like cops, have a taste for black blood.

The mosquitos made a meal of me
for weeks—their walking Slurpee.

One stuck his straw in my third eye. I spell
him struck blind. My friends compile lists

of things they never knew, read me
for filth. I say in every language, I don't have

the answers. They don't believe me.
I stop buying tickets to the shit

show, but no matter the distance,
the smell is pervasive. In the woods,

I learned baby wolves get high
from the scent of hearts bursting

on their Instagram feeds. Serotonin
is a helluva drug. In the clearing, I strain

to hear the echoes of men whose bodies
drag the forest floor. Unfortunately, all

the witnesses withered seventy winters ago.
Blood is a potent fertilizer.

Credit

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About this Poem

“‘Out of the Woods’ is a poem that emerged from recent experiences on a research trip to the island of Martinique and teaching in the woods of Saugatuck, Michigan. Playing on the literal and metaphorical meanings of being ‘in the woods’ and ‘out of the woods,’ the poem is a stream-of-consciousness meditation on the paranoia birthed from the history of racially-motivated violence in idyllic settings, my desire to escape urban and digital life, and the fragility of feeling safe in any landscape.”

—*Krista Franklin*

Author

Krista Franklin



Krista Franklin’s most recent poetry collection is *Study of Love & Black Body* (Willow Books, 2012).

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Bibliography

For essays on Metaphor:

- *Best Words, Best Order* by Stephen Dobyns
- *The Poetry Home Repair Manual* by Ted Kooser
- Jericho Brown's Twitter thread on Metaphor - <https://twitter.com/jerichobrown/status/1324838895377408005?lang=en>

Poems:

- "Ode to My Socks" by Pablo Neruda
- "'Hope' is the thing with feathers " by Emily Dickinson
- "The Doctor Told Me the Shots Would Make Me Spin Silk" by Oliver Bendorf
- "Hijira" by Hala Alyan
- "Out of the Woods" by Krista Franklin
- "Hail" by Jon Boisvert
- "What God Gave Me or Instructions on How To Live a Nomadic Life" by Cynthia Cruz