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**Poems by
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Claws, Cat Call, Dagestan, Honeyclaw Nyx

A woman who fights all corners
Takes her life into her hands
Each bout a desperate struggle
Like a cat fighting a bear
Each swipe of the largers paw
A promise of certain destruction
Her defense is merely ferocity
Her strength merely tenacity
The bigger and stronger being
May still get fucked up
If you mess with the wrong pussy
I have also known women bears

Comfortable

I get comfortable
And imagine you
in the next room

Never comfortable
I toss and turn
Nowhere finding ease

I'm always comfortable
Anywhere sprawled out
Relaxing like a cat

and squish it down
and squish it down
bundle by bundle, leaf by leaf
layer by layer we pat it down
and top it off with goodies and paste
reds and greens and white and orange
let no air bubbles show
we place on the cap
not too tight
don't want it to explode

then we pack the next jar
back and forth
back and forth
your hand, then mine,
your hand, then mine
reaching into the jar
we're tired but happy
at the end of the day
when we make kimchi
we eat hot rice
and fresh kimchi and extra mix
white fluffy short grains
sweet crunchy, spicy, salty veggies
we fall asleep dreaming
of kimchi creations:
kimchi mandu and KBBQ
kimchi jiggaе and kimchi bokkumbap
kimchi ramen and kimchi hot pots

The Stone

The stone shows a crack
where rough play and banging about
scratched and chipped and polished smooth
A crack, thin and jagged
all the way thru
from one side to the other, Move
many fissures and fractures
hidden from view

Coffee shop poem

Bright morning sunlight shines through the coffee shop windows
Every glossy wooden chair and fresh flower vase alive in the
dancing beams of light
I eagerly jot down lines on the latest scrap, a torn piece of lined
cardstock
The poetry is kind of crap, low effort mushy stuff
It doesn't matter, I reassure myself. The idea is great
My high school sweetheart slides up to my side
Yellow sundress twirling around her waist
What are you doing?
A Radiant smile on her lips
I have a great idea, I say
I'm doing a photo diary of my latest poem!
Each part is written on a different scrap
Like a card or a receipt
It's angled to point to the next part in the room
I finish writing the line and pick up my trusty Nikon
Shining silver steel moving with comforting weight

and stick our hands deep down
into the mix to mix and stir
and squeeze together and
squish all the clumps and move the globs
until our veggies cry out their tears
and become a smooth spicy paste
our tasty ruby kimchi mix

We boil the jars and clean their caps
wait for whole ten hours to pass
we rinse the softly wilted cabbage leaves
shake them dry like floppy dogs
we take the big red bowl
drag a leaf through red paste
squish it deep down
into the depths of our lovely mix
cover it well on both sides
wrap a bundle of slivered veggies and ruby paste
and shove the bundle down
to the bottom of our jar
squish it down into the side
so that no air bubbles show
through the clear wall of our jar

Koreans say 'hand taste'
is the taste of homecooking love
we alternate back and forth

I fold a leaf and roll it
push it way down
you cup your hand
around our kimchi bundle

The cool metal feels good in my hand
I give her a smile behind the familiar lens
The shot looks great!
It tells a story that takes place in this shop, you see
A warm, exciting story!
Each photo telling the next part
And I am going to bring it to life!
I can see the ghosts of the characters moving throughout the
room,
Dancing here, laughing there
I'm going to show them to the world!
The poetry itself isn't the best
But as a picture story, I think the effect will be great!
I open my eyes, cramped on my brother's couch
Empty cigarette cartons and crumpled trash
I don't know anything about photography
I haven't written a thing in weeks
I haven't seen that girl in years

Boatman

Boatmen dressed in suits and ties
Cross the Styx and dot the eyes
Psychopomp to our maladies
Shuffle them all down to Hades

covered by plates and platters and cutting boards
salted cabbage curing all over the house
all the cats looking on from the ground
wary of all the strange plants
spreading out taking up their climbing ground
their spots for jumping and stepping on

chop chop chop, rhythmically knocking
knife on wood chopping
we dance around each other
thru the kitchen and dining room
washing and peeling
scrubbing and chopping
chopping and chopping
carrots and daikon
mizuna and green onion
rinsing and shaking
removing roots and stems
silver, ribbon, slice
piling a mound in our big red bowl
we the gochugaru
dried red pepper flakes
glittering like rubies and red gold
twice, three times, eight cups all told
for our special extra spicy kimchi

we boil the sweet rice flour
to feed to our yeast friends
we pour the paste into our big red bowl
with vegan fish sauce, salt, and MSG
we put on nitrile gloves to protect
against having angry stinging hands

Love like the Trees

My love led me here
Love like the trees
Always standing tall

Jail is Normal

In a Federal jail unit
with 90 other people
men, women, and children
trans women and GNC people
teens and elders with white hair
and mobility aids
come and go
week after week
month after month
year after year
Court. Sentencing. Prison.
So many trans women in prison and jail
We are all going thru it
basically the same
2 or 3 million every year
1 in a hundred locked up
It is miserable sure
It's where people live
Many haven't known anything else
Millions of us have been here
People adapt to it
They keep going thru it
It's important to be clear eyed

hasn't worked since last year
Derivatives make better stuffing
than commodity foodstuffs
speculation on futures
event contracts on suffering
Perpetuals declare
competitive advantage
in imaginary steel

7th Day

And Satan said to God
on the 7th day
This world you made
is not so good actually
You have cut some corners
The crops are not growing
The rivers are running dry
This is all a facade God
You can't leave them this way

Kimchi Making

The napa cabbage leave
cracking and pulling apart
watery pages of green and white
crisp and stiff
we rub them and cover them
with thick corns of salt
Every tabletop and counter

About the truth that

....

(remainder of poem submission destroyed, possibly by prison staff)

Yesterday, it wasn't me

Yesterday, it wasn't me
But other poor last souls
whose lives are consigned away
to go on behind closed doors
in tower cells, camps, fences, walls
Whole minds, ideas, and memories
love, trauma, and loss
softness and sadness, bravery and strength
2 Million humans in a box

One job town

Young boys and old women
come to work at the village-prison
dawn till dusk for wages given
to stay outside
in homes and bills and wine
not much else to this town
especially with AI around

warehouses for goods mailed just in time
warehouses for rows of artificial minds
warehouses for families, adults, and children

Or failing facilities
Middle men take the money
No money for insurance
No money for bills
No long term care
In long term care

Potluck

What are you bringing to the potluck?
Tables and tables
covered in dishes and love
Kimchi fried rice and lentil curry
cabbage salad, cucumber salad, shirazi salad
tamales and pintos and Spanish rice
coconut soup and vegetable stew
samosas and sambusas and empanadas too
casseroles and lasagna and giant ravioli
potato and yam and cassava and daikon
spring rolls and egg rolls and enchiladas
gyoza and wontons, pierogi and one pelmen
edamame, tofu, mozzarella, and paneer
sourdough, pita, naan, and lavash
takoyaki balls and bowl of colcannon

The Elevators Have Stopped Working

The elevators have stopped working
dying cars, freezers, and lifts
stickers stay frozen
the elevator here

Fuji-san is shining down

Mountain sun and mountain water
Your Colcannon is getting cold

Best Buy

Leg twisted to the side
swollen stiff as wood
who knows what happened
And I can't remember when
Slide into another uber
Another day at work
Can't keep going like this
Can't take a single day off
Medicine
Care is something
that happens to other people

Strip Club

I'm studying real estate
What about you?
Let's get this guy
To buy a bottle or two
I'm working commission
You're working for tips
Let's make a plan
Let's make a move
He's a rich guy
On a long trip

Toilet Paper

Please put the paper in the bag
Do you have a sign
that the plumbing here
cannot handle trash
not even the paper
we think is meant
to be flushed down
our strong toilet plumbing
Do you live on the side
where easily exists the wealth
to dispose of all refuse
refuse it tells you
the world is designed to dispose
does your sink have a blade
a mechanized sword
to cut up the trash
and force it down
the strong metal pipes
of the clean nation

Long Term Care

Long term care
Uber to work
Clean the sheets
Change the catheters
Study like a nurse
Pay like a janitor
Travel to home jobs