Rusting Woman: A Collection of Corresponding Poetry and Photography

A Creative Project for English 488 (Honors 499)

by

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Purpose of Creative Project

When I first asked about this Creative Project, I was told it should be a culmination of what I have learned since I have been in college. Although it was difficult to pin down exactly what I have learned the most about, I knew that, as an English major with minors in Art and Creative Writing, I wanted some sort of outlet for my final creative efforts. It did not take me long to decide that, for this project, I wanted to combine the efforts of my two passions, photography and poetry, into one cohesive piece.

The main goal of this project was to express, in a creative fashion, my own hopes, fears, and complications in relation to my inner struggles as well as in my relationships with others. I feel that, within the piece itself, an evolution of myself comes about, both personally and creatively.

This piece consists of sixteen (16) sets of photographic images and poems. Each set consists of one poem and one photograph which complement each other in imagery and style. The photographs give an even clearer vision of the imagery found in the poetry. The piece is divided into three clusters that signify three different stages of my evolution. These clusters are titled, respectively, “Wish”, “Without”, and finally, “Rebirth.”

I would like to express my gratitude to Mark Hamilton for all of his guidance and supervision on this endeavor.
Rusting Woman

a collection of
poetry &
photography
in three parts
by Amy R. Holt
rusting woman

1) “letter for August”

part I: wish

2) “last”
3) “chatterbox”
4) “hideaway”
5) “end of hope”
6) “August”

part II: without

7) “solitaire”
8) “birthday”
9) “one moment”
10) “escape”
11) “world”

part III: rebirth

12) “rebirth”
13) “will”
14) “sudden”
15) “the plan”
16) “rusting woman (mental drummers)”
how now,  
or you’ve lingered  
the fringes  
my mind for  
been patient months  
ed with sanity,  
(lack of, failure &  
me) success,  
af, smiles, &  
then part-time  
ployments, that  
maybe) you’re watching  
800 miles, the  
woggles of my past  
ile my present lives  
mout your knowledge,  

you’ve waited & i’ve  
waited for our turn together,  
& waited for you  
golden fries  
are hardened with  
aging,  
our cherry green  
illow drinks have  
et all luscious  
z, ‘til waitresses  
turned your absence, too,  
i’ve wondered you,  
aving lovely times  
liles & miles from me,  
i’ve wondered you,  
aving separate lives,  
,2,3, how many  
people are you now?  
i’ve gone on, tying  
rayed ends neglected,  
i’ve gone on, stacking  
town memories on  
usty shelves & i’ve  
wondered before blank  
screens, hoping only  
see your name blink
suddenly on, followed
by proclamations of wonder
& not knowing how,
how i am, how i've been,
how i one day might
be great., flying in
a technicolor sky over
blue grass & green wind
where we used to smile,
& i've gone on, moved
through stages medicated,
stages sedated, stages
numb; but now
i'm just living,
living in the truth of
what i have become
(& i think i like it)
i have vaguely forgotten
your cornflower eyes,
your peachfuzz skin, your
beautiful soft presence
(see, i swear that i've forgotten,
but i know i still remember)
& i just can't wait 'til
our lives are complete,
'til success is ours, &
we're forever apart
(only then will i know
that it wasn't meant to be)
& i've sat in candlelight
shadows, looking for you,
surprised at your vacancy,
& i've moved on to
find new daydreams, losing
oldhope, finding different
stars to wish on, new
sticks & rocks to cherish &
read, strange houses to
drive by secretly,
bedroom lights, belonging
to someone else, blinking
at night...

& i've moved on without you...
wish
I'm losing you again

Tired of us,
you've escaped
through the pores
of your skin...

Two days have passed
without your
voice, silky & cold,
heartless,
numb with nothing

Why do I miss you?

My ears don't
hear the sky,
but the blue falls
on my head,
knocking me
out
flat
for your voice...

Why did I lose you?

I know I did,
I don't know how
your final
sound Goodbye
was heard
through clouds
& register grates,
where my ear pressed
tightly

My thoughts of you
spin out to
forever,
voices soft like
mellow,
listen
as the sun...
SOMETIMES I THINK
I TALK TOO MUCH
TO FILL IN
EMPTY SPACES
BETWEEN ME
& YOU
WHERE I FEAR,
IF LEFT UNTouched
A LONELINESS
WILL TREAD,
SCUFFING ITS HEELS
EYES DOWNCAST
EARS PINK WITH
EMBARRASSMENT

I WONDER
WHY I NEED
TO CHATTER ON
& ON,
CASTING ILLUSIONS
DRUNKEN PASSERS-BY,
BAD COFFEE &
CONVERSATION

I ONLY WANT
TO PLEASE YOU,
TO CONVINCE YOU
I'M SOMETHING
I'M PROBABLY NOT:
RICH WITH EXCITEMENT,
ENDOWED WITH WONDER,
Packed WITH
MIND-BENDING CHARMS
LIKE THE ONES THAT FLOW
SO EASILY FROM
YOU TO ME

MAYBE FALSE IMAGES
PRETEND IN YOUR HEAD,
TOO, MAYBE IT
SPINS LIKE MINE,
CRAZY WITH INFATUATION,
ONLY SEEKING TO
FILL IN OUR BLANKS.
A part of me is richer,
the part you'll never see,
the quiet dark harmony of me
that steadily throbs
in the corner of my mind...

This part of me thinks greatly
ideas bright with passion,
comprising softly all
of your ideals, the ones
you could never quite catch...
i've grasped on to the honesty,
the fairness;
seldom insecure am i
in this hidden part of me...
For you I would hold my breath forever, swallow oceans of denial
cut myself off from life & smile only when broken...

I would give up life without you breaking vows with others & shivering in my skin (if necessary) to give you all of my warmth...

How can you sit in your skin & pass me by with your eyes when I'm here, wide awake & colorful, right by your side?

If I were in your side, I would feel so real... I would reach out to feel my warmth & not blindly bang about in darkness...

But you keep yourself roped off, too velvet to touch, what you can't see is just enough for us

Won't you give me just an inch of your time laugh in my direction nod at my arrival?

I sound so weary, so bleak, I just need you to escape me.
Not a pretty autumn leaf
But a dried up shell of summer
Is all that remains to remind us
Of what we thought back then
That the sun would shine on everyone...
But now the air is frigid,
As if summer had stepped back
To make room for the cold,
Somewhere we skipped a stage...
Feels like our legs will break
Like so many icicles
Hanging on the stop-sign
On the corner of the street
Where, in summer, we played games
To amuse and pass the time
The time we grew to love
As it quickly passed us by.
Now we're holding on to time,
It's naive for us to try
To keep holding to each other
When we ourselves are temporary
We change our minds so quickly
Look away for one moment
And We are gone.
It's now just You and Me
It's funny-
I don't remember you
Slipping away
I don't remember the leaves
Changing colors.
I just know I reached for you
And you weren't there:
Put on your mittens
And your scarf
And faced the cold
Skipped right past autumn
And now you're gone.
We play our game of solitaire, but not together...
from states away, we, forever in a state of sadness
play, in imminent madness inside our heads;
your hand better than mine, of course,
you send me scores, quicker than me,
though time spent worse...

There is no point to solitaire, why can’t we compromise?
why do you sit at your silent table, without partner,
without player, and watch your world go by?
...but you tell me,
   in solitaire you always win,
   in solitaire hearts will stay together, never broken,
   by life or by time, one suit eternally yours...

Solitaire is your game...
forever.
Edges of my mind
curling in on center,
crusty & void
i sit, my hands vacant
& still not moving,
one with the stale
sheet of paper, blue
lines marching
obediently across,

We are one as empty.

This day is birth,
joy & crying, blowing
candles but my breath is
dry,
i cannot smile at passing
images or even lament
loss
i sit, still, a blank
screen,
still

Still.
In this solitary moment
i feel fine,
exhausted & colorful,
cheering the oranges & blues...
but when this moment slips away,
the grains of it hazy & lost,
spiraling down to pile up in the
underhalf of an hourglass &
what?
will the moment be gone?

Where did my time go?

What happened to brave days & happy hours?
just on the cusp of a something Better
i think i missed the alarm
when everyone,
laughing boys & pretty pink girls,
risk screaming into
brick buildings in single file,
heeding the tinkle bell:
i am deafened to it...

Where am i standing now?

I saw me waving
(was it goodbye?),

throwing rocks at my
happy moment,
incredible
great
gone.
All those little traps life sets,
the coincidences, long lines,
events surreal,
have caught us here,
staring at our feet as you spit out
your words, ugly, numbly, frowning...

Fate, you realize, has brought us to this,
clumsily smacking & stumbling & rolling
into each other’s lives

as you crossed my line of trust,
i teetered on your blurry one,
finally landing in your shadow,
heaving & sucked dry...

Now tired of living in you, i
want to escape, fly far to the edges,
to the corner of infinite sky,
crashing through clouds of dull,

To live anywhere but in your darkness.
This is my world now.

The cities are me, & you, just dirt roads trod upon by horses & boys with candy-sticky hands you, you unlucky: your lonely road goes unpaved as i leave you behind to small towns & ghost towns & deserted families with broken-down station-wagons in the dusk of summer... i thrive on in my Brave New World, sending you postcards from somewhere, anywhere, of sunsets & skyscrapers

"Wish you were here" but i really don't, you schizo, half-heart, lonely road to nowhere.
I don't need.
your skin next to mine,
like 1000 possibilities...
watch me with unblinking eye

hold me breathless
in arms of steel...
wrap me in that metal,
strengthening me, you,
& us, i promise

& i promise you, too,
under love's pale blue,
if you hold my hands,
i'll harm myself no more...

i'll show you my silent soul,
naked & honest,
kneedeep in you

hold my heart together
with a railroad
of kindness &
i'll cling to your floorboards,
slip into your corners...

move over your lapdogs
make room for me as you
hold my self together

hold my soul together, Love,

You hold my soul together.
As I follow you through
hill of sadness &
waves of glory,
i will need your eyes
to guide me...
you will stand
near me & tell me
where to turn
in my final days...
you will be the
mirror I find,
the only reflection
to see us in; you
will follow close behind,
hand on my shoulder,
breath on my neck,
ears listening for me
to confess that
I need you at last,
i will need you one day
I will admit my
indirection,
when I fall,
will you catch me,
will you be there?
In the bondage of time
we've moved quickly,
casting aside the indecision,
filling our future with
particulars, plans, draperies
of red & gold & desire...

Waste not what we have
under our constraints,
stretch & turn to move
about freely,
kicking & joyfully shouting,
calling by name our gods...

Our time will die rapid,
taking with it our past,
which we've all but forgotten:
you know no ghosts,
i recall no dreams past,

only the ones that, with you, will end merry.
I've mapped out our lives for us
(are you ready?)
let us shut all old doors behind us
(turn out her light, I'll turn out his)
then we can run head-on
full force, into cozy facades, complete
with the false fireplace
(we'll keep warm at night)
that's what we deserve,
for loving too much (you & i)!
we, together, of course, will end up
repairing each other, night & day

"But at least we are together!"
you'll say

O, I love your stories of lion's dens
(i need you from within)
sharpen your eyes to look for me &
see what lies ahead for us;
let me know (before I burn any bridges)
what we will become (you & I)
then maybe I can love you some.
I only live in yesterday
clutching my souvenirs
like the stars that never change my days,
my nestled heart throbs on quietly,
unnoticed, in blue tuesdays & hazy high days...
will yesterday never come?

seven hundred and thirty days
(or has there been a leap year?) &
i won't let go of this piece of
contentment, clutching this reminder,
this fragment of being still...
i won't let go
this swollen heartstring, once so dear,
now pulled too much in vain,
now stagnant still & still fat...

i'm a woman, i admit, still rusting
in my soaking shell of salty water,
pale small girl still waiting for the
last train before the dawn arrives, missing
the beat of drummers pounding, sounding
for the rest (not me)
i can only hear the ones in my head,
urging me forward into nothing, out
of step with the rest of the world,
my mental drummers march on...