

*After a Coup: A Collection of Poems*

Mary Sierk

CWR 304 with Caitie Rosemurgy

The College of New Jersey

*After a Coup*

I.

A golden throne sits upon a pedestal,  
Shining with the muted sunlight  
Spilling through the stained glass windows.  
Blood collects at the feet,  
Congealing on the gold.  
Dripping  
From the arm to the feet.

The blood pools in tiny lakes,  
That smooth into clumps,  
Staining the marble floors,  
White turns red,  
Turns brown,  
Leaving flies struggling to break free.

Smooth marble turns  
To unusable flypaper  
Swallowing that which comes near.  
Red.  
Lips pried open, kissing the floor  
Golden and crimson gowns  
Burgundy capes weighed heavy with the praises of the king  
Spread across  
The court.

Eyes staring into Hades' pits,  
Wigs scalped from their heads,  
Lying among the pools of blood.  
Crimson dries to gold,  
Bodies turn to dust,  
A palace is vacant.

II.

Ivy creeps up the walls,  
Windows miss their glass,  
A small buzzing sound  
Fills the room.  
Flies flocks to bodies,  
Moths eat at clothes,  
Scavengers feast  
On the remains left behind.

Holes form in the heavy cloth,  
Loses its muster,  
Dull clothes,  
Dull eyes.

Skin lost its luster,  
As it clings to bones,  
Shocked and crying faces  
Turn into skulls,  
Empty eyes,  
Picked out of sockets.

III.

Souls are quiet,  
Accepting their fate.  
They drift from the bodies,  
Decayed yet whole.

Women stuck in gold,  
Men stuck in uniforms,  
Gliding above the violence,  
The death.

Their death.

Forced to roam  
The gilded halls  
Forevermore.

Staring at portraits,  
Of themselves,  
Their wealth,  
Staring at themselves.

They dance now,  
In broken moonlight,  
No music,  
Just ghosts,  
Who long for life.

*Alone*

The sun rises over the Eastern sky,  
Filling the world with bloodred light.  
Sand sweeps over the palace  
Leaving a cloud of thin dust over the King's bed.  
It's empty.

The town is quiet.  
No merchants on the street,  
No homeless orphans,  
No crying mothers,  
No military parade of the wounded and dead.

One man sits in the throne room.  
He is made of stone,  
Waiting for nothing to change  
For a city consumed.  
The sand takes back a city and a prince,  
Never to be seen again.

*The Female Soldier*

Her breath came in quickly,  
The only thing to penetrate the silence,  
Wind lightly rustled the leaves,  
Bringing her to attention.

Men snuck in the bushes,  
Only the shine of their guns distinguishable  
From the thick brush,  
Leaving them grasped gently in  
Mother Nature's bosom.

Then the snap  
Of a branch beneath their feet  
Made her look at them.  
Targets sighted.

The shine directed her eye  
As she lined up the sights,  
Prepared as she was,  
The noise of the gun surprised her,  
Her trigger sat ready again,  
As a man slumped against a tree,  
Allowing Death to claim him forever.

*Together They Bring Warmth*

He is an infinity symbol.

He is a star, sitting aloof in space.

He is space itself, cold and unforgiving.

He is the ice that cracks and swallows travelers whole.

He is the cold, vast, emptiness of a black hole, consuming what comes near.

He is a king that stands alone, back turned on those that wrong him, the man that is Medusa.

He is a broken crown.

He is a strand of pearls that his mother clutches.

He is the coin that breaks teeth inside a birthday cake.

He is the wealth his father dreams to attain, yet never can.

He is the dog that sits dutifully at a man's feet, willing to protect those he loves.

He is what men are supposed to be, for his father and mother, yet more than enough for his lover

Together,

They are a gem filled with beauty and coldness.

They are the bountiful harvest after a long, hard winter.

They are the snow that has no ice, just fluff, perfect for play.

They are the marble counters that mothers set their children on.

They are the men that people look up to, who love each other every day without trying.

They are what passion longs to be, entwined in an embrace that can last centuries, forever fused,

They are,

Together.

*Churches At Night*

When all was dark,  
I would go down to the sanctuary.  
Pews stood cold and dark  
Silence pervading the air.  
Bibles lay dormant.  
There was a strange nothingness.  
No quiet whispers  
No shuffling pages in a Bible  
Nothing to shush  
Not even a quiet prayer stretching the air.  
The red exit sign glowed neon  
Lightly giving a red tinge to everything near.  
Shadows stretched long  
Fear is paralyzing  
Hearing a giggle from the person seeking you.  
As they shuffle from pew to pew,  
Ruffling the cheap thin carpet.  
Smelling the dust  
As it rose from the toes dragging.  
When they leave,  
It is silent again.



*I Can't Lose You*

Her arm reaches out for me,  
Grasping at the air,  
Her face a layer of shock  
And hurt.  
I make no move to her.

She starts to slide,  
Ground giving way beneath her,  
Still, I stand firm,  
Looking away.

Then,  
Before she falls,  
I move.  
I break the spell.  
Clasping my hand around her arm,  
Holding on for dear life.

I try to hold my tears back,  
We're slipping,  
But I hold on,  
The witch stabbing me in the back  
As I hold on.

My lover cries for me,  
As the blood falls down my dress,  
I won't let go.  
The spell won't move my will.

As it cascades down my arms,  
I pull her up  
On the cliff next to me.

"Why?"  
She asks.

"I can't lose you."  
I say.

Then the warmth fades,  
As my blood spills  
Onto the grass,  
And I close my eyes  
As I see her.