

Demetrius Buckley

Two Poems

Something to Say

I made that letter out to you—my name & prison number—
everything needed to be on a stamped envelope. Travel-wise,
it will go through many hands before reaching yours,
hands of people love-struck for happy endings,
for grandeur, for low-lives becoming rich
from their newfound wealth & Kingship, their
stability. Nothing changes for us. I heard you have
two kids now & the guy you're with
—the one who blocks my calls—
is never around or left you after you were kicked out
on the street with a child on each breast; clothes
in garbage bags your oldest hauled
seven blocks to a urine stench bus bench
where you & your little ones stood
like herons nodding on a back of a crocodile. Waiting.
I knew then (and now) that my worries—the written kind—
would be in someone else's hand, tossed on a
coffee table with the rest of the mail;
but you—my physical kind—I didn't know
would be in the hands of another, splayed on someone's countertop,
easily read, your short clauses & phrases, his liking
then turning the page as he slowly thumbs through
with a gentle slide of a finger
while the envelope addressed to nowhere, to no one,
falls to the cold, expected floor.
Where do we go, then, when havens abscond
to the desolate depths of nostalgia? To self, I assume, to
the momentary collapse of dialogue,
to the ones who gave us up, left us with behavioral relapse
& practical repetitiveness to interpret
—to hell, I say, to hell with it all.

On the phone where we've been reminded
of being recorded, you tell me everything is fine
at home: your little girl can count up to sixty. I believe
the counting & fear the day my daughter
figures me out, the lie about me being an astronaut
in outer space, my blue-orange uniform

issued to the best pilot, always “Takin’ off.”
I think of something to say, begin fumbling through
the pile of unanswered letters that went
uninterrupted beyond the blank space of unansweredness.
Something to say: I will always love you, no matter what.