

Dear Sinéad

I'm just an old punk who grew up
half in love with celluloid you
in Docs & a sun dress. I had a picture
on my wall way longer than I
should've, past when boys replace posters
with the certificates of men. It was
a black & white, circa 1990, by Linssen
& you're wearing a black turtle-neck
knit, smoking a cigarette with a pair of Lennon's
on your head. You have that
half smile only a human who's initiated
can give, because you know life's a pose
& you are gorgeous. I had a hundred girlfriends
I wished were you, through no fault
of their own, no flaw in their beauty,
no bummed notes in the symphony of their souls
but your accidental fame, that
odd misfortune every muse that ever
was has suffered
Sinéad

I woke up a thousand times still drunk
on my murdered
Persian rug under your portrait
wet from holding you in an intoxicated dream
& wished
those glossy paper eyes would just once
see me too . . . so, recently, when I read
that you felt lonely in a hotel room
in some cracked back-lot of the world
Christ, I cried — like himself when he questioned
his father on the horrors of this earth, a
sorry canvas hung in the ruins of the
last
museum, a spear in his portrait's side.

I remembered, well, more
a flashback, the first time I saw you
on television, the Arsenio Hall show &
you said all these wonderful human
things, like people prefer to listen to Neneh
Cherry than Margaret Thatcher
& when the host bought up your haircut
I cringed with you though your
demeanour only betrayed the truth
that the asinine stamps out the sparks
of art & beauty
for a laugh & you
are no side-show pony.

I thought I'd write this poem for you
 & maybe, across this connected disconnect
this online present,
 you'll read it & smile.
I wonder what you're thinking, where you are, right now
 here it's raining. I imagine what you would
say if we met checking-in to our final flophouse together
we'd watch sitcoms & old westerns & smoke cigarettes
until the sun fingers through the curtains & the
 trashcans bang & buses wheeze & we see
out the windows all the other people go to their deaths
 alone
 though social.
Well, the age of instagram
 has killed the rhetorical question
so I googled you &
 Sinéad
I also hate not being able to love
 almost as much as I despise Dr Phil.
The way he tried to strum your heartstrings
 for entertainment in front of the soulless
Siren lens of cameras has seen him cursed
 for eternity by all the daughters of Zeus
who turn the poet's pen
guide the artist to capture light in oil
occupy the fingers of musicians whose instruments
 move the universe
echo in the throats of singers who vocalise
 the gospels of our souls
sculptors whose hands find grace
 in shapeless marble.
 Sinéad
your petals are a little scarred
all those clumsy picnickers in the savage garden
 have trod in your bed, have bruised your blooms
 with decades of million lumen flashes
but your beauty has never faded, even in HD digital.
Then I hear your voice!
 Clear as the church bell on
Red Hill above where I live:
 I aint no bloody flower, mate!
But I'm prepared
 Sinéad
Don't ever discount the brutality of a good bouquet.
 I'd lay out there with you for ever
 in the junkyards on a silk scarf
with a basket full of sins as the moon falls apart
spark one up, twist off a top
 & fuck like new lovers, like nothing matters.