

SUNSHINE

Melissa Lee-Houghton was announced as a Next Generation Poet in 2014. Her first and second collections are published by Penned in the Margins. *Beautiful Girls* was a Poetry Book Society Recommendation. Her poem 'i am very precious' was shortlisted for The Forward Prize for Best Single Poem. She has received a Northern Writers' Award for her fiction. She lives in Blackburn, Lancashire.

PRAISE FOR MELISSA LEE-HOUGHTON

'Melissa Lee-Houghton is a bold, observant and daringly honest poet who intuitively knows what she is doing, even when she ventures into the scariest places.'

Poetry Book Society

'These unflinching poems feel as if they wrote themselves and have the compelling quality of a great novel. At times the language becomes rhapsodic, though there is always a lyrical grace and adroitness, and an intense but careful control.'

Pascale Petit

'Melissa Lee-Houghton holds a mirror to our mouths and teaches us how to breathe so that it hurts like hell.'

Abigail Morley

ALSO BY MELISSA LEE-HOUGHTON

Beautiful Girls (Penned in the Margins, 2013)

A Body Made of You (Penned in the Margins, 2011)

Sunshine

Melissa Lee-Houghton

Penned in the Margins

LONDON

PUBLISHED BY PENNED IN THE MARGINS
Toynbee Studios, 28 Commercial Street, London E1 6AB
www.pennedinthemargins.co.uk

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First published 2016

Printed in the United Kingdom by TJ International

ISBN
978-1-908058-38-6

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Melissa gratefully acknowledges the support of the Royal Literary Fund and the JB Priestley Award. She thanks the British Council for enabling her to visit India. The poems 'And All the Things That We Do I Could Face Today', 'Loneliness' and 'Last Trip' were recorded for The Poetry Archive. 'You Can Watch Me Undress' was first published in the anthology *Glitter is a Gender* (Contraband Books, 2014). 'Z', 'Beautiful Bodies' and 'Mad Girl in Love' were first published in *The Rialto*. 'Hangings' was first published in *Proletarian Poetry*. 'i am very precious' was shortlisted for the Forward Prize for Best Single Poem; it was first published in *Prac Crit* and subsequently in the anthology *Best British Poetry 2015* (Salt Publishing, 2015). 'The Price You See Reflects The Poor Quality Of The Item And Your Lack Of Desire For It' was published in *Granta*. 'He Cried Out To the God of Austerities Who Said On the Seventh Day You Shall Tax, Pillage and Burn' was published in *The Morning Star*.

With thanks to Tom Chivers, whose continual support has enabled these books to reach an audience. Thanks also to Steven Houghton, for keeping me alive.

NOTES

'And All the Things That We Do I Could Face Today' is a lyric from 'If Only It Were True' by The Walkmen. The line 'the caves of your sex' in the poem 'i am very precious' is taken from 'By Grand Central Station I Sat Down And Wept' by Elizabeth Smart.

'I thought I should never speak again but now I
know there is something blacker than desire.'

Sarah Kane, 4.48 PSYCHOSIS

~

'who shall I tell my sorrow
my horror greener than ice?'

Marina Tsvetaeva, 'THE POEM OF THE END'

~

'Burn, suffering!'

Mikhail Bulgakov, THE MASTER AND MARGARITA

Sunshine

And All the Things That We Do I Could Face Today

If Disney made porn they would pay us well for our trouble.
We share baths together because we get bored and it's cold and
we used to talk but now I just pull sad faces and you sympathise.
I was thinking about abstract things, like what distance means to
lovers;

physical distance, emotional distance and the distance
between us in the bath in our heads. I looked into your eyes,
your perfect, blue-jay Hollywood eyes, and how starved they sank
and I massaged your soft cock in my right hand; your eyes rolled
in ecstasy and I let my thumb rub the soft part and you melted
into the lukewarm water like butter on a hot knife. Your come
oozed out slowly and sweetly and I licked it off my hand as you
groaned. Immediately, a dozen bluebirds flew in and tidied your
hair,

a gentle and spritely music soothed your brow and blew
all around us, and all I wanted was forgiveness.

And the come in my mouth tasted strong and hormonal and
strange;

and you settled back into the bath with your flushed skin and your
cock bobbing and your come floating in globules
on the surface of the soapy water. You said you needed to get clean
and drank your advocaat. I said Rob's getting me some MDMA
for my Christmas present. You said what you gonna do, sit in and
get high;

I said no, we're gonna walk around all night drinking beer

and talking. I'm thirty-two years old, I'm thinking,
and I need to come, and I need to sort my life out, my head out,
my heart dilated to an apple, the core waiting to be pierced
by some dumb Cupid, pinning me to the one trajectory.
You said I'd better rinse the bath down, and watched me clean
my pussy, and dry my body, and grow cold and silent again.
I love you baby. I love all of you and I will never love myself.
This book is gonna be a killer. It's gonna suck me dry,
suck me white, suck my insides out and leave me hollow and high.
Do you even realise how cool the full moon looks
over Pendle Hill and all the rotten towns at midnight, howling
and hollow, and do you remember how good it feels not to touch
on MDMA and have all that hollow love like a mouthful of wasted
come.

I've never come so close to drowning, my love.
The world seems so hollow from here — I've never been less sure,
saturated, lonely or wet, and over and beyond my head.
And what if the moon's not full? And what if? Where are we going?
And why can't I come too? You fall asleep nestled under my arm
and I want to pinch you; cruelty being all I've got for now.
Is it brave of me to fall from this sad height? Or should I
climb down and lie in this coffin of pain and wait for lights out;
listening to the sound of my own pulse beating against the pillow;
in the same sheets *he* slept in when he stayed at our house.
I fit inside love like the breath in a flute. I will escape
at the slightest pause or hesitation. You need to *clasp* me.
You need to tie me down. Please. I want to go *nowhere*.

Videos

I held hands with you today. I held hands with you
at the doctor's surgery awaiting the results of my blood test.
I held hands with you during *Synecdoche, New York*
and fell asleep mid-way through. I asked you how it ended
though I knew. They all died, you said. Everybody did.

I was the wife who didn't care and her lover.
I was the protagonist and his impending death.
I was the little girl and her green shit.
I was the house on fire.
I was the much-lauded play.
I was the world's only fat junkie.

I woke when the titles played out and disregarded
all the thoughts that attempted to suck me out of finality.
There's nothing final when you can play it again;
you watched the same film a year ago and everyone still died,
and I still let go of your hand.