

Jonathan Greenhouse

Invisible Toolbox

Depression's like being trapped in an attic, & love's like a
 toolbox,
& inside the toolbox are sledgehammers & drills & plastic
 explosives,
but sometimes depression's so bad it's like a steel-plated attic,

fireproof & explosive-deterrent, & in the toolbox,
you've only got toothpicks & chewing gum & scotch-tape.
Sometimes love's like a toolbox with nothing in it.

Sometimes it's an IOU note saying she's going to bring back
 the tools
in a couple weeks/months, but you know she'll never return
 them.

You know the box she's left is becoming unhinged,

the handle coming off. You're trapped in this attic
& hear the faint hammering of reinforced construction,
like they're burying you further within yourself. You open
 your mouth

but only hear the cement inside you, the scaffolding & signage
of a work-in-progress, a series of dead-ends. You look at
 your toolbox

& wonder if you're not looking closely enough,

because sometimes love's like an invisible toolbox you suddenly
 notice,

& you take all the tools & escape from the hole into which
 you'd fallen,

then return to the open sky & breathe in the scent

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of all the world's flowers; & this is love.
& depression's when none of this has happened,
because there's no such thing as an invisible toolbox,

& even the dream of one is entrapped within a fresh coat of
concrete.

Different Worlds

Somewhere, in a distant part of our galaxy,
a girl's thinking of me & foolishly believing I'll find her.
She's straightening her hair & putting on a red dress,
the one she'd worn when she'd met that last guy who'd done
her wrong,

& she puts on the earrings given to her by her grandmother,
who disappeared into a flock of starlings devoured by twilight.
If she were here right now, I'd tell her not to bother,
that we're light-years away & can't possibly meet, the two of
us separated

by the history of the cosmos, our two different worlds coalescing
so far from each other our small stars only catch
furtive glances at the other when there's an eclipse
of a hundred other stars at once, all aligned & holding their
breaths.

I'd appear to her in dreams & tell her how impossible it'd be,
how our body parts don't even fit, our chemistry
a clash of misunderstood compounds. Our sizes hardly correlate
& our colors & brightness could be alternately blinding

or susceptible to an invisible fate; & yet she waits,
somewhere, in a distant part of our galaxy, knowing she'll find
me

because this is what she has to do, just like all of us,
dreaming our revolutions will take us closer to where our other
selves wait.