

**2011 Roger M. Jones Poetry Contest**  
**Third Prize: Tanya Das**

**Minnie Mouse**

when I was a little girl  
my sister and I used to play a game.  
I would go into her room and say,  
“hi Minnie!”  
and there Minnie Mouse would appear,  
temporarily taking on the appearance of my sister,  
she would chat with me about her life with Mickey -  
(she and Daisy went shopping yesterday and bought two matching red polka dot  
dresses, Mickey told her a joke yesterday and it went like this)  
then after a while Minnie would say,  
“it’s been nice talking to you but I have to go now!”  
And in her place,  
Belle would appear!,  
temporarily taking on the appearance of my sister,  
she would chat with me about her life in the Beast’s palace,  
(she discovered a secret passage in castle that led to Candyland, her fairy  
godmother visited and gifted her a magic wand)  
then after a while Belle would say,  
“it’s been nice talking to you but I have to go now!”  
And in her place,  
Jasmine would appear!  
temporarily taking on the appearance of my sister,  
she would chat with me about her latest adventures -  
(the genie accidentally turned Raja into a toad and they decided to keep him that  
way, she snuck out of the palace last night and watched a meteor shower in the  
sky on her flying carpet)  
then after a while Jasmine would say,  
“it’s been nice talking to you but I have to go now!”  
and this would continue for quite a while  
until we had exhausted a list of Disney characters  
and after our children’s peals of laughter had subsided  
and after we had were fully satisfied with our imaginary trips to Disneyland.  
then one day,  
I went into my sister’s room and said,  
“hi Minnie!”  
and my sister said,  
“Go away.”  
and I said,  
“no I want to talk to Minnie!”  
“Minnie’s not here right now.”  
“when will Minnie be back?”  
“Never.”  
“but I want to talk to Minnie!!”  
“No. GO away!”  
and she pushed me out of the room,  
closed her door in my face,  
and that was it.  
Minnie never came back.

**you**

and I'm lying here, shivering and sweating  
my body crying tears that my eyes can't.  
just wondering, where will I be in four hours, when you're gone?  
I want simultaneously to lie here all night,  
to memorize every detail of your face,  
and also to turn and run as far as I can  
away from you and everything about you,  
no,  
away from us,  
so I can uselessly try and remember who I was before (you)

what is it that's so insignificantly significant...  
I can't stand the thought of this being replaced by  
the cold rigidity of black pixels on a screen,  
forming symbols called letters,  
forming strings called words,  
forming paragraphs called e-mails,  
which hopelessly attempt to replace this random wonderful collection of atoms and  
molecules which represent an existence,  
yours.

waves, vibrations in my ear,  
resonating within me in ways I didn't know were possible  
the comforting sounds of your breath,  
so regular and constant and assuredly there,  
right next to me.

today, my soul longs to be lost with you  
but tomorrow, yours will be gone  
forever.

## **A violin**

Pick me up  
Tuck me gently under your chin  
Glide your fingers across my rigid body  
Your arms cradling my stiff form  
Your fingers forming complicated designs on my skin  
Alternately quickening, then slowing down, then stopping all together  
Simply holding, suspended in air  
Subjecting me to your whims as I lie here, you're putting on a show  
Exhibiting me, using me, drowning me  
And I remain, stiffly allowing you to inflict your desires  
I'm an instrument and you're the player  
Playing me like a violin.

## Misalignment

As it finally quiets down I take notice of my physical state.  
I have just bathed and yet I feel dirty.  
I have just eaten and yet I feel hungry.  
I have just slept and yet I feel tired.  
My stomach ties itself in knots of protest whenever...

...

Every moment seems incomplete.

That last night, I slept just fine  
But I could tell she had been up all night;  
Knowing her she was already missing me, even before I had left.  
She has a tendency to do that.  
I tell her to live in the moment, but all she can do is  
Think about someone else who is somewhere else  
So she misses the stupid wonderful things right in front of her.

Now I feel a bit alone.  
I go to parties to dance and forget myself in the music and forget myself with  
friends.  
I do not have to think.  
Then I return home to the quiet and the books and the equations, piles of paper,  
numbers, concepts, things to learn.

All I want is to feel alive.

She isn't the same any more.  
She's unresponsive, bitter, holding back.  
The memories I have of her, while quite imperfect,  
Are so completely alive in comparison with what we have now.

I don't know what I've done.

I don't know what I could do or what I should do.  
Young people are all unhappy because they don't know what to do.  
Old people are all unhappy because they know what to do but don't want to do it.  
Somewhere is the balance between maturity and recklessness.  
To be happy is to be reckless.

But for now, I am content with living in distractions.  
5 months to the day  
7 months since she entered  
5 months since she left

What a terrible haiku.