

Natalia Panzer's
Poetry for Children
2017

Bread

I went to get bread. Somebody with a clipboard approached me and said, "I mean you no harm." What's the matter? Bread and only bread. Tree nuts were hitting the sidewalk with a click. I hoped one wouldn't hit my head. I went into a store and bought sweet bread. I ate it on the way to the pizza stand. I have a big bag. Somebody screamed in my ear and opened a can. I went back the way I came. I thought, do they have bread? A loaf as big as my head?

Bugs

Cats plop down against my legs.
Their soft back fat against my long shins.
They line up, as if at a milk bar.
I'm pouring drinks from a 9-way pitcher.
On a hill, on top of a skinny staircase, I talk about money with a stranger.
Loud laughter, then silence.
There's not enough salt. The salt's key!
All oil inside me.
I ask for a plastic fork.
I promise, I forget.
Strawberries shrivel and rot
in the fridge in thin, plastic boxes.
Dust piles up on everything.
The bugs in my code begin to act.
The page looks different in every view.
Some recent bugs include
the ability to sign up for two accounts
with the same email address
but one account's email address begins with an uppercase letter
and the other one begins with a lowercase letter
and the ability to sign in with
an email address that begins with an uppercase letter
sometimes in some places on the website
but not other times and other places
and the ability to sign in sometimes and in some places
with an email address IN ALL CAPS.

Dead, refresh

Sometimes, all I can do
is click through
my social media accounts
to see if anything new has happened.
I'll close an app or page
and open it up again straight away
even though I know nothing's changed.

I lie in bed. Lonely, a blunt sword
hits my head again and again.
Plastic swords crack against trees, and in my hands.

I try to draw and only the outlines of animals look right.
I draw the folds of the curtain
over and over, and it's always a blob.

Who am I looking for?
Who am I waiting for?
Who, the whole night through.

My brilliant friend

She takes me out on days off
Plants explode
They grow and grow
Nothing else matters

We wait for ten minutes on the corner, then eat
I sleep, but still, she tweets
Colourful clothes on bodies of one in fragments

Walking by windows, we glance left
In profile, everybody looks right
She comes in the day
I don't remember
What's right
No time at all for night

Would she stay with me through Paypal?

Pythagoras

In one of his reanimations
Pythagoras was a fish
and in another, a bird
said Pythagoras.

Pythagoras walked out of the sea
on webbed feet
and he walked and walked
and as he walked
the webbing got slacker and slacker
until it faded away
and he could no longer walk
and so he sat to rest his feet.

He was still on the beach
lost in the dunes
and with nothing else to look at
he looked at the dunes
and he saw how they shifted in the wind.

His feet moved in the wind.

Limits are what any of us are inside of,
especially my feet,
but they are still my feet,
and so he started to notice a pattern
and then he wanted to predict the pattern.

He bent his head this way and that
until it doubled in size
so one became one
and two to two became four.

He spread this word.

A Pythagorean sect
whose followers would listen to their master speak
from behind a curtain.

Sleep

8 to 12 hours.

Sometimes, I sleep for 15.

Waking up at 5am.

Waking back up at 5pm.

More than anything, I sleep.

So much has been lost to sleep.

So much that I can't forget it.

In a dream, I run across the street, like a bee.

My face stings for weeks.

Talking

I thought

I didn't mean to

I don't care

What do I do if I don't?

I take it back

Headaches from chats

Hello, duh

No, no, who

No, no I'm not having fun anymore

Bad questions

Wrong answers

Comfortable silence

Then movement, rest, repeat, horse, hello

I appear to be normal

I am in acceptable used condition

Walking

Comfortable shoes protect my feet, but where do I put my hands? My jacket had pockets, but then I took it off and left it on a dumpster. Luckily, I had another jacket underneath. Front-facing pockets hurt my hands. Side slits are best. I text and text. Traffic goes both ways on the sidewalk. Where do the fish go after the end of the shopping day? Blue crabs and little snails. Crawfish hang suspended in a tank in the window in grey water and green slime. Racks of pork ribs and sizzled ducks hang slick in the window, and a bright yellow sac. Where do I buy an eel? She wants chocolate, not strawberry. The shopkeeper shakes her head. Tourists don't know what they want. I'm in a shop, lifting up pots, tapping on their bottoms, listening for what? Scuffed boots and chipped teeth. Bank robbery. I'm waking up at 6am and so I'm not sleeping until then.