

Allie Poague excerpt from “I Am Happiness on Earth”

Oz Leshem excerpt from “Hello Syndic Cowboy of My Dreams”

Desert Runoff

<Hello Syndic Cowboy of My Dreams>

come rescue me with your ill intentions and diesel engine horse
gallop across the America you don't know of yet
collect every passerby and assailant you see walking along the way
you wishful and deep-thinking danger
dump them into a pit of *i forgive yous* and *everything will be okays*

come see me working boy
come find me in the mountains
of my fantasy

<I Am Happiness on Earth>

When I was a child, I used to think my heart was a circle. The circle is the most diverse shape in nature, from the footsteps of men on the moon that remain untouched, to the cycle of animals eating each other to stay alive. It all joins in one large sphere, the ends tying together in a circular knot. Emotions are a circle, repetitive, joint. My anger is the fifth circle, the mud caked onto the memories of cold winters, drowned in the pits of the river Styx. My joy is the whirlpool attacking the sink's drain. I used to believe everything metaphorically or not was a circle, but I'm starting to believe that human nature is the exception.

<Hello Syndic Cowboy of My Dreams>

you facade of passion with your country music blasting

bring me Caurteles clay if you ride over Chimayo

you outskirts rascal of paradise

bring me a breakfast burrito from Abe's Cantina y Cocina if you pass
through Arroyo Seco from any San Cristobal valley of reckoning

you lingering thought in my head

soar my part of La Sierra de la Sangre de Cristo

you waste of my time

i'll wait for you at the edge of Valdez shackled up near the water

<Hello Syndic Cowboy of My Dreams>

come flower the potent rhythm

come sway in arm's reach of me

come here cowboy

you shrapnel blade seductive in sound

bring me a name new to the ear

you lampoon shaped heart

find a kind of someone that makes you want to change

<I Am Happiness on Earth>

My father lived in the bad side of Albuquerque as my mother would say. Every other Friday, he would drive two hours to pick us up for the weekends he would have custody. We'd throw our duffle bags into the backseat of his beat-up Ford and buckle ourselves up in anticipation of the moment we'd reverse the action to get snacks from the inside of a gas station

down the street for the tedious drive. We'd eventually pick up a Hot-N-Ready pizza, get to the one-bedroom house he lived in, watch a movie a child certainly shouldn't be consuming, and go to bed. This was my circle, with the end point being my dad yelling El Chupacabra every time he would see my mother's car pull up in the driveway.

<Hello Syndic Cowboy of My Dreams>

make a song out of me

etch a scar onto me

toss around Taos with me until we cannot see the colors of the night

pull the roots of promise that exist

come humming

come raining down and don't stop the pour

you fragile dream in a durable world

<I Am Happiness on Earth>

I haven't seen my father since I was 11. After a tumultuous final year of court hearings and an ongoing battle with severe mental illness, he had vacated my life completely. I tend to find this contradictory though because I am 50% of him. No matter how pale I get, how short I cut my hair, or how quickly my skin heals, that 50% will always remain under the surface. It makes me sick to think about my blood, not because I am afraid of such, but because I have this dream where I can drain it all and be completely clean of him. I imagine it spilling out of me much like a waterfall containing the time we spent together with the memories of school events and daddy-daughter-lunch-ins he never attended pooling at the bottom of my newly cleansed

body. In these visions, I can imagine it slowly being absorbed into the flooring and I feel a sensation of being more and more clean, but less and less whole as it trickles out.

<Hello Syndic Cowboy of My Dreams>

you fragile world of my dreams

you whisper of rage

you incomprehensible thing

walk meadowsweet in Amole Canyon

you fix of home on the spindle

ride the last few hours of the day

<I Am Happiness on Earth>

“What’s wrong?”

“Allie, do you know where you come from? You come from a line of people like me, people like us; people who ruin things. Allie, you do not ruin things. You are the only person I met who does not ruin things. We have a plot of land on the reservation. Land a line of people ruined, but you...you will not ruin this. You will bring love and happiness to this land. If I die tonight, I want you to get this land, you hear me? I am a bad father, but you...you are happiness on earth.”