

MY LATEST POEM

The VCR is broken
and we don't want to miss our favourite programs
so we have to stay home
every night this week.

On Monday I want to tell you that when I was seven,
I fell off the swings awkwardly
and hurt my groin.

On Tuesday I want to tell you how my father,
when he was carving the turkey,
asked, "Are you a breast man or a leg man?"

On Wednesday I want to tell you that
my heroes, when I was in Grade 7,
were the Green Lantern and the Submariner.

On Thursday I want to tell you that, for
my next poem, I plan to put together
a bunch of words that John Stiles
will never use in one of his poems,
like "windswept," "gossamer," "Persephone,"
"sycamore," and "turgid."

On Friday I want to tell you
my three rules about change:

- 1) you can't change your man
- 2) you can't change your woman
- 3) fuck change

then the weekend comes
and it is time to shop for a new VCR.

Someone in my workshop tells me
to avoid clichés, like *the plague*,
and *kiss me like there was no tomorrow*,
and *hold me and never let me go*,
or *take me in your arms and tell me*
everything will be all right,
or simply, *I love you*.

Clichés are bad, unless you can turn them on their head,
make them new.

My Latest Poem
wants to be finished
during a power outage
when we eat snack foods by candlelight
and worry that the food in the fridge will go bad
and that the shut-ins are freezing their balls off
and the batteries in the flashlight are near death.

I feel, at this point in the poem,
I should repeat earlier lines, like,
the VCR is broken
and we don't want to miss our favourite programs
so we have to stay home
every night this week
but I can't decide which lines
are worth repeating.

You are Persephone!
You are the poster child
for chips and chocolate
and I want to munch on your windswept hair.

Our clothes are clean
thanks to the turgid agitator.

I want to tell you how I fell
off a bike and kissed the cold comfort of the ground.

I want to tell you how I feel
but I have said it all before
and I can't decide which lines are worth repeating.

I am working on a slogan:
Built-in obsolescence creates jobs.
Do you like it?

I like the clothes you wear,
and the way you adhere to *your* three rules:

- 1) you have the right to change your mind
- 2) you will not wear white after Labour Day
unless it conflicts with rule 1
- 3) nothing makes you look fat

I look into your gossamer eyes filling with tears
and I know VCRs are made to be broken.

The sycamore makes you look thin.
You are wearing white.
You are wearing white and changing into something else.

The batteries in the flashlight are going into the light.
The batteries in the flashlight are going into the light.
Let us light a candle for the batteries.
Let us remember the batteries, fondly.

Kiss me like there were no supermarkets.
Hold me as if there were no garage sales.
Take me in your arms and tell me
you didn't lose the receipt.

I have to get the VCR fixed.
We must go out.
We must go out tonight.
We must go out to the store and buy chips and chocolate.
I love you.
Maybe that's the only line that bears repeating.
I love you.