

May Day

My mouth is crowded with weather
left over from today's parade.
What will grow here out of the fist
waving on a flag I reached to touch with my fingers while a boy watched?
Will it look
like a woman standing on a car with a camera? Did she catch our faces right?
Will viewers see us singing *Clandestino!* at the ends of lines
in between buying food from a truck
and watching red-winged blackbirds?
I want to know what kind of erotica
the Subcomandante writes.
Surely he knows how to write sunburned eyes
and how to make Lorca kiss Mayakovsky next to the pelota cart.
And also how to make them just
another thing happening while all those feet march the streets and sidewalks.
While the band plays music
until the confusion of birds and traffic is hot.
We have to be where we're at because in the Midwest there is no horizon.
Because the water around this city is the kind of fluid doctors talk about.
We create spectacle, our bodies moving
into a future filled with vendors who sell nothing, barter in moments.
I open my coat: a Milwaukee street like a Paris committee,
a protester like a laptop in a forest.

Teach Out: The Wisconsin Uprising (Milwaukee)

your job, your pay and your benefits
don't exist

to the election of politicians who are hostile
inner-city neighborhoods mostly disenfranchised
your collective bargaining efforts
the majority of my co-workers

the Latino community and America at large

invest more in incarceration

scapegoating teachers and all
immigrant youth as a source
of cheap labor and cannon fodder

we will only accept a proposal to disrupt

tens of thousands of people
who continue to peacefully

a coalition of parents, students,

educators, teaching assistants
were dragged

this is a walk out

I'm feeling sick,
and I'm going to be sick on Monday

Note: All text is from press releases, web sites, articles, social media, and speeches by the following Milwaukee-based activist organizations and unions: Local 212, Milwaukee Graduate Assistants Association, SDS Milwaukee, Take the Hood Back, and Voces de la Frontera.

The Raised Fist That Greets You Is/Is Not

an ad for a union job
all jobs exploit you

footage labeled "Olympics, 1968"

reproducible at scale

resenting Leadbelly being made into a living documentary

a great name for
an artillery, a Stallone film, a movement

populating Wisconsin with forgotten history

a morning radio shock jock

getting her hair done at the salon without stigma

both a sexual act and the falcon's perch

explaining black power in an unwavering interview in prison

the poor person's livery

a corrido leading to toppled governments

a widespread convention

right now undertaking monumental loads of laundry

Recognition

guards treat the pizzeros
like flunkeys convalescing in the hot sun or a bacterial picket line,
one-celled and multiplying
a heel-to-toe phantasm on the sidewalk
police threatening citations for stepping on the grass
backstepping through history
until strikers and allies fight back through Instagrams a strategic nostalgia for sweating
letterboxed for the news
El pueblo unido . . .
the language of missing fingers parading through living rooms
because people need to know we are all loopy survivalists of realism
and there are circles
forming right now under the sun

Touch the Rock & Roll

A man in a hat that says "Lietuva" swallows
beer and presses buttons on a digital camera.

The sign behind him says "Touch the Rock & Roll."

I write words I don't like in a notebook
and suddenly realize Bright Eyes is playing.

"If you walk away, I'll walk away."

Today we were walking on corpses
and I was thinking of you.

The woman selling Parisian stationary
asks where I'm from.
I pass cards to her and she presses buttons
on a register.

We both like the human-rabbit eating flowers:
"I like to celebrate."

She offers to show me around Vilnius.

We were walking on corpses, on burned
flesh, and I wanted to touch you.

The woman across the hall is sitting on her bed
listening to music. One of the guys from Neutral
Milk Hotel plays music on a saw.

Her door is open, and I think she can see the UFO
oil painting on the hostel wall.

There were strawberries growing from the burned
we were walking on.

The American couple huddle together and start
scribbling notes to each other.

They think everyone else is either too hipster
or not hipster enough.

Johnny Cash drifts from the building next door:
"I hung my head, I hung my head."

The strawberries growing from corpses

might be your relatives. I never asked where
your people were from.

The bartender passes the menu back to the man,
“I know, I know.” He turns his back, slams the mug
under the tap.

Not sure if he hears the plans
to dance under a disco ball on Saturday.

We were walking on strawberry corpses.
I was thinking of you
and having medium-weight revelations.

I can hear the man in the cafe bathroom speaking
on his cell phone, “I’m in the bathroom.”

I thought you should know all of this.