

My teacher, regret

There will be days where I'm left
at the end wondering
who taught me that love
can only be proven with hands and mouths and
violent satisfaction guaranteed?

Who showed me the lack
of care that led to heartless
sex, the fear of men with big
lips, the secret desires
for death again and again?

Was it Chad in the closet
in 6th grade? I couldn't get away
from him, trapped in a pile of my own
clean clothes?
Was it that boy whose name
I don't remember, who told me
when I was 9 that I reminded him
of our 8th grade home ec teacher?

And wasn't it hot that I already wore a bra?

Was it the nameless faceless
countless men & boys catcalling from
cars and across the street.

Hey are those real?

Check out those tits!
Is that your real hair color?
What's your name girl?
What's your name

gorgeous?

Was it Ricky & Travis
who first took my virginity
and then my dignity?
For nearly a year or was it more, they took
turns fucking me and because it was

all I knew of love, I let them.

By the time
I left for college, I'd learned that sex was
more like a weapon
and love a bitter disappointment.

I honed my sword and for years
they fell in battle: Jason, John, Jason,
Micah, Shawn, Jack, Cute Dumb Boy #1,

Steve, Matt, British Guy in an Alley,
Peter, Brandon, Jeremy, Eric, Valerie.

And then, moving to a new city
3rd in eight years,
I vowed not to use my love
as a dagger.

I thought that I could just
decide to be better
but my heart,
it knew a different story.

I have buried each pain for more than 30 years and
I don't even know where
to start,
to begin looking for answers,
for apologies. Mine and theirs—

Who was it that taught me
Love is only violent satisfaction?

