

# Five Poems

by [Mather Schneider](#) (May 2023)



*Alone Together*, Maria Kreyne

## Normal

I haven't talked to Natalia in 3 days.  
We had another fight.  
I've been sleeping in the room out back  
and drinking like a hole in the ground.  
It's 2 p.m. and I hear a knock on the door  
right in the middle of a dream where all my hair was falling  
out  
and spiders were crawling out of my veins.  
Natalia says,  
The guy's here to fix the water pump.  
We've been waiting for a week for him to show up.

They never call first.  
I spend too much time reading Emerson's "Self Reliance"  
to learn to fix anything.  
I get dressed and go outside.  
It's sunny and a bit warmer.  
Natalia and I stand and watch him dismantle the water pump,  
40-ish Mexican man with his son learning the trade  
handing him tools.  
He smiles and says,  
You need a new tank and a new hose,  
I'll go get the materials,  
and you'll be back to normal in no time.  
Gracias, I say.  
We watch them drive off in his old truck.  
Probably the same truck his father used.  
I put my arm around Natalia  
but she twists away and goes inside.  
I stand there next to the pieces of the water pump  
laid out on the cracked concrete,  
wondering what that guy thinks normal is  
and how much it's all going to cost.

## **Eggshells**

The sun comes up a little later and a little slower each day  
and so do I.  
Natalia stays in bed all day.  
I water the plants out of habit  
and drink coffee.  
The birds chirp.  
Birds don't get depressed it seems.  
They've seen the big picture.  
Eggshells on the ground under the big tree.  
No sex anymore,

no kissing.

I wait for 3 o'clock so I can start on the beer.  
There's a water leak in the wall of the bathroom  
seeping through.

I look at it while urinating,  
turn the light off and walk out.

Some people can't smile through the pain.

I might as well apologize  
to the abyss

and wait for an echo.

Easter will be here soon.

## **The Spit that Fell from the Clouds**

When your wife has been ill for 2 years  
and no doctor in the land can put a name to it  
when she cries in bed each night  
and flinches when you touch her  
and all you can do is remember  
how young and happy she once was  
it is difficult to give a shit

that they're fighting over sky-fairies in Tal Afar  
or that demonstrators are up in arms in Barcelona  
or that somebody made hot cakes on Facebook  
or that glassy-eyed poets are passing mouth-gas on Spotify  
and bitching about Nietzsche  
with their laptops and backdrop bookshelves testifying  
to their talent and mental acuity  
or that the motorcycle rally is next weekend  
or that the car is filthy  
from the spit that fell from the clouds  
or that jam has bits of fruit in it unlike jelly  
or that a pubescent loop-job dropped artillery

in a Missoula classroom  
killing eleven  
or that the monarchs are fluttering again  
on the motherfucking wind.

## **Lucky**

The doctor told Natalia she has a hole in her eardrum  
too small to see with the naked eye,  
been there from birth.

It never bothered her  
and has nothing to do with anything  
but that's all the doctor could say.  
You've got a hole in your eardrum  
need to fix that, that'll be  
4,000 dollars.

We don't have 4,000 dollars.  
Now Natalia puts cotton in her ear  
and is afraid of the wind  
and the sea  
and showers  
and sand  
and the rain  
on top of all the pain.

But what about the other problem, doctor?  
No idea, but there's a hole in your eardrum, doc said.  
You're lucky I found it, doc said.  
Doctors don't listen too good  
and they only see what they look for  
just like you and me.

## Footprints

Went swimming in the ocean yesterday.  
It's October and the water was cold,  
bracing and good for the hangover,  
helps to freeze and shrink the hot balloon head.  
Natalia went with me but she doesn't swim.  
It was a bit windy  
and there is a lot of fecal matter in the air here  
in our small Mexican town.  
Natalia is scared of the wind.  
She's scared of almost everything these days:  
dogs, cats, strangers, yeast, grocery stores, the sun, sugar.  
We carry an umbrella  
and plant it in the sand of the beach.  
She sits under it and watches me swim.  
It's like being on the moon when I'm in the water  
or flying in a dream.  
Sometimes there are manta rays that will sting you  
and bright blue jellyfish the size of baseballs.  
They've touched me and didn't sting me  
but it's only a matter of time I'm told.  
A lot of people wear shoes in the water but I don't.  
The scientists found fossilized footprints  
in New Mexico the other day.  
It was on the news.  
In the photos you could clearly see they were human footprints  
with the unmistakable splayed toes.  
They say they are 23,000 years old  
which is hard to imagine.  
I wonder what they were doing 23,000 years ago.  
Just walking around  
looking for food,  
trying to get out of the mud.  
I wonder if they were confused  
about the meaning of it all  
or if they knew something

that I do not.

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**Mather Schneider** was born in 1970 in Peoria, Illinois. He has had many jobs over the years and published many poems, stories and 5 books. He divides his time between Tucson, Arizona and Mexico.

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