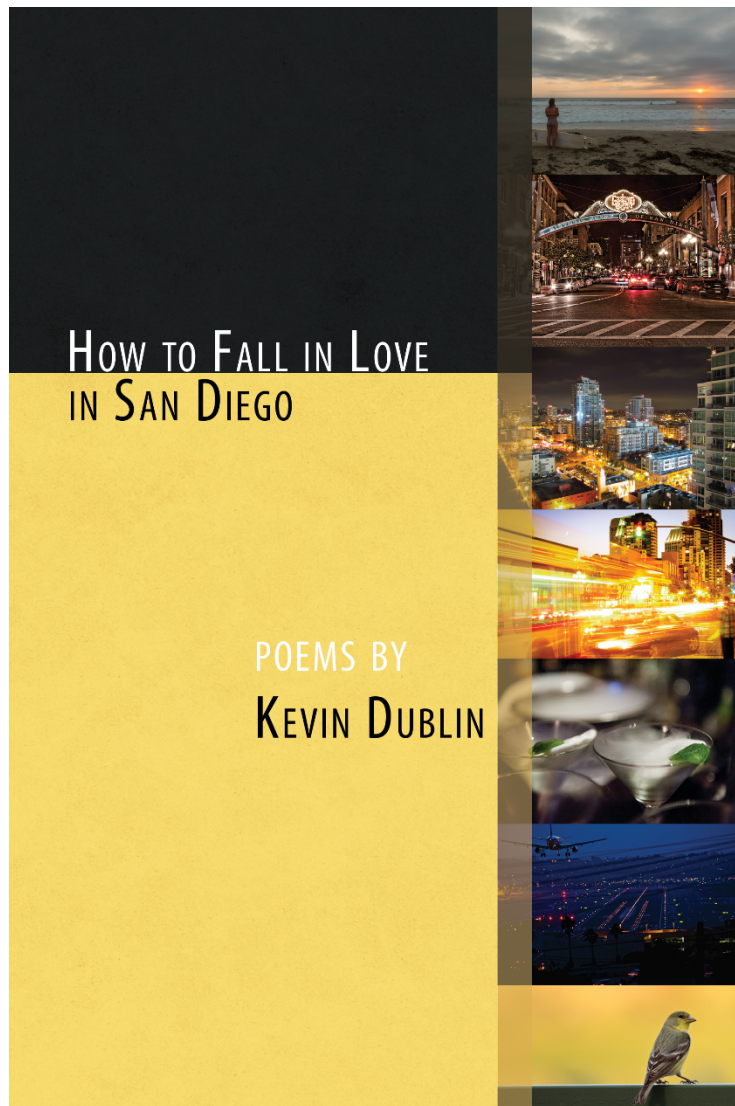


Kevin Dublin, author of *How to Fall in Love in San Diego*



Press Contact

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Biography



photo credit: Molly Jane Hudson

Kevin Dublin is an educator, editor, and writer of poetry, prose, scripts, and code. Currently Director of the Elder Writing Project, a community-based outreach program of the Litquake Foundation as well as a coding instructor and advisor at the low-cost coding bootcamp, Kickstart Coding in Oakland. Kevin is committed to helping nurture emerging writers and developers from ages 5 - 105. He currently serves on the board of the bay area reading series Quiet Lightning. Kevin is a Writers Studio Ralph Dickey Scholar and has received fellowships, grants, and awards from the San Francisco Arts Commission (SFAC), Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI), Martha's Vineyard Institute of Creative Writing, and the North Carolina Poetry Society. He is author of the chapbook *How to Fall in Love in San Diego* (2017) and his words have recently appeared or forthcoming in *The SanFranciscan*, *Syzygy Magazine*, *Cincinnati Review*, & *North Carolina Literary Review*. Kevin holds a BA & BFA from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, MA from East Carolina University, as well as an MFA from San Diego State and for a little Black boy from Smithfield, NC believes he has been brought a mighty long way.

Curriculum Vitae

Kevin Dublin

Education

The Writers Studio. 2021–
In-Progress: Tales of the White Nights
Ralph Dickey Scholarship Award Recipient

M.F.A. Creative Writing, San Diego State U. 2015
Manuscripts: The White Knight & Coming of Age in Failed Love Stories
AWP Intro Journals Award Nominee, Sarah B. Marsh-Rebelo Scholarship

M.A. English, East Carolina U. 2012
Thesis: Identifying White Knight Syndrome
Scholarship and Award Committee Outstanding Graduate Student Award

B.A. English, Writing & Technology, U of North Carolina-Wilmington. 2010
Thesis: Internet Privacy: Web 3.0 and the Future of Cookies on the Internet

B.F.A. Creative Writing, U of North Carolina-Wilmington. 2010
Manuscript: Half these Poems are About Love
North Carolina Poetry Society Gilbert-Chappell Distinguished University Poet

Works in Progress

Mural, Poet, Producer, Filmmaker. Full-length poetry manuscript & video poems, 2022

Prompt Me Web App, Full Stack Web Developer. <http://promptme.net>, 2020

Poetry Lateral Revision Web App, HTML5 Developer. www.revisepoetry.com, 2016

Termination, Inc., Web Series, Writer/Producer. Part Everything Productions, 2022

Write Like the Masters of Poetry: How to Imitate the Key Strengths of Poets and Transform Your Own Writing,
Writer & Editor, tbd

Sonic Density: The Critical Anthology of Hip-Hop Poetry and Poetics, Co-Editor, tbd

Poetry Publications

“Politics,” *The SanFranciscan*, issue 5. Fall 2021

“Ghost Story,” “While Black in America,” “Each Evening,” *Syzygy*, Vol. 1. Spring 2021
 “Unsung Bay Song,” *The Reader Zine*. Fall 2020
 “From Such Great Heights,” in ‘One Happy Story,’ *San Francisco Chronicle*. Fall 2020
 “After Grand Theft Auto,” *The Racket SF* #12. Summer 2020
 “Be Smooth,” *Cincinnati Review*. Spring 2020 (Best Small Fictions Nominee)
 “Argument” and four other poems, *Sparkle + Blink* v 101. Fall 2019 (Pushcart Prize Nominee)
 “Divorce,” *North Carolina Literary Review*. Summer 2019
How to Fall in Love in San Diego, Chapbook. Finishing Line Press, May 2017
 “His Kind,” *Rogue Agent Journal*. March 2016
 “After a Month Apart,” “Black Masculinity,” “Pacific Beach,” “Last Night You Said You’d Leave Me,” *Quatrain.Fish*. November 2015
 “Growing Up Sheltered (Three),” “Not Kissing You,” *Glint Literary Journal*. Fall 2015
 “How to Fall in Love in San Diego (Four),” “Find the Source,” “Four Letters Dependent on Circumstance & Time,” “Find Someone Who Needs Saving,” *SOFTBLOW*. July 2015
 From *Courting Sylvia Plath*: “Serving the Party” (Best of Net Nominee), “At a European Café in East Village,” “To London,” “Affair at Hampstead Heath,” “Fragments,” *Menacing Hedge*. Spring 2015
 “Hands Empty and Trembling to be Filled,” “On Sight,” *Cababa River Literary Journal*. May 2015
 “How to Fall in Love in San Diego,” “#LoversAndStatus,” “Inflection,” “#LoversAndFeelings,” “How Can You Remain in Love in San Diego?,” *Leipzig Glocal*, April 2015
 “Poets are Always in Love or They Would be Serial Killers,” *Writer’s Monthly Review*. April 2015
 “How to Fall in Love in San Diego (One),” *Sunshine/Noir II*, San Diego City Works P. 2015
 “Find a Father Figure II,” “Across the Riverline,” *Connotations Press: An Online Artifact*. July 2012
 “Misunderstanding White Knight Syndrome,” *Poetry Quarterly*. Summer 2012
 “In Passing Downtown,” *Aries: A Journal of Art and Literature*. Spring 2010
 “First Encounter with Fatherhood,” *Strong Verse*. May 2010
 “Resolutions,” *Strong Verse*. Feb 2010
 “Memory Recovery,” “If I Could Find Her and Hear Her Speak,” *Word Salad Poetry*. Fall 2009
 “Complications,” *Between the Lines*. 2008
 “Saturday, November 9, 1996,” *Atlantis*. Fall 2006

Prose Publications

Review: “Tending the *Domestic Garden*,” *Poetry International*. 2015

Review: "Reading *The Poem She Didn't Write and Other Poems*," *Poetry International*. 2015

Review: "Swedish Made English in *The Star by My Head*," *Poetry International*. 2015

Fiction: "Learning Love's Language," *Cahaba River Literary Journal*. July 2015

Critical Forum: "Gender in Poetics," *Gendered & Written: Forum on Poetics*. Locked Horn P. 2014

Review: "From a Distant Land: a Poet Who Knows We Exist," *The Rumpus*. November 2013

Creative Non-Fiction: "A Twenty-Six Year Old Thinking about a Sixteen Year Old..." *Tell Us a Story*. Aug 2013

Other Publications

Film Poem: "How Can you Remain in Love in San Diego," *Film Poetry Live*. December 2017

Featured Interview, "How to Fall in Love in San Diego," *Speaking of Marvels*. October 2017

Film Poem: "Not Kissing You," *Moving Poems Magazine*. March 2017

Teaching Experience

Writing Instructor, *Writing Poetry, Fiction, & Creative Non-Fiction*, Litquake Elder Writing Project. SF Campus for Jewish Living, Downtown Oakland Senior Center, Excelsior Works. San Francisco, CA. Spring 2017 – Present

Writing Instructor, *Intro to Creative Writing*, Writing Salon. San Francisco, CA. Fall 2019

Writing Instructor, *Start 'Write' Now*, Writing Salon. San Francisco, CA. Spring 2019 - Winter 2019

Poetry Instructor, *Writing the Poetic Sequence*, Cayuga Connectors. San Francisco, CA. Fall 2019

Poetry Instructor, *Generative Poetry Workshop*, Syzygy SF. San Francisco, CA. Spring 2019

Poetry Instructor, *Generating and Revising Creative Writing*, Pre-College Art Experience, Academy of Art University. San Francisco, CA. Summer 2016 – 2017

Writing Instructor, *Hip-Hop Poetry*, *Outer Poetry: Techniques of Poetry*, *Writing Web TV: YouTube, Vine, and other New Media*, *Outer Poetry: Bringing International Poetry into Your Work*, *Poetry: Page & Stage*, *Poetry: Write it Your Way*, *Quest: The Hero and Villain's Journey*, and *Fantasy Writing: Writing the Imagined and Conjured*, *Screenwriting*, and *Jumpstarting Fiction: Oblique Strategies* Duke Young Writers' Camp, Duke U. Durham, NC. Summer 2012 – 2016

Guest Lecturer, "Learning to Expand Reality from Modern and Contemporary Swedish Poetics," *Techniques of Poetry*(ENGL 570), San Diego State U. Fall 2014

Guest Poetry Instructor, "Tools to Use a Poetic Voice for Good," Ivy High School, Spring 2014

Guest Lecturer, "Hybrid Forms: the Haibun, Parabelle, and Bop" and "Structural and Conceptual Tools for Form Invention," *The Writing of Poetry*(ENGL 580), San Diego State U. Spring 2014

Guest Lecturer, “The Negotiation of Writing Poetry for the Page and for Performance,” *Introduction to Literature* (ENGL 220), San Diego State U. Spring 2014

Guest Writing Consultant, “Writing with Purpose and Style,” High Tech High. Spring 2013

Graduate Teaching Associate, *Research Writing for Careers* (ENGL 1200), East Carolina U. Spring 2012

Guest Lecturer, “Tools of Repetition in Poetry,” Wintergreen Intermediate School. Spring 2012

Lecturer and Workshop Leader, “Hip-Hop Rhythms in American Poetry (From Poe to Terrance Hayes),” *Poetry Day*, Dillard Middle School. Spring 2012

Lecturer and Workshop Leader, “The Connection between Music and Poetry,” Arts and Literature Night, C.M. Eppes Middle School. Spring 2012

Graduate Teaching Associate, *Writing and Critical Thinking* (ENGL 1100), East Carolina U. Fall 2011

Guest Lecturer, “Lucille Clifton’s ‘A Dream of Foxes’ and the Black Cultural Consciousness,” *Black Women Poets: Brooks to Trethewey* (ENG 3841), East Carolina U. Fall 2011

Guest Workshop Leader, *Introduction to Poetry Writing* (ENG 3840), East Carolina U. Fall 2011

Lecturer, “Writing and Awareness: Using Rhetorical Tropes to Structure Your Writing,” “Reading Local Authors,” and “Reading Small Press: Chapbooks and Journals,” NCSU Teen Writers’ Workshop, NC State U. Summer 2010

Poetry Instructor & Workshop Leader, *Poet in Residence*, Bottega Wine Bar & Art Gallery, Wilmington, NC. Summer 2009

Other Professional Experience

Executive Director, Writing Academy San Francisco. Spring 2022 – Present

Publisher & Managing Editor, Etched Press. Summer 2008 – Present

Operations Manager, Writing Salon. Winter 2018 – Winter 2019

Graduate Admissions Advisor, Academy of Art U. Summer 2017 – Spring 2019

Undergraduate Admissions Advisor, Academy of Art. Winter 2017 – Summer 2017

Pre-Admissions & High School Completion Advisor, Academy of Art. Winter 2015 – Winter 2017

Design & Production Manager, Six Arrow Press. Spring 2014 – Winter 2015

Creative Writing Consultant, Narrative Craft. www.narrativecraft.com. Fall 2012 – Winter 2015

Writing Tutor, College of Arts & Letters, San Diego State U, San Diego, CA. Fall 2014

Editor, Independent Author, Urban Fiction Novel. Summer 2013

Graduate Assistant, San Diego State U, San Diego, CA. Fall 2012 – Spring 2013

Instructional Assistant and Tutor, San Diego State U. Fall 2012

Editorial Assistant & Web Developer, *North Carolina Literary Review*, East Carolina U. Spring 2011 – Spring 2012

Director's Assistant, Duke Young Writers' Camp, Duke U. Summer 2011

Writing Consultant, First-Year Writing Studio, East Carolina U. Fall 2010 – Spring 2011

Freelance Writer, Demand Media Studios, Demand Media. Online. 2008-2011

Director's Assistant, NCSU Teen Writers' Workshop, NC State U. Summer 2010

Director, "The Angel of Death Checks in at a Local Motel" by Jean Jones. Summer 2010

Undergraduate Assistant, Curriculum Materials Center, U of North Carolina-Wilmington. Summer 2006 – Spring 2008

Conferences, Panels, and Workshops

The Writers Studio Method. Summer 2021

Living Room Craft Series with Ellen Bass. Spring 2021

The Volta Unmoored with Ruth Awad. Summer 2019

On Persona: Exploring Other Voices Respectfully with Ruth Awad. Summer 2019

The Unexpected Image with Amy Meng. Summer 2019

Building Strong Connective Tissues with Phong Nguyen. Summer 2019

Santa Cruz Workshop with Jericho Brown. Spring 2017

The Art of the Short Poem with Brittany Perham. Stanford U. Spring 2017

Finding the Fragment in Complete Thought with Thomas Sayers Ellis, Watering Hole. Summer 2015

Online Master Class with Roger Bonair-Agard, Watering Hole. Spring 2015

Festival Internacional Poesía Caracol VIII, CECUT: Centro Cultural de Tijuana. Fall 2013

Conference on Cruelty, U of Southern California. Spring 2013

Poetry Performance Workshop with Stacy Dyson. Glassless Minds. Fall 2012

Southern Entrepreneurship in the Arts Conference, U of North Carolina-Greensboro. Spring 2012

Nature Writing Workshop with Gerald Barrax, Sr. NC Literary Homecoming. Fall 2011

Poetry Workshop with Ellen Bass. Summer 2010

Chapbooks as Art Objects Workshop, Graduate Center of City U of NY. Spring 2010

Chapbook Festival, City U of NY, New York, NY. Spring 2010

Cave Canem South Workshop, U of South Carolina. Spring 2010

English in Action, U of North Carolina-Wilmington. December 2009

Grants & Scholarships Awarded

Ralph Dickey Scholarship, Writers Studio, 2021

San Francisco Individual Artist Grant, San Francisco Arts Commission, 2021-2022

San Francisco Arts and Artists Relief Fund Grant, SFAC/Center for Cultural Innovation, 2020

Teach Write Play Fellowship, Martha's Vineyard Institute of Creative Writing, 2019

Student Success Grant, College of Arts & Letters, San Diego State, 2014

Ariss Treat Endowed Scholarship, College of Arts & Letters, San Diego State, 2013

Service and Leadership

Featured Arts Festival Speaker, The Nueva School, San Mateo. Spring 2021

Guest Poet, Alta Vista School, San Francisco. Spring 2021

Guest Poet, Isbel Middle School, Santa Paula. Spring 2021

Mosaic Workshop & Fundraiser, *Defunkt Magazine*. Houston, TX. Winter 2021

Student Interviewer, Hidden Genius Project, Oakland. Winter 2020

Produced: SDSU MFA Writers in the Bay @ Lit Crawl 2019. Litquake 20. Fall 2019.

Poet-in-Residence, Syzygy SF Artist Co-op, San Francisco. Spring 2019

Fundraiser, Hidden Genius Project for Young Black Males, Oakland. Spring 2019

Volunteer, Brothers Code, Hidden Genius Project, Merritt College, Oakland. Fall 2018

Fundraiser & Feature, ILS Lane Celebration, SF Community Land Trust, ILS Lane Advisory Council, San Francisco. Fall 2018

Fundraiser, National Coalition for 100 Black Women, San Francisco. Spring 2018

'Tenderlovin' Reading Series & Community Outreach, Board Member, San Francisco. Fall 2017–

Poetry on Demand Booth, Stanza Poetry Fundraiser, Poetic Theater, Oakland. Spring 2017

Poetry Station Leader, Poetic Youth, Monarch School, San Diego. Spring 2015, Fall 2015

PrimeTime Activity Leader, Hancock Elem, SAY San Diego, San Diego. Spring 2015

Co-Founder, Words Found: Hunger Lost, San Diego. Spring 2014

Judge, NC Christian School Assoc. Regional Elementary Arts Festival. Greenville, NC. Spring 2012

Judge, International Alert Presents: Poets for Peace Poetry Slam, London, England. Summer 2011

AVID Program Speaker, "The Value of College," N. Pitt High School. Spring 2011

AVID Program Speaker, about “What to Expect in College English and How to Prepare,” N. Pitt High School. Spring 2011

Judge, National Poetry Month Poetry Slam, Williston Middle, Wilmington, NC. Spring 2010

Volunteer, Literacy Live at Randall Library, U of North Carolina-Wilmington. Summer 2009

Featured Reading Events

Familial Animals Release, Green Apple Books. San Francisco, CA. September 2021

Labor Day Special, My Place Cafe. Pasadena, CA. September 2021

No Poetry, No Peace, Mechanic’s Institute Library. San Francisco. April 2021

Free Fall, OH GOD, *The Long Gone*, *The Racket* SF. May, August 2020, March 2021

Something Ordinary. San Francisco. April 2020, March 2021

Writer’s Montage, *Defunkt Magazine*. Houston, TX. February 2021

Well-Versed Reading and Q&A, Syzygy SF. San Francisco. November 2020

Something San Franciscan, *The San Franciscan Magazine*. San Francisco. October 2020

Get Lit #56, #65, Nomadic Press. Oakland, CA. January, October 2020

Read Some Shit. Chicago, IL. September 2020

Black Poets Matter Week 6, Manetti Shrem Museum of Art. Davis, CA. August 2020

Literary Speakeasy, San Francisco. January 2020

Litquake Literary Festival, Writing Salon Interactive. San Francisco. October 2019

Joy of Being a Poet, Mindful Art Gallery at Mangalam Center. Berkeley, CA. September 2019

Quiet Lightning, Poetry in the Parks, Angel Island. August 2019

Menacing Hedge Dinner Jamboree, Portland, OR. March 2019

Presenting You Feature, Writing Salon, Berkeley, CA. February 2019

Medium-Sized Living Room Concert. San Francisco. January 2019, May 2017

Cosmos Art Show, Syzygy SF. San Francisco. January 2019

Inside Storytime, San Francisco. December 2018

Lit Crawl, Consider the Crab Collective, Litquake Literary Festival, San Francisco. October 2018

Poetry Brothel. San Francisco, San Diego, CA. April 2017, October 2017, May 2018, October 2018

It’s Lit with PhDJ. KTUH 90.1 FM. Honolulu, HI. November 2017

Tenderlovin’ in the TL Reading Series. San Francisco. October 2017

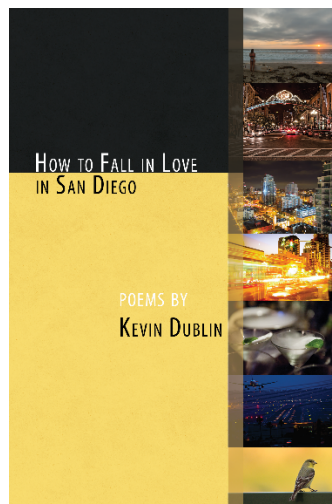
Embodied with the Hausmann String Quartet. San Diego, CA. November 2015

DYWC Instructor and Staff Reading. Durham, NC. June & July 2014, 2015, 2016
Thir Thur October. Oceanside, CA. October 2012
Word on the Mic at ArtBeat. Vista, CA. October 2012
Seven at Seven, East Carolina U. Greenville, NC. April 2012
PoetrySPARK, SPARKcon. Raleigh, NC. September 2009, 2010
Wilmington Entertainment Festival 14. Wilmington, NC. May 2010
Walking into April Poetry Day, Barton College. Wilson, NC. April 2010
NC Poetry Society Reading, Sheppard Memorial Library. Greenville, NC. April 2010
NCPS Gilbert-Chappell, New Hanover County Regional Library. Wilmington, NC. March 2010
West End Poetry Festival. Chapel Hill, NC. October 2009
Word Salad 15th Anniversary, Bottega Art and Wine Gallery. Wilmington, NC. October 2009
UNCW CAIC Def Poetry Jam, featuring Sekou the Misfit and Rafael Casal. December 2007
“Poet’s Corner,” WMPM Radio, two poems featured. Smithfield, NC. April 2006

Press Releases

Finishing Line Press
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Finishingbooks@aol.com
<http://www.finishinglinepress.com>

Finishing Line Press is proud to announce the publication of:



How to Fall in Love in San Diego, a collection of poems by Kevin Dublin

How to Fall in Love in San Diego (Finishing Line Press, May 2017) is a collection of love & anti-love poems set inside, around, and far outside the bounds of San Diego, CA. They're a collective attempt to encapsulate the city's energy and people, as well as the universal, sometimes heart-wrenching, 21st century search for love or something similar.

Praise for *How to Fall in Love in San Diego*

"Kevin Dublin is a new poet whose open-hearted songs of praise remind me of Whitman, O'Hara, and Ross Gay. *How to Fall in Love in San Diego* is a collection of remarkable formal variety, encompassing received forms, nonce forms, and what feels like a truly original improvisatory style with grace and confidence. It is also a collection of tonal and even spiritual variety: it can be as giddy and inclusive as one of the *Lunch Poems*, as forcefully engaged with the world as *Citizen*, or as transcendent and magisterial as Wordsworth:

even as the world beyond ashes and burns.

May we wake each morning and remember it.

I look forward to more from this wonderful poet. In *How to Fall in Love in San Diego*, Dublin develops a redemptive art that charms even as it restores us to our own better selves.”

—Michael White, author of *Travels in Vermeer*

“Kevin Dublin’s *How to Fall in Love in San Diego* is synaptic, prowling dangerous borderlands between our nearly inarticulate sorrows and the ineffable. These poems commune with desire and desertion, limn betrayal and tally up the damage. The epiphanies are nearly numinous: ‘*Goodbye* reminds me / to *mean what you put your mouth on* / whether it’s words or the silent parts of a body.’”

—John Hoppenthaler, author of *Domestic Garden*

Kevin Dublin’s debut has some of the most beautiful love poems I have read this year, which is to say these are poems of heart-break and the knowledge that comes after, poems of play and the excitement that comes with, poems of surprise and the astonishment that stays. “Pretend you are here / for a wedding” the poet tells us, “—unless you are here for a wedding.” There is so much fun in these pages that you know pain is real, there is so much feeling in the images, in the tonalities, in the sexiness of warning (that attraction transcends most sanity), in lips (each a strawberry perfectly split open), in silences (when a lover sleep-rhymes words that don’t rhyme), in dreams (that teach carousels are the best place for orgasms). Beware. These poems bewitch. You might just fall in love.

—Ilya Kaminsky, author of *Dancing in Odessa*

Kevin Dublin is a writer and editor from Smithfield, North Carolina who currently lives in San Francisco. His words have appeared in many literary journals, including *Rogue Agent*, *Menacing Hedge*, *SOFTBLOW*, and *Poetry International*. He studied English and Creative Writing at the University of North Carolina – Wilmington. He holds an M.A. in English from East Carolina University and an M.F.A. in Poetry from San Diego State University.

Media Contact

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Sample Poems

Tinder Profile

I am not a good lover; although, I suggest it
in every love poem is the absence
of a black man face down on pavement:
pimple on his left cheek grazed to hot pink.

from *How to Fall in Love in San Diego*

Each Night, An Elegy

for Sauritha Blackwell (7/23/1933 – 11/27/2017)

Lover, when lying on our backs in bed
and when no other parts of our bodies touch,
don't mind my foot hooking around your ankle.

I'm grounding to fetch silence beneath cacophony:
scratch of ocean waves against beach
from white noise machine
and breeze's sneak through window
weathering tape. I love isolating it—

your breathing: the long and heavy inhale,
exhale which never seems to end, tides
tied to another inhale. Each night,

distant honks drown out by hum of lamps dropping
streetlight. Incandescent buzz becomes Embarcadero
on-ramp woosh. A Honda Civic's push into wind
exiting the drift from behind a semi truck
turns into the waves of my sleep playlist on low.

Finally, I can focus on your heartbeat.
With each faint thump, I know my heart pumps
more slowly, muscles unflex from their work and loosen.

It's like the brain does a plank above the body—
starts arranging the day and traces memory:

the surface of my gums raise from heavy flossing,
location of a clothing receipt misplaced in that space
as I remember the photo I came across today.

My mother's aunt and I in our only photo together.
You took it. You met her the way you could never meet
my mother—alive, though cancerous. She smiled. Still.

Being alive, she grinned with that curve of upper lip
always bent in, ready to say grace. I'm so grateful
she taught me to believe I was handsome by simply saying it.
Even after that seventh grade fight with busted lip
from the bully who kept calling me *green* and pulling my shirt.

Dear auntie, your smile was the same after a well-sung hymn,
after some well-worded advice and a rhetorical, *huh?*
How many ways can we grow through the power of repetition?

I was listening. Intently, moved by you
like a semi truck's tires on the highway—
where have you gone? My last memory of you: asking
if I could visit while you lie in hospice
as I exited a BART train in a city 3,000 miles away.

Now I'm on the margin of sleep, noticing my partner's foot twitch.
I'm breathing more slowly, and my heartbeat matches hers.
For the few more seconds I'm awake, we keep the same time.

I wonder if we all simply move in the same direction:

old white cashiers who place receipts on counters instead of my hand,
ocean tides rise to become more ocean, the galaxy tumbling
through intergalactic way, the universe rotating and expanding,
aunt Sauritha closing her eyes for the final time.

We can't stop moving. Any of us. We have traveled
from some universal atoms throughout time and space
to end up here and human, until we make it to the next place.

from Quiet Lightning's *Sparkle + Blink*

How to Fall in Love in San Diego

A couple cuddles tongues on the corner of 5th and Market

Their meeting shades sunrays that heat the rain puddle

A man waits to wash his hands in

from *How to Fall in Love in San Diego*

Growing Up Sheltered: Saturday Morning with the Cuzzo

I remember us having so much fun you took a dump
behind an oak tree because you didn't wanna walk home.
It was fall, and you described the leaves' cold scratch
as if it were trying to pick thick pudding from a tight space,
spoon brittling away between fingertips from the weight.

For several days we'd watch the white ritual of it harden.
Let scavengers pick at it like cruel punishment for knowing
we put it there. Six months after, you invited me to my first
cypher. An impromptu group of hoodies and windbreakers
leaning against gymnasium walls like living graffiti. One guy—

Green Eyes was left behind so many times he was twice
the size of the next cat, had a mustache—not peach fuzz,
but the real kind you couldn't cut with bare clippers.
He was the type'a light skin you wouldn't call an African
booty scratcher because it was too improbable.

And his bars reflected 'em too, *Like Bishop from Juice—*
you don't know the ledge, so why I'm fuckin' witchu? /
Crazy dark skin cat who think he can rap? /
Here's five bullets for you / BLAP BLAP BLAP BLAP BLAP /
Take that, ay son, pass me his shoes! /

And the crowd ouuuu'd like they heard "Hit em Up"
for the first time. And he walked the line, stomping
the aluminum of each lyricist's pride. It got to the point
that nobody had anything to offer him, so he twisted
his snap cap back forward and we all wafted in its silence.

'Til my cousin spit lines at me: Stuff about how I'd pee the bed,
piss bucket next to mattress, so I'd never miss. Most of it
wasn't true. I was about to not be eleven and knew what he was doing.
High school cliquelessness was not cool—and these guys were—
Green Eyes is irises widening with each bar stymied in front of me.

And I knew I should take it. These cats didn't even know

my name and I could only rap along to tapes, had no rep,
and went to a different school. Plus they had never seen me
nearly naked or palmed a conversation that changed my life:
You wanna end up like the brothas down at Peabody's house, fool?

That was it, but still. I kept *crack kills* closer than the cereal bowl
on Saturday morning during Dragonball Z. Usually next to you,
and here you were transitioning from youth—Static glider high.
It was shocking. And when you said the line about my dead mama,
I wanted to cry—throat-stomp you against pavement and cry.

I wanted to say we'd grow up and always be in touch.
If there was an entire country between us, it would mean nothing.
Your opinion: like glitter, impossible to get rid of, except it was useful.
This wasn't the last Saturday. I'd embrace you first after each child was
born—miss you the way clouds miss rain and plead to sun: *evaporate*.

I'd eulogize you when you died. Break a pact. Tell a congregation
about the time you dropped a deuce behind an oak tree—
the first acknowledgement of it ever between my lips.
Instead, I mentioned it in a terrible freestyle that barely rhymed
to nine dudes who meant nothing to me, but were everything to you.

from *Glint Literary Journal*

Multimedia

Visual Poems

How to Fall in Love in San Diego YouTube playlist:

<https://goo.gl/8BHnh9>

Audio Recordings

How to Fall in Love in San Diego Soundcloud playlist:

<https://soundcloud.com/kevindublin/sets/how-to-fall-in-love-in-sd>