

Reader's Response Poems

To Anyone Who Has Seen Me With Shaved Legs

I was fulfilling the expectations of others
which had become my own
I was told, I don't know by who, or whom,
that it is proper to have
hairless and neat legs
That it is what you are
supposed to do
But why do I care?

Have you ever tried to
Really
tell yourself that you
don't care what other people think of you?
If you haven't, give it a shot

It's hard, isn't it?

I don't care
I don't care
I don't care
They don't care
Why would they care?

The expectations of others
dictate

The expectations *they* set
dictate

The decisions you make

Who is *they*
Who are

Who says you
Mustn't read
Nor write
Nor have a conversation
That isn't prescribed?

Do I feel like "I have failed...to fulfill the expectations of others,
which have become my own" (Page 73)

When I
Pull my socks up high
Or pull my pant leg down
To cover
exposed ankle?

I don't care
I don't care
I don't care
They
don't
care

Have those expectations
become my own?

I would like to speak with the person
who made up these rules, please

I have a few things to say.

I think I'll go shave my legs.

What Is Ordinary?

“This may not seem ordinary to you now,
but after a time it will.
It will become ordinary.” (Page 33)

we are living in a dream we wish
to wake up from

Maybe if we wake slightly
we could change the ending

But surely,
real life will come after this

Because “if it’s a story I’m telling,
then I have control over the ending” (page 39)

But when will we wake up and realize
that what we are living is real
And it won’t change
unless we make it

But when trapped in a
monotonous life,
change is at the end of a long tunnel
with a pinprick of light you sprint towards
that never gets closer

Someday, someone will look back and ask
“Is that how we lived, then?”
And we will answer
“But we lived as usual. Everyone does, most of the time. Whatever is going on is as usual.
Even this is as usual, now.” (page 56)

Someone will gape at our lives
the suit and tie
that disguise the bottom line
that we kill for

“It can’t last forever” (Page 136)
It’ll change
Just like how
Karl said that
capitalism has an inevitable ending

But in the meantime
we feed ourselves lies
like,
“We are so happy” (page 126)
Impersonal things
To fit in
to conform to the
Supposed to’s

And the
expectations
of others that

dictate

Things You Do to Keep Yourself ~~Sane~~ From Going Insane

To compose yourself
you use litanies
repetitive
recital
reaction
rebellion
chair
charity
faith
hope

You over describe
the light on an
opaque oval
sitting in a white china cup
with a blue stripe

You parcel out
portions
of your paper-covered room
to wistfully stare at

To an observer,
This is what might make one insane

—

When you have trouble breathing
and can't catch your breath,
Even after no activities have been done
other than the action of simply focusing on the feelings
inside your chest
It is of best practice to
stare at something real hard
and flip your attention to the outside
On "the unevenness of the plaster under the wallpaper,
the scratches in the paint of the baseboard and the windowsill,
under the top coat of paint" (Page 51)

This is what some call

Meditation

It is a good way of training your mind
to do what you want it to

Successfully?

However, if there is a great happening
that you are trying to distract yourself from,
the strength of your focus might dwindle,
a slow gas leak
a tiny hole
ever so slowly, but surely
filling up every square inch,
and when a match is lit

Well, you can imagine

Boundaries, Confidence, Elevators

What would happen if I walked into
the most bourgeois building I could find
with a strut so spectacular
I looked like I belonged?

What's the worst that can happen?
You get kicked out
They say
I'm sorry, you can't be here
And then
Then you politely say
Oh, I'm so sorry, I do apologize
And leave

But if that doesn't happen
You might become a
confident person

So you walk right through the big revolving doors
And say
Take me to the top
And they say
Right this way
And just like that you have become confident
So you "marched straight out the front door, with the bearing of a person
who knew where she was going." (Page 132)

And hopefully you don't get lost