

The Prairie Light Review

Volume 24
Number 2 *Reading Material*

Article 25

Spring 5-1-2004

It All Trickles Down

Kathleen Swain
College of DuPage

Follow this and additional works at: <http://dc.cod.edu/plr>

Recommended Citation

Swain, Kathleen (2004) "It All Trickles Down," *The Prairie Light Review*: Vol. 24 : No. 2 , Article 25.
Available at: <http://dc.cod.edu/plr/vol24/iss2/25>

This Selection is brought to you for free and open access by the College Publications at DigitalCommons@COD. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Prairie Light Review by an authorized editor of DigitalCommons@COD. For more information, please contact koteles@cod.edu.

It all trickles down

Kathleen Swain

The cat crawls around my neck and I stand still but spin at the same time into this oblivion that is my world, my mind. I'm caught in the undertow of what I have created, what I have brought about, and I'm struggling to breathe. I wonder and wonder what am I? Who have I become? I try but not hard enough. I can't stop thinking about how the cat wrapped itself around my shoulders and how you stood there and watched me and laughed because you thought we'd fall but I tried my hardest and I stood up straight. I can't stop thinking about how your toes curled and the veins in your arms stood out. I can't stop thinking about thinking and why I think what I think. I feel like I'm caught in a drain where the water swirls down but slowly, so slowly that you don't even realize that the water is moving. I can't stop swirling in this puddle and I hate it because it's limbo, it's purgatory, and everyone is caught in the middle and waiting, waiting for me. I make decisions but they're not ones that people want. I am so caught up in what people want and what I want and what people want for me. I hate being in control yet I do these things to myself to make myself be in control. They're not good things, not even bad things, they're just things and I don't want to do them but they are done anyway. I wasted so much gas on you the driving, all the driving, but it doesn't matter now. I'd rather pay for all the gas in the world than risk my sanity as I'm doing now. I can't cry any more, for reasons I can't explain except the fact that I have no more tears to cry and that I have finally realized that it does nothing. Just when I think that I have made a good and concrete decision in my life I realize that nothing is concrete, that it is all just quicksand and I'm sinking, sinking, sinking, slowly sinking, and the more I struggle to get out the deeper I work myself in. I feel like throwing up and eating the world at the same time. I was called a hopeless romantic yesterday, someone who expects too much out of people and is inevitably disappointed. Who are we to judge others, who are we to judge ourselves? Does anyone else think this much? Why did I hurt myself so bad when I hurt you? Am I really feeling this way or am I trying to convince myself that I feel this way? Am I a good person? This question infects my mind worse than any other question. You make me doubt things that I never even thought to question in my entire life and I hate you for it and I love you for it at the same time. You make me admit things out loud to you that I've never even admitted to myself in my own mind. All the things mix together, the Egyptians and the Italians and the Irish and the cheating and divorce and the fathers and English and the calamari and the dark green cars and the matching shirts and bubbles and collages and obituaries and the photography and that picture of the trees with the path and I feel like I'm looking out and I'm about to walk out of those trees, out of that path and I don't want to walk out alone and I have to make a decision because life is all about decisions. I'm afraid to walk out of that path alone but I have to but I want you there beside me to hold my hand and behind me to catch me when I fall and in front of me to make sure everything is okay always. I'm standing at the edge of those trees wanting someone there with me but I know I have to walk out of them alone; so I reach up and take the cat off of my shoulders and listen to her as the bell you put around her neck jingles and I put her down and I take a step. And another step, and another, and then I'm walking and I'm walking, and I'm running, and I'm out in that open field, and I'm by myself. And I'm okay but I reach my hand out anyway and there you are and you take it.