

PARA



MAXIMIÑO

# Para Maximino

A Chapbook for

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by

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*Para Bulbasito-*  
*Poco a poco, se anda lejos,*  
*y yo camino con el.*

## **Bulbasito**

You are convinced grass starters  
are best, and I  
am inclined to believe you.

After all,  
what is a good thing if not  
growing?

A lone cactus persevering for the possibility of rain;  
an ivy steady climbing towards the sun;  
a queer boy always reaching for the light radiating  
within

# Honey Lavender

Somewhere,  
honey overflows in a bee colony,  
the sweet nectar collected in the  
hive's honeycomb body

Elsewhere,  
lavender is crushed in a boy's palm  
and he is reminded of his first lover,  
or the first summer without him

The two meet  
in an ice cream shop,  
the most unlikely of pairings  
churned to divine perfection

We consider this  
as we laid beside each other,  
we, too, an unlikely pairing,  
paths intersecting on an unfamiliar road

We both wanted the stars,  
but all I could offer was a terrace  
on a rainy night,  
and you assure me you are content with the glow

After all, you say,  
the stars are still shining  
even when we can't see them,  
even when they aren't

and isn't that beautiful?

That a star's light will remain with us  
long after it has passed?  
That the spark in someone's eye can  
light you simply from knowing it exists?

That two flavors can meet  
in an ice cream shop,  
or an empty terrace,  
and it doesn't end in tragedy?

How honey can make a  
sharp scent softer,  
and lavender can make  
a subtle thing stronger

How two queer things can lay  
in the same pot,  
or the same bed,  
and both are made better because of it

# Happy

As in

Content

As in

Cute earlobes

As in

Walk to a random park two blocks away

As in

There are no stars, but those plane lights will suffice

As in

God, look how beautiful those clouds are

As in

God, look how beautiful your eyes are

As in

God, I could I kiss you right now

As in

Your secret power is making time stop

As in

Moments stretch for millennia with you

As in

One day this poem will fade

As in

But right now, I could kiss you forever

As in

This is the best example I have of contentment

As in

Happiness

As in

Joy

As in

You



## pineapple Upside Down Cake

I am convinced there is a metaphor in here somewhere, somewhere between me taking a bite and the sound of you saying my name, sweeter than anything this coconut ice cream could attempt to muster, but instead of saying any of this, I choose to listen for the 12th time tonight how grateful you are for my presence, and I am grateful that you are still grateful and somehow not yet sick of me, and I smile at the way you treat the wait staff like royalty, because how could any person be this good (I am convinced they can't), so I am convinced you are something more akin to divinity, like whatever god it is I believe in tonight plucked you out of the sky and put you here, because what else could explain it, what else can hold this much light if not a star, or an angel, or your smile, just a few watts short of a sunbeam, and what metaphor could this cake hold that isn't held in the way you care, unless there is no metaphor at all, the cake is just a cake and you are just good and this world, so blissfully unaware, is just so lucky to have you in its orbit

## Proposed Names for Grapefruit

- Bittersweet beauty
  - A trillion tiny deaths dancing on my taste buds
  - Citrus anglerfish
  - Bastard child of Country Time Lemonade and a Tide Pod
  - [REDACTED] made me eat this, and I would do it again, probably, if they asked
  - Love, because what is love
    - if not always biting a bullet
    - or our tongue
    - or into a grapefruit
- If not a tart thing we are always trying to make taste better

So yes, love, if you ask me to eat this  
grapefruit,  
I will, over and over again,  
Only because I know you will be there  
to wash out the taste  
Always with a kiss, or a smile, or a  
laugh  
to carry us into tomorrow

## Ode to Mucus

In a state of extreme distress,  
convinced my body is patient zero  
for whatever disease the CDC

will inevitably say is going  
to kill us all next,  
my pitiful body now a feverish,

boy-sized piece of garbage,  
I call upon my partner,  
who braves the cold

of the California night,  
something around 60 degrees,  
and flies across campus

armed with Nyquil  
and cough drops and,  
as a nuclear option,

water,  
which he lovingly forces me to drink  
which I begrudgingly oblige,

complaining all the while  
how boring it is compared  
to my steady diet of lemonade,

because sometimes love is  
swallowing the bitter pill,  
or listening to someone

explain for the 5th time  
why I need to drink water daily,  
or my partner, at my protest,

opening the playlist  
of all the songs I want  
played at my wedding,

the Natalie Cole & the Aretha  
Franklin & the Supremes &  
the Whitney Houston,

ordering Jack in the Box,  
and forcing me to eat  
under the guise

of an impromptu date night,  
rubbing my steaming forehead  
with an ice cube,

still convinced that I,  
in all my grumbling anguish,  
am the most beautiful boy he's ever seen.

Blessed be the breakfast jack  
and the hash brown patty  
and the orange juice my partner

didn't know there was a straw for.  
Blessed be the water, the bland  
panacea my body desperately needed.

Blessed be the raging headache,  
the dull pain in every joint  
I didn't know I had.

Blessed be the stuffy nose  
and never-ending mucus.  
Blessed be the fever

and blanket blocking  
the phantom chills.  
Blessed be small tragedies

and miseries as minute as these,  
for how they all fade away  
in the palm of my partner's hand.

## Rosemary and Oranges

If honey lavender be a soft thing sharpening its edges,

let this be an antithesis:

A siren song belted in a quiet room

A serrated blade smell slicing through the night's  
silence

A lover picking oranges in the darkness

and presenting them as offering, as the highest form  
of praise,

as tribute to the way its sticky sugar water streams  
down the side  
of your smile

How could a love this deep not be revolutionary?

How could it not be a rosemary bush waiting to be  
stumbled  
upon

after a first date, two boys rubbing their hands in its  
scent until

they are nothing but perfume, until they can't tell their  
hearts  
apart,

glad to find what they were not looking for?

## Dog Days

It has been 4 weeks and we are already celebrating our 5-month anniversary. This queer love moves in dog years only because no measurement or social construction could contain it, not Time, nor Space, nor whatever planet is in retrograde today.

Two state lines away you are radiating somewhere, I'm sure, trying to convince someone that we are made of the same stardust, and they will disagree, but something in your laughter will remind them of the first time you met, on an asteroid no one has heard of, both of you still distant thoughts in the universe's unconscious, waiting to meet again in every reincarnation.

Three lightyears from now, I love you in a new galaxy, one where I don't have to forgive the past to love you in the present. We meet every night on an adjacent star and watch the cosmos dance. We make love in a black hole, in a gravity so strong it bends physics // reason // both of us until we are tumbling over one another and sitting at the shoreline of God's creation, your head on my shoulder as we name all the beautiful things we can still remember:

An empty park at the end of January. A flower neither of us knew existed until yesterday. A word tripping on the tongue moments before it meets a lover's ears.

Yesterday, our eyes meet for the first time and we think nothing of it. We are two unknowns crossing

paths in a world we weren't sure existed before we did, even now unsure if we are figments of each other's imaginations.

Tonight, I ride a bike to you. The road is uphill, but I know you are only 4 songs away. Halfway through Lauryn Hill's "Can't Take My Eyes Off of You," I can already hear you laughing, and time ceases to exist.



## Prayer to Whatever Angel is Watching Me Today

My Angel, who art in heaven  
    or purgatory, or whatever limbo my spirit will  
soon enough reside  
Hallowed be my name  
    may it be worthy in the eyes of whatever God  
hasn't killed me yet  
Hollowed is my soul  
    this empty-bottle-body of a boy I fear  
    is always too close to shattering  
    always poured out for a dead thing I hope I  
do not recognize

Tonight, my love was pulled over by a cop  
    but I am the one that is fearful  
    afraid my adjacent blackness is enough of a  
provocation  
    I know we have done nothing wrong  
    but I have heard that narrative before  
    know how it always ends on a sidewalk  
    that didn't have a name

I am grateful for the hand that comforted me  
    I do not know if it was yours  
    or my partner's  
    or if there is a difference

I think that maybe you reside in his index finger  
    or that heaven is a place under the red of his  
blanket  
    or that God lives somewhere in the way he  
says *cariño*,

*are you okay? I'm here if you need me, you know that*

I have no candles to burn for you

I do not feel that *amen* is a proper ending

so instead I will tell my partner I love him

thread my fingers through his until we could

never be unraveled

and hope that this suffices