

**Intimate
Linguistics**

**Poems
Gabriel White**



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Playing With Matches

The house went up like kindling
Years of growing, learning, loving
Gone

I knew every floorboard's creak
The hidden places in the basement
Dark

Now fire truck bright flashing lights
A flood of city water rains down
Heavy

The fire, along with our belongings
The pictures, clothes, and books
Crushed

Years of memories now reduced
To wet, bruised, ash-covered
Kindling

Holy of Holies

Over tangled bodies and raspy breaths

The sun burns low like a cigarette

We hide from your dad in an old RV

Whispering secrets over cheap boxed wine

I watch your lips during church on Sunday

As they form the words of our favorite hymns

Shattered rainbows shining on the saints

They say it's wrong for us to be together

I know in my heart that it's a lie

No matter what, when shit gets real

We have each other and our sanctuary

Fresh linens on a fold out bed

And swirling dust in the embery light

Kansas Leviathans

Cannons again today
Shells exploding far away
Fighting the great plains monsters

Black smoke rising from the tall grass
The flint hills on fire
And booming echoes

Shake the windows of my house
A distant roar lets me know
They'd never gone away

Window Seat

A garden breeze swirls in
Through the whitewashed window frame
The slanting afternoon sunlight
Kissing your freckled skin
Spreading your legs invitingly
In a summer dress, nothing between us
That knowing smile
Showing the dimples in your cheeks

Craigslist Swingset

We wrestle

Crumbling wood in the pouring rain

The weight

Of a fully assembled

Two-story clubhouse

Tearing with splinters

At our slippery fingers

Struggling to maneuver it into place

Shivering

Soaked to the bone

Power Outage

Rain, rain, thunder

Illumination

Power's out

Sirens in the distance

Child and wife tucked in

Sleeping, dreaming

I'm awake

The storm reminds me of ocean sounds

Takes me back to when I was a child

The swell and crash, the rumble

Nature's patterns rise and fall

A distant memory is like time travel

And the Kansas waves crest and tumble

Carrying me back to the coast

Indoor Creatures

We evolved to be indoor creatures

Allergies, mosquitoes, and sunlight kept us inside

Where we could struggle under the weight of nine to five for many years

Until we earned the right to stand under the sky in our soft and wrinkled
old age

July

It wasn't a fun summer
The summer your grandma died

We listened to the thunder
I held you as you cried

I didn't know how else to help
There's nothing, you replied

I'll never leave, I whispered
I gently dried your eyes

The summer rain fell in sheets
We fell asleep, and spooned all night

Big Spoon

Floral and pheromones

I bury my face in

Pulling you close

Crushing you into me

Attempting

To press us into one

Two flowers in a book

Two for Tea

Blue and white china cups
Steam, floral and aromatic
Honey and lavender petals

Unlaced, bare in the sunlight
Kneeling naked at her feet
Moaning sweetly, two for tea

Craigslist Swingset II

During the night a torrential wind
Ripped the tree out by it's roots and
Sent it smashing through the wooden swingset
We worked so hard to build

In the morning sunlight
With rain still glistening on the grass
My little girl stands in our back doorway
And weeps openly over the loss

I tell her I can rebuild it
And stare at the mangled mess
Of splintered boards and tangled limbs
Roots uplifted to the robin's egg blue sky

Sweet Mercy

Sweet angel of mercy
My ivory pearls strung
Across your alabaster stomach
Crowned with instant shame

Trees stripped naked
Bones outstretched
Shaking in the bitter wind

And it breaks my heart
To think that Jesus
Couldn't love me
Just the way I am

My hands smell like ivory
As I pull on my skivvies
Slam the door, and run

I sure hope your daddy
Doesn't find out when I left
Shaking like the trees
Under the shrouded moon

Monochromograph

Thunder crashes and lightning flashes outside, sporadic arms of light reach across the sky; the clouds like an Ansel Adams photograph, and the rain like Noah's flood.

A house with rickety walls, a ramshackle roof. The windows shake. No electricity or artificial light cast their pale glow upon the scene, inside the furniture and little boy are lit by strobes of brilliant white. The shadows cast are long and quick, the corners shrouded are unlit.

He's seven years old, and seventeen days. His parents sleep like babes upstairs. He too should be in slumber's grip, but drawn to waking by the storm he finds himself wandering the house at night.

Tow-headed, a ribs-showing skinny, curious eyes cast about the maze of flashing light and familiar objects turn strange and tall. For a while, he is content to sit, on the living room floor by the brightness lit. Staring out at the sky and the chariots of wrath, listening closely to the pattern of the rain as it splats and slams against the speckled pains of glass.

A rustling sound catches his ear, the pitter-patter of tiny hands on hardwood. The little boy drops to all fours, and looks under his father's raggedy chair. A small white mouse, with pink eyes; an intruder in an otherwise solitary and monochromatic setting. The mouse wiggles his nose, and the boy does the same, squeaking at the mouse trying to invoke a reply.

The mouse just sits and stares, looking back with a matched curiosity, uncertain if he should flee or remain completely still. The boy, bony-awkward, reaches out a freckled hand; a welcoming posture of invitation. Patiently he waits for a response. With quick but apprehensive movements, the mouse crawls near, curiosity supplanting fear, and with trepidation climbs into the outstretched palm.

A death-tight grip crushes tiny bones and sinew pops, a scratching squeal of sudden terror silenced in a tiny freckled fist; and thunder cracks and rolls across the plain.

Then, spying underneath the stair a smallish scar, a crack of darkness leading down into the walls; the boy becomes a mouse. Pale white, a contrast to the waving shadows, the boy-mouse runs, and dives into the black. A new father for the mouslings hidden, a husband to a widowed rodent wife.

And the storm drowns on, pouring rain into the cracked and barren farmland.

Poly / Theism

Bitter cappuccino, garbled doctrine

We think we know everything

Leaning, on booze and gut feelings

Sudden Onset Amnesia

The shower curtain has grey stripes

And transparent ones

Running horizontally

My heart thumps

Sideways in my chest

Because I know she's showering

And I'm tempted to pretend to forget

Chicago, 2 AM

The slow hammer dehydration
Golden ale intake increases
Head heavy on it's pedestal
Loud talk without a keeper
I love you! politics! I'm dizzy
Did I just spit on you oh god
I'm so sorry! I love you all
Dumpster golden shower
Does anybody have anything
To smoke so good burning
Subway swaying rattling home
Please come to bed with me
While the sky's under my feet

After Sunday

Keep the bass / pumping Sylvan

Your Esso is / what I need to fake it

Until I make it / to 5PM

And can crash on my mat/tress at home

Into the soft / cool sheets

And orangey-pink fading light

Intimate Linguistics

Soft and wet

The place between your thighs

Soft curly hair

And quivering

Fog and quiet

Autumn wind outside our window

Sweet sweat

Sinking in our sheets

You taste like salt

Your rhythm, gentle swaying

Pressing deeper

My soft kisses

I press in

Pulling tight your hips

Until you shaking

Gasp and whimper

Then tender kisses

For your flushed and smiling face

I hold you closely

Skin to skin

Mold

We raise cultures on the kitchen counter
Not for fun, but because there's
Not enough hours in the day to raise
Children and find time to do the dishes

We're too tired after work to make dinner
And clean up after dinners from before

We're spread thin like butter
So we put it off until the weekend
When we'll put a load in the washer, then
Rearrange the rest and leave 'em for later

Nightfall

The temperature drops from 30 to 5 in hours

Falling faster than the winter sunset

Darkness and cold are brothers

Thick as thieves in the night

Cassette Tape Blues

We drifted toward each other in that metaphysical space
The seventh sub-basement beneath the building of our minds
That dark nothing under our conscious reality
And you pulled me in like a supermagnet
Our attraction wasn't merely physical or emotional
It wasn't fate or will's design
We swam through crawl spaces between the places outside space
And holding hands fell through the schisms in reality
Then winked out like a distant lighthouse

This chapbook features personal narratives shot through with abstractions and a few fantastic breaks from reality.

“A quick read as each poem hits hard then makes way for the next one.”

Intimate Linguistics is Self-Published in Manhattan, KS

Learn more: thethunderandtherain.com/self-published-books