

The Lonely Genius

by Darryl Price

was washing her hands and looking
in the mirror and hoping to
see someone who could tell her
the way home again. She wasn't

sure why she should want to
go there except maybe to find
the missing piece that had always
eluded her. The lonely genius put

on her clothes but the old
familiarity wasn't as comfortable as it
had once seemed to be. Pants
and shirt seemed to be at

odds with her somehow. The lonely
genius panicked when she couldn't find
her glasses but then remembered they
were pushed on top of her

head, a habit she had picked
up from her older sister when
they were both in college. At
least my shoes never let me

down, she thought. I'm too smart
to be sad, she thought. Work
and thinking are the not foolish
things, she countered. So why is

there something broken and dangling inside

me now? What did I do
to deserve this? The lonely genius
noticed an old floppy hat sitting

slumped over some sweaters in the
top corner of the closet before
she had time to close the
door. It looked sadder than she

felt. Why am I being so
silly, she thought. What is wrong
with me? I must be getting
a cold, but I never get

sick. She brushed the brim off
with a wave of her hand.
Back in the bathroom with her
glasses hanging onto her nose like

an exotic butterfly she pushed the
hat down on her head. She
smiled. She turned sideways. She glanced
up shyly at herself and gave

a small crooked grin. This is
stupid, she thought. Is this what
people do, she thought. Why am
I crying? She grabbed her keys

off of the dresser and stumbled
down the steps. Stupid plants, she
said to no one. Stupid kitchen
sink. Stupid rugs. Stupid books. Stupid

coffee maker. Leave me alone, she

shouted. I just want to feel
something else besides your company. Is
that so wrong? No appliance dared

speaking up. The lonely genius punched
a symbol for a number into
her phone, her brain beginning to
pick up speed with every second

wasted. It's me. I'm not coming
in today. Because I don't feel
like it, she thought. I'm not
feeling well, she said. Yes, tomorrow. dp

Bonus poem:

Trees by Darryl Price

It all comes down to how you are able
to move energy around. If you get
real good at passing it there will always
be more to come because you've made the road
work for a living. You and the road have
to make that magic happen between you.

It probably feels like being trapped in
an hourglass, if you're unwilling to
even consider talking to trees. What
I mean is everything wants to know who
you think you are and what are you doing.
Sometimes the answer's simple enough: I

am you as me. You are me as you. And
sometimes it's more complicated: I'm on a
secret mission to save my life. Joni
Mitchell comes on the radio. It stops
you in your tracks. You know what she's asking:
how can you say you don't know me? If you

know yourself, then you know me, know life is
endlessly beautiful. Life is shit. How
can we give each other a moment's peace
without completely falling away into empty
nothingness forever? I don't know, but
I think it matters. I think it matters

to me. I've only learned lately to write a new kind of prose
poem. The rest is still a mystery.
My body's been through the ringer. My mind
is still in love with music. A lovelier
mystery. My body's been here with me
this whole time. I have to say I like this

being with trees thing. Always have. It's a safe
space in my own carefully crafted illusion. I know what's
going to happen. Things will fall apart. All
good and bad people will disappear one by
one. Love gets pressed between the pages of
a book on beautiful birds. But poets go on with their plays

until the end of the run. Wouldn't you know it?
The sky is starting to cry. If I just
quietly continue to sit here the last
leafy tears will have washed away my first
meaning into something less solid and realized.
My good shoes are beginning to squeak at me and

want something more comforting than my sad
eternal musings over nothing. I stretch my tired feet
inside them to say all is well, don't worry, this is
not the end flood, just another trickling
tributary. We'll make it home before long and dry
off together like always. Say goodbye trees. Goodbye. dp

Tenderness by Darryl Price

I wouldn't fall apart if I could just
remain a child and not be a stranger,
but I have a permanent rip in my
lost soul that none of you have ever touched
with any special tenderness before. Wouldn't
fall apart to take your hand once again
and pour out my head like an hourglass of
its useless colorless sand seconds. You could kick
all the grains into oblivion. You
could put your hands on your hips and laugh at

the silly glass face, stretching your uncomprehending
grin to the bluest of skies
beyond. But it would not kill my love for
you. I've always seen the beautiful in
you. I wouldn't fall apart if I saw
you shouting with glee and eating an ice
cream with identical ribbons streaming
from your pretty belt into the summer
winds like some kind of new creative flags.
I'd silently salute you and I do.

Thank you for your service to being you.
That's a place like home to me. One I have

forever been banished from, but I will
defend it with every breath taken or
left in me. I wouldn't fall apart to
hear you sing. It's one of my fondest young
memories. Peter Pan and I may have
parted company as old pirates with
no more adventures to be had in this
sad lifetime, but our last handshake was pure

and genuine. I wouldn't fall apart
to slip you this poem. This ticket has
already been punched. It's no invite. The
bell has been released from its masking tape
tower. It really doesn't matter. I
wouldn't fall apart. You never listen.
I wasn't prepared. I was curious.
I wouldn't fall apart because I had
no choice once the room disappeared under
my feet. My sorrow was only the first note played. dp

