

Dear Poets,

Today's teaching takeaway examines Summer J. Hart's "Boy Crazy" from her forthcoming collection *Boomhouse* (2023, The 3rd Thing Press), originally published in *Waxwing* Issue XX. The poem and its synesthetic rendering are included as a separate document. Fabiohood to follow.

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### How It's Put Together

In addition to human-avian bonds, Hart's six-sectioned microprose highlights nature, kitsch couture, and a certain literary enterprise whose recent publications include *It Started with a Puppy* and *Her Highlander for One Night*.

Whether "hot pink [crop-topped]" or amour-encyclopedic ("now she knows *everything* about love"), the poem's characters lend themselves to narrative tabling.

Relationships:

Nadine	Owl
Speaker	Crows

Attributes:

Summoning-Proficient	Landings, Evisceration
Sleep Financier, Book Smuggler	Gifts

Additional:

New Dog	Canine Heterochromia
New Neighbors	Their Rattling Decoys
Nadine's Mother	Jure en Français

Section one's shorter first sentence "Nadine belongs to an owl now." is a surprise thanks to its verb. The same holds true for sentence two, "They imprinted while I was on vacation." *Imprinted's* follow-up success: it's a word we associate with clothing, where *Boy Crazy* resides, the detail of "puff letters" a rung up rayon's ladder. "Silent as smoke" nuances the owl's stealth.

Hart's standalone *I* sentences close sections one through four on notes of wisdom, caution, preparation, and subtle purloining. For all the poem's Nadineness, defter revelations are saved for the speaker. Self-knowledge or a bird at your beck and call, which garners gravitas more?

I wouldn't "look an owl in the eyes" either.



"Cologne of lupines" is inhalable-germane to hybridity ("He has one blue eye & one brown one because he is half wolf / half dog."). *Spiced* guarantees a lingering in our heads long after this takeaway.

Section three expands by a backyard via "The new garden is ringed in marigolds & nasturtiums." *Ringed* is another example of Hart as verb tutorialist extraordinaire. The windowsill becomes ground zero for crow magnanimity, stolen ribbons paired "sometimes with a piece of river glass or a bead from a long-lost necklace." Call it beak realism, these trinkets are just the right size for crow couriering. Such logistics better offset the fantastical "I hide them under my pillow in case sleep requires payment for passage." Never underestimate a bauble.

Nadine's calendaring runs on ethos ratios: one Harlequin novel a week, her days owl-occupied. That the books are purchased at a Shop 'n Save fulfills their duties as paperback royalty presiding over, say, a sunglasses display.

Meanwhile, if you've ever wanted to incorporate Harlequin<sup>i</sup> into your writing:

Originated in Winnipeg, Manitoba (1949).	Controls 85 percent of the romance market worldwide.
Founders: Richard and Mary Bonnycastle.	Happy endings are an absolute requirement.

The emphasis, "*everything* about love," is a tonal visual appearing in the right place and right time. Remember, italics have eye rhythms. Speaking of visuals, did you know that Hart's "mixed-media installations have been featured in shows and galleries including SPRING/BREAK, NYC; Pen + Brush, NYC; Gitana Rosa Gallery at Paterson Art Factory, Paterson, NJ; and LeMieux Galleries, New Orleans, LA."<sup>ii</sup> Of her process, Hart says, "I use a blade to draw objects that are indicative of natural forms such as leaves, feathers, barnacles, and seaweed. Sewing, layering, or adding lights and sound allow the work to operate across four dimensions."<sup>iii</sup>

Hart's microprose is the layering, teen summers our lucent facets.

Section five begins as a contest—which sees decrepitude first?—between tech and the idiom-assisted organic, "Lights flicker. Maple leaves go belly up. The TV cuts out . . ." Confined to a single paragraph, the sentence lengths maneuver between volume and volley. A final table shows

how a part of speech augments this segment's palette:

Softer Verbs	Pulls, Billow, Tells, Holds
Percussive Verbs	Cuts, Beat, Click

Poem-knows if the ending's "knot of hair & teeth & bones" is crow present or imprint remnant. Its enigma compels a second look, tin Tuesdays and all.

And, long live Hart's section dividers in their talon-raked glory.

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Prompt

Write a sectional microprose poem about two teenage friends set over spring break. Describe their interactions with flora, neighbors, and cerebral fauna. How do word choices in the first two sentences surprise us?

Preplan your details.

Relationships:


Attributes:


Additional:


Verb Qualities /  
Verb Bank


Include one tonal visual and a pivotal bauble. Unique dividers too.

Happy Poeming,

Jon

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.encyclopedia.com/media/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/harlequin-romances>

<sup>ii</sup> <http://www.summerjhart.com/>

<sup>iii</sup> <http://www.summerjhart.com/work#/new-page-1/>