



Future Islands

“Little Dreamer”

Wave Like Home

08/2008

Upset The Rhythm

Three Little Dreams – after “Little Dreamer” by Future Islands

Sarah Shields

I dream for you, small girl, hair a soft sheet of butterscotch. I go straight home and paint you, dress flecked with red and green and yellow, your back forever to my eyes. I am a daughter with no daughter. I am a mother. I am not your mother. When I was young, I was sure I had killed you inside me. Then I made two songs, two sons, two hearts—my heart all theirs. I still paint you. All blossoms. All colors. Sometimes, I catch only your ghost.

I dream in you, my lovely fig tree. I say goodnight and goodnight and goodnight, and I climb from my bedroom window, into your gray spotted arms and legs. Necklace of solar-powered bulbs, I hold them as tiny moons in my tiny hands. Once a hummingbird came, once a thousand fig beetles, once a rat. I pray inside you and you hold me close without injury, never let me fall. In the morning, we are still here—leaves or not, figs or not, birdsong or not.

I think too much of you, caretaker of dreams. Once, you found me approach, when I ran wild in this child’s place. I could not help but bloom a different shade than I’d promised. Now this is loving you, not knowing you. Husband of a wife. I am no wife. I wrap my ceramic body in a rosy blanket of wool. Here I do not sleep. I do not eat. I stay silent as a small death. Though I will not break, though I am not yet broken, it is you I keep to myself or cannot keep still. Everything grows here. Everything sings here. There is no end—only this I repeat and sow.