

The salary of a soul

Put a dollar amount to my soul
I dare you! This trickling merry-go-round

cuts crooked, a cyclone of sabers
melting like teeth, leaving my tongue

split between fear and music;
I choose a diminished third

at this buffet of lacerations
where my hands serve all I have bartered

for my breath. Here each table of feasting weeks
carves their names as veins in the corpses

of forests; when life is a currency weighed
in whiplash gasps, I sprint to keep pace

with the industrial strut of chic-garbed time.
So, what then might my entire being earn?

a text, skittles on a diabetic day,
a yawn, a welcome beyond the mat, perhaps

these little gestures in Jupiter weight
drag drag raw as bone, bone as

birth: the first understanding that
we is me spelt in cuddled panic.

What is the texture of a dream
blue and bulging with metaphor

under a rent-is-due roof? In one way or
another, I never feel it enough

for my truth.
Oh! To be consumed.

Plastic-Wrapped World

How would we dance
if our lungs composed
condomed ballads of plastic romance
detailing the innocence we claim
because our blood-bleached paws
never touched the throat
of a choked turtle?

There are enough cardboard boxes
to house every human
yet the refugee's tent still fears
the demagogue wind;
we dissect petals and eyes
to leave no trace behind
but forget we have built the crime
into the scene of our bonfire hive.

If you had to see your mother gutted:
intestines and aortae ripped out
with a plastic steak knife,
which immigrant would you blame
when the carnivore is your hand
and your teeth have rotted black
from blood-leeching the soil
beneath your lying Judas feet?

Ursa Major bears witness to our crimes
best attempting to inform the cosmic police
of the savage horrors she has seen
whilst shielding her child's starry eyes
from the black hole that was built
by the apocalypse born of mother earth:
a matricidal race clawing in consort
to extract the black milk from her bleeding breast
all while her tears rain acid
from the dearth of clean water
and her voice attempts words to express her story
but her truth was stolen with her tongue;

now her lips are sealed with the plastic wrap
whose steak-burning altar
we have come to worship at
as we chant the mantra of extraction
and set fire to the trees beneath her crucified feet
laughing into the oil-black void
of the forever night
we are too flaccid to believe
will soon be our eternity.

Playboy

Each human, a number,
notch on bedpost,
representing *i*: imaginary
invention of perverted masculinity
and a self worth as miniscule
and real
as 0 .

Each new addition
to his body count
divides his soul
by his nothing self
spawning a black hole
sucking in diamonds
and doves
and any comets
whose tails
he covets.

The singularity of his pursuit
fuels his expansionist ways
and as he grows with screams
he boasts of his once lovely stardom
and rages over the supernova force
of his *romantic* sabine death
which will birth a million starry-eyed boys
to repeat
this infinity
game.

The paths we must

In my much younger youth, I thought a man
was the sum of his mutilations.

So my cousins and I lit dynamite
in the throats of toads.

The croaking aftershocks of my life's explosions
still echo in the color of twilight.

My feet are scarred from the debris of indifference
unprotected by even the privileges of gated innocence.

I still do not tend very well
to the garden of my blessings.

I struggle to swim
through the flow of time,

dragged down by the guilt of caskets
and the weight of the love I can no longer give.

We call it heartbreak
because we are used to living

through the beating of broken things;
after all, we tread daily on shards,

the shattered glass of rainbow souls
jailed in the prism of white light;

Rage is the circumscribed word we must use
to describe this staining of fleshed windows

and *Rage* is the story of pain
untold around a wildfire; and now

think of your tongue
and all the burning years left to come.