

**distilled all over the place**

sixfold poetry submission

## **distilled all over the place**

y'all know what you don't know briefly holds us together. and that's on connection. a trance projects me into your mind, and i'm distilled all over the place. where'd that face go?

a new invention, heard that one before. just the same old weaving, new stitches baby. new wishes baby. an intervention. messing with convention. i'm a homemaker, lady. (nothing's canon when you look hard.)

what you see is what i'll be

holding briefly  
together in a tapestry of skins.

## wound

*after Fred Moten<sup>i</sup>*

When you walk me home from surgery you walk me up into myself. And in myself I see: a clearing.

(Solemnity, the nearest we'll ever come to celebration.)

Not to be cultivated, no.

We need not build a home here. A place in absence of otherwise (a gulf we might've drowned in.)

For a wound is a constancy. A suspension, an unending. A dwelling.

& the clearing is where I stand when I wake up into myself

pinkish streams flow behind the lids of my eyes (snowing layers down my throat)

& you walk me home

where bloom pinkish streaks across my chest

& give me drink

where I pour myself

& pour

and pour, and pour...

and a scar is a soreness. An expiration from the lungs. In other words, an exhalation

into grass, (which might be the clearing and is never an escape)

and a cutting is a process which never really starts and never really ends.

A constant (prompting) of (im)permanence.

## how they knew

*after Alexis Pauline Gumbs* <sup>ii</sup>

they bathe in steam and gulp down saltwater. piece of parsley. leave their body to its own devices. they eat more than you daily, feed on heart after bone after leg. never full, so hungry no choice but to beg. they stew, fry, boil themselves silly. crunch down so willing. *they look at their body and see only pores, only wet spaces, vessel, opening.* their beef kindling of flesh to the fire which sustains them warm. warm like they know they could be, warm like they know they deserve. warm like the open wound they for some reason preserve. and warm like you, they are, like a secret banging against the door of your motherlode of a mouth.

\*

and they taste like undoing. they taste like all of us sitting circular on the floor of your apartment, sipping wine like blood. they taste like the day the market is no longer free and no longer a market. they taste like that dream you had last night while you slept on my chest. they taste like a riot of snow between your lips. they taste like morning. they taste like a choir of a hundred voices, mouths agape to the heavens. like a fragment

\*

in the mirror, looking at you clearer, they are always extracting. they snap and chop and shave and maim. and they don't cry. they only let water fall out of them, and taste salt on your tongue. they pull on their skin to see what lets go. they crawl down their throat. and they shake like the strings on a guitar as they slip down on it hard with painted red and orange nails. they shake like an old old needle, like a travelling seagull. and they welcome upheaval. they shake out their hull and they strip. spots of brown and crispy lips. *what are they doing with my only face?*

\*

and just as they wrest enough to be forever shapeless, they assemble. the thing itself—which might be called their body—breathes and grows into countless forms and reminds them that solidity in no way means stagnation. all that remains is the very fact of change. *they are whole. are they possible?*

**quilt**

we pause

together in a dream

and kiss our thick callused feet

oh, the muddy walkers

we are

—a dispersal

tonight

i find us

stewing apples so we can swallow them whole while

i rock slowly in my chair with your grandmother

s quilt on my lap.

## illusion

a great confusion

a     great  
      profusion

might create

something like  
me + ~~the right~~  
~~to live~~

a great contusion

&

might carry me  
right in.

a great allusion

watch, click

watch,

slip

no, illusion,

and the ink is disappearing as i write your name.

the ink is disappearing     your name.

and th ink                   ing     your name

is    appearing as i

the ink     appearing as     your name.

i                   you    me.

## Notes

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<sup>i</sup> Fred Moten, *Black and Blur* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017).

<sup>ii</sup> Alexis Pauline Gumbs, *Spill* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016).