

THE BIRTH OF SHAME

*with misguided tales of nothing to fear
we were promised the sounds in the dark
were only the well intentioned wind.*

i knew better.

my ears hook a minnow
a silverjaw
so young it can barely flap
i reel it in
fossilized, for future digs.

She's not to play with that boy ever again

smashing through split ranch wall
sending waves into the tepid water of a half-filled-tub.
i am seven
and i don't know how to swim

*i think i can **just** fit*

as i measure the distance between the tip of my nose and the top of the water line.
if i turn the water back on she will hear it and come — an alarm
used for emergencies.
i debated.

he promised he wouldn't tell
he got his wish,
i got my money,
a fair deal had transpired.

*She entered the pale yellow bathroom and sat her exposed thigh on the cold porcelain edge
you are never to play with him again
she stated, stood and left.*

a second wave — my little body cold, now pruned

i learned it was the naked trees that gave me up
a sparse and full view from the kitchen window
straight into the woods where my shorts and panties

— bunched around my ankles — offered my curious best friend
a moment of gentle innocence in exchange for a quarter.

perhaps i should have asked for more — it was such a costly mistake.

left alone to make sense of my crime
i decided my body must be a dirty and disgusting thing.
never to be shared
never to be discussed.

all this wisdom
well
before my eighth birthday.

ME, MY, MAMA

from a daughter to a wife,
no label in between
the contents of a life
so sparse and dirty
— green.
how could she teach me
from the attic of impotence
thrust a fawn onto fifth avenue
and regard such innocence.

tell me the why and what
you have done.
tell me the why and what
you have learned.

your expectations
do not allow
my wings
to unstick from the
whiteness

spilled

everywhere
trapping my
Me
drying empty
milky-creamy-off-white,
rubber encasements
of privilege and profanity.

i try to peel them
free
like chipping red enamel off a 4am thumbnail and watching the flakes gather
useless
on the carpet
sarcasm drips through the ivy.

why couldn't mr. decker tell the truth in 4th grade?
wouldn't that have been a much more valuable lesson
than forcing correction

of my left handed pen-
man-ship?

my

Me

seeking all the attention
he obliged
never had they seen the likes of
such a young charlatan
so sure
they never would again.

i hustled for the part

— big mouth

fill it, fill it

my holes ache,
teach me what full feels like

Mama

as nurturing as a nipple

dipped in arsenic

she never could

give

me

my

Me

invisible looks good on you

she told me over

and over with

her distracted gaze.

from a daughter to a wife,

no label in between.

AUTOPSY

I murdered her
and in the grieving period
prayed
for Jack to reveal
the roots
of my violent nature.

◇

Inside the dark light of all that I seek to dispose,
I uncover pearls
of white rice
sticky in their
starch,
crisp
in their coffins
where time has not done them favor.

◇

Vulnerable,
I call upon the roosters to feast
but my auto correct wants to peck that crap away asap.
Why is it so hard to feel into wet clay and feathers?

◇

Where are the edges?

◇

I need to feel the edges.

◇

I lunge for sharp corners
turned out with hanging buckets
to catch the mess
but all I find is
this damn sticky-starch
— a crater
lined with emptiness
— no edges
the speed of light is slower than dark.

◇

I swallow shards of glass and pray like hell to shit diamonds.
One day
they will cut me open and see my beauty.

◇

THROUGH THE CRACKS

Seeking escape
from the belly
of the crocodile,
the light becomes the target.
It's always moving

unless I'm still.

Yet again,

I fill the syringe
with the nectar of his soul
and pierce my flesh
to overdose
— delicious and high on familiarity
the comforting warm bath
of rejection.

His saccharine juice runs toxic through my veins;
I hunger for it daily.
The offering of one's agency is gratuitous yet charitable work.
This sad little boy,
my intoxicating rescue pup.
He's like cheap perfume
trying to mask the stench
of shame and self-loathing
until inevitably they blend and linger
on the nostrils of contempt.

Faith leaves
when we abandon
what we know,
and is replaced
with a private hell of
conviction and despair.

I'm in a solitude cell,
thick with smoke and mirrored bars.

I crouch beneath my soul
looking up for the cracks

— escape must be pre-planned.
But there isn't a crack large enough
for this tumor
to pass through.

Heat, more heat

a simmer turned boil
will melt the illusion.

The rescue pup searches for the warden's key and sees its reflection.

A sad young girl
— she is familiar.

Like a tenacious dandelion
commanding itself through
the cracks in the concrete,
she becomes a soldier
for her mission
feeding
the hunger for something real.

Amidst the thick fog of facade
The dandy feasts and finds its way
up
through the cracks.

READER

what are you eating
— you people consuming my words —
as they swirl through your tracks
of digestion
unable to taste as they were prepared.
savor them please
on the tongues of your experience
and if you find some meaning
for them
know
that i too
will never get to taste you.