

House of Arson.

Eulogy for the Living

At night I twist limbs into tombstones,
Every breath, a eulogy,
For the things I have forgotten to remember.

All I can dig up are time capsule caskets,
The haunting still unopened,
The ghosts must all have amnesia.

I outline the bedsheets in chalk,
Keep the crime scene quiet,
I have always been good at keeping my silence,
At worshipping it into a dead thing.

I mourn for the words turned morgue,
For my wrecking ball tongue,
I still cannot break loud enough
for the truth to release its hostages.

This requiem is always off-pitch,
Every sound tight and tilted,
A symphony of rope burn,
Of noose notes, hanging without reason.

In the morning I am a mortician,
I paint it all pretty,
Phantom fingers stitch strings into my speech,
Puppet paragraphs pulled upwards
And I play the part, again.

Unopened

I could leave her.
For something more flammable,
For a body more bridge to burn,
For the pretty girls in bars,
Looking for arson and holy,
With blood diamond cheekbones
And feather teeth
More air than body,
Skin too easily turned canvas.

I could paint their spines into highways,
Pull my lips over to the shoulder,
Show them the way my eyes light up,
Like hazards,
Like warning,
Like *don't see through me*
Like *don't know me*
Like *collide*

When it's over
I could light their cigarettes,
Turn my teeth mirror,
Smile them into believing
I am what they need.

I could carve out convictions,
Show them my convincing loose ends,
Could bend words into strings,
Tie the truth into a skyline,
Uneven and stretching
Manmade.

I could lay my tragedy out on the surgical table,
Make incisions where it has metastasized,
I could resize it,
Fold its mass more manageable,
Digestible,
Make it look less human,
Let them comfort me into simplicity.

And I could leave them.
Without electricity,
Without static and voltage,
Without turning every word fluorescent,
Without hurt.

Your Soft Blood

The radio light blinks,
Hums a soft electric yellow,
And you sing out of key,
In a tone almost deep enough,
To fall asleep to.

I chain link my arms around your legs,

Cling to them like fence posts,
I am still built of you.

Your stagnant eyes blink,
A cold metallic blue,
And you speak out of rage,
In a tone almost deep enough
To dig a grave in.

I chain link my arms around your absence,
Cling to it like it was not already rusted,
Watch the gears twist under your tongue,
When you say love,
Like you are not an arsonist,
Like it is a bridge that has not been burned,
Like it is something that could still be built of you.

Ten Things I Want to Tell my Mother

My mother is like mother earth,
Carries nature's curse under her skin.
Her temper, a tempest that never lets her rest,
Because even at her best,
I can never find a forecast,
See it only in the aftermath,
When her pulse is already ebbing and flowing,
Some suicidal tidal wave.

And I know,
That telling her the truth would only come
At the expense of breaking her heart,
Would only kickstart more dark into her life.
And I know,
her life has been absent of light
for long enough already.

But if I could I would tell her,

One,
When I was young I wore my heart on my sleeve,
Every time you would leave,
Every time you wanted to find heaven through your own wrist,
Every time you would insist you were never coming back
My words would panic attack,
Stutter, like a broken record on repeat,
Don't leave, don't leave, don't leave,

I still need you.

Two,

I am sorry that I once said you are just like your mother,
It isn't your fault that you sometimes carry her touch in your fingertips,
That your hand sometimes slips,
Hits,
Throws,
I know sometimes you just need to anchor your anger
Into something tangible.
Something just dark enough to see.

Three, I don't wear my heart on my sleeve anymore,

But *Four,*

This is not apathy.
I am not indifferent.
But this consistent collateral damage,
Has left my heart a monument
That does not want to remember it's own history.

So I have never given you my honesty,
Because honestly,
These words would fall like a guillotine,
Clamp onto your neck like teeth
That time has made sharp,
And I don't want to leave bite marks like that.

Five,

Stay alive,

Six,

You have to leave even through all this hell,

Because *Seven,*

I'm not sure that there's a heaven,

And *Eight,*

I know how much weight you carry.
I know sometimes,
You just want the hurrican to stop,
I know,
You get so caught in your own storm,
That you do not see the casualty,
You casually make of everything you cannot fight through.

And I know this,
Because I am just like you.
We both search every entrance for an exit sign,

But *Nine*,
I hope you find a way to love this life.
In spite of all the light that doesn't shine through,
I hope you find a way to turn your heart strings
Into kitestrings,
So that gravity does not pull you down as often,
So that your skin
Does not become your own coffin.

So I will soften my words.
Because I know how far you bend,
To give us the life you never got.

And I am learning how to heal.
Learning how badly I want to live,
Learning, to give love even when it burns,
I have learned,

To turn suicide notes into paper boats
And sink them.
Have learned to find forgiveness through a pen,

Because *Ten*,
We are both
Still
Alive.

Soldier

I walk into a restaurant somewhere in New York City,
Flash my teeth white,
Like blood diamonds,
Like something cut, clear, and stolen.

I shake hands with the man four times my age,
With lines that trace across his face
Like highways on a dusty map,
And a tongue that sputters, stalls, stutters,
Like it has run all out of gasoline,
All out of drive.

And I hope his eyes will skid

Across my cold shoulder,
Sharpen it into blade.
I hope he will say something fast enough,
For me to hit to brakes,
To break open my marble expression.

I hope for hazards,
For headlights,
For bite.

Hope he will invite me back to some dirty motel room,
With sheets he can unwrap me from
Like a bodybag.
I hope to be the flag,
Mourning for morning at half mast,
A mask of ragdoll and still stature,
Stone statue and plastic,
Eyes, closed caskets.

I hope my body elastic enough,
To snap into flinch, into swing,
Into anything but a dead thing.

I stare down the lack of life in his eyes,
Wish them empty sockets,
Wish them electric enough
To shock my apathy into anger.

I wish for my backbone to bend,
From a question mark into a fist,
Into a fight,
So I can finally write this war out of me.

Instead, he tells me that when he was young
And was drafted for the Vietnam war
He almost bought a train ticket to Canada,
Because he has never been a soldier.

He tells me, the older he gets,
The more loneliness loads it's gun,
Says he has swallowed all of his bullets,
Starts shooting off his mouth,
Becomes the little boy being drafted again.

He says he is only buying companionship
For these hollow days.

And suddenly, we are both so small,
And so much the same.
And suddenly, all his creased abandoned highways
Uncurl my spine from a fist
Into a tightrope I can string across the table,
Across rock bottom,
Anchored to hope.

He pays with an envelope of cash
And a book of poetry,
Tells me not everyone is the battle I make them out to be.

Months later,
When I can no longer afford to live in New York,
He pays for my train ticket to Canada.

Tells me the war will be over,
Soon enough.