

Behind the Glass

Reproduction, as you put it, is a biological superlative.
Red wine seeped up to our eyeballs
and spilled out on my cheeks
and splashed onto the loud city lights.
Behind our words stood a glass wall
shored up with ego, youth, mud, and sand.
(The ocean breeze tries to tear it up with its teeth
but in summer like a stalwart old sailor
shipwrecked after his last voyage,
his head rimmed with hoarfrost,
clinging to the salt soaked rocks.)

We live in a world of unfulfilled fairytales.
You were promised I would be dainty
with a size three foot (to fit the glass slipper)
a bell dangling in my skirts,
an apron bow like a present topper
and flowers on my knees
(red and blushing violently).
I was promised you would be tall,
white honored, piney-handed (handy)
golden curled (sweat soaked tendriled)
wearing a coat with three buttons
ruffled feathers beneath,
a popinjay – with a sugar-dusted tongue
and after I tasted you we would fly
into the sun.

Yes,
promises we made
behind the glass.

Housewife

I am peeling the crisp brown suits
off of a pair of onions, reproving
for the clock is digging in
between the ribs and marinade,
it hates the night time sour.

I am broken over the boiling vinegar
and sweet-faced green cucumbers,
knobbed and vulgar, peeled away
to meet their maker.

The house – four rooms with bows tied
end to end to counterfeit the confidence of it
concealed behind draperies
that hemorrhage orange daybreak
onto end tables, side tables, console tables.

Pouring out the one beam
like hot lemon meringue filling
in the blinds, I see it as a slanted scowl,
sad thing, keeping out the
bright, keeping me in, custodian.

She Learns How to Disappear

She memorizes the little spaces she could hide in -
the white place between letters on the page,
the dashboard – a blushing radio throne,
the corner of the yard where crows suckle,
the cherry streetlight which creates the rain,
the white blue sky with its open space
where she could be a splinter in the expanse,
fold up like an origami swan,
tuck her face under her wing, blasphemed.
This one thing is clear, she knows
one more day is purgatory.

Two Young Wives

We two sat
on the swing
on the porch
in the house
by Range lake.

We talked about
the future, which
seemed to end in may.

There – in may – an end.
A bridge between our old lives,
where we were pillars
striving to be wood, strong,
to hold up.
Where we were young,
before thirty rose up
and devoured us,
showing its face
at first in secret places
blue starburst veins,
dimpled smile lines.

Cupping hot cups
of blueberry coffee
we watched yellow oak
and brown pine
and red maple
leaves falling.
They never seemed
to reach the ground,
drifting out over the lake
whose surface was pinched
as if by some invisible touch.

And you remarked,
“I see now how a seed
could be spread across the ocean.”

Aerie

Our bones hollow fingertips feather
pinions tinge with gold.
We hide in silver linings quills
line down cotton scrapbook
nests sinews mold the quiet mess
of a body of light – the light of a body.
We soar into flare – burn brighter
burn a hole with a lighter
and view us in it.

The walls built of sheaves of words
the words cleaved from books
the books penned by a sister's hand
the hand tiny and sweet serif finite
sand poured over dead, dry ink.

We remnants of light like sunbeam
hoops petals pressed into walls
like men's mouths who pick
up our light pop it in lick
greasy fingers brush our snow
small and precious off their
charcoal suits.