

Terra Incognita

Last night I watched myself mail you
a single piece of paper.
On it, truth or wish: EVERY PIECE OF MY BODY
BELONGS TO YOU.

Lately, the muscles of my back are wound up
kitchen timers that never go off.
And I think of my hands
as piano hands that never felt home
until the first time
I pressed my fingers
over the dark keys
beneath your eyes.
When our teeth touch,
I am not sure whether I want to be
predator or prey.
I do know I want you
inside of my mouth,
but maybe just so
I can keep you there.

Today three freckles spill across my left shoulder.
On my right knee is my thickest scar.
I always notice it; I never touch it.
I have three others steeped in memory too.
I hope you find each one & fill it with you
so I'll never wonder anymore
what has happened to all the cells I've lost
or the past selves I've buried
and whether it matters or not
if they will ever meet each other.

Yesterday I read how the atoms of everything
we love become
the atoms of something else,
but I also know
one day when my body is white daisies &
red poppies
instead of tendons
and ligaments
pulled across the weight of being,
we will find each other
and finally see
what we could only feel
for so long.

Even though you were the wrong story

Peel the story
inside of me,
the one where
I am the disco
that is always
open, the sugar
confetti under
your tongue.
The night you
uprooted violet
seedlings, the
leaves sprouting
waxy &
crushable,
the careful shape
of lungs.

Because
if I do everything
right, I'll be
a firework
after July.
If I could just
do everything
right, you'll
hold me up
so high
when I'm gone.

Pyrrhic victories still construct monuments

Wipe the stain off the lip
of the glass, fake cherry
red and mulberry wax.

If lips are like fingertips,
white pebbles on a forest
trail of grief, today I am

the witch. I grind details
of where it hurts to dust.
I bleach the remembering

so I can wake up tomorrow
& smile as I straighten
your tie. I sweep away the

knowing. I leave only how
roots are organs, that they
keep us alive, even when

their desires kick up rot
to the surface, the same
soil sprouting spring

jeans, cherry tomatoes,
the laughter of our daughters,
yellow daffodils.

Phantasms of dreams reveal still more

Dreamt I climbed
a lemon tree, rinds
dragged along
the sidewalk of nights
I left late & came
too drunk,
my nails shining
tombstones
in the dark.
These memories
with baby teeth,
canals gasping
as I rip them out,
milky white
& thin-stemmed
on the counter.

I wish I could
lovingly cradle
each one
but I've already
declared
sovereign queendom
in the land of revision
because I do not trust
forgetfulness &
all possible dissidents
must go. It will be
bloody & winters
terribly cold but
I'd rather know
my way
to the sun.

Long Before They Declared It An Epidemic

I.

I only remember backwards,
hiding under
How Things Were Supposed To Turn Out
and I,
I am so sorry.

II.

When we were raw and green,
they told us how many decibels it takes
to break a dream,
without telling you
how to wake up from one.

III.

You sleep, still –
bound in sheets of hurt color.
And I imagine a faint blue
sweetening the hallways
you pace.

Your hands reaching
for the drip.

IV.

In steady letters, you write:
*I dream about bleach, pure white high,
and it always,
always feels so good.*

V.

I mail envelopes across time, carefully
inking **2009** as I wait in line.
At 2:53 pm, in cheap red ink,
USPS declares our history **Processed.**

VI.

Here, in a house full of fabric,
I sift for lines to lead you home.

The letter you wrote remains
on the fridge, the memory of your thin
stained arms.