

Exsanguination & Others

Sore Soles

Dark are the clouds above her head,
And weeping are the Willows in their backyard beds.
Somber are the souls who wander concrete streets,
Aching are their backs and the bottoms of their feet.
Perfect are the smoke rings emanating from her lips, and
Clicking are her heels- it's an effort not to trip.
Biting is the breeze that whispers at her back,
Forgotten are the books that she pushed into a stack.
Weary is the second hand, of constant ticks and tocks.
Alone is the girl in the music box.

Exsanguination

By the time I broke his heart, mine had already begun to crumble.
Doubt came knocking, and erosion spread. There was now geological proof.
A history in the dust.
Our civilization thrived, and like a biblical flood or a crawling army, I snuffed it out from under his nose.

His heart suffered a swift, sharp slice that bled quickly and furiously. Exsanguination of the soul.
Mine had fallen prey to a quiet disease. A sickness, slow to show the symptoms.
Debilitation from deep within.
It crept in and infected every kiss and conversation.
I lied to myself and to him. I lied to my skin and to my hands.

From start to finish and back again, this was my fault, my burden.
A burlap sack of flour whose corners were frayed.
I dragged its weight behind us, back and forth from coast to coast.
I left a trail behind until there was nothing left to leak.

I killed the animal that we were, and its blood is on my hands.
Roadkill that we politely halved and strapped to each other's backs, agreeing to share the stench. The last task we did together.
We stretched and dried the skin, dumped the innards in the river to wash away. Our heartbreak in its collective sense will wash up on someone else's beach, but the blood still stains my hands.
Three summers have come and gone, and no amount of scrubbing can rinse my skin of the damage I've done.
I still smell it when I close my eyes.

I drove a wedge between us and the lumber split.
We cannot put it back together, but we can hold it up and press and pretend.
Our arms will get tired. One of us will drop it.
There will be no picking it up - things lost at sea are never found.
I wrecked our ship - the Coast Guard is not coming. We are many miles from shore.
Where we sink, we will remain.

I held up what we built for as long as I could, and I'm so, so sorry, but my arms got tired.
Faster than I had thought they would. Faster than I had hoped.

By the time I broke his heart, mine was deeply flawed at its core.
Cracks ran through it from end to end. There is no fixing a flaw like that.

Instead, you knock it down before it collapses. You wait for the fog to lift. You cry while you wait.
You sift through the rubble. You salvage what you can. You let go of what you can't.
You mourn the things you've lost. You forget what didn't matter.
And you start again from the scraps.

Reprisal

I'm taking my name back
From your mouth where it has perched on your tongue for long enough.
You will summon no more of my own tears with my own name.
You will torture me no longer with your voice of velvet.

I'm taking my name back
From under your bed where you kicked it
And left it to collect dust until you needed it again.
You will know me for not a moment longer.

Anonymity is a sweet, fresh breath.

You were my lost and my found and my all-around.
My love and my friend and my never again.
My roots and my sap and my never-look-back.

Autumn, buried

The leaves were soft and rotten
On that morning in October.
We were wide awake
And the air between us sober.

What lay there so few hours before
Had gone and screwed us over.

And I'm to blame again, it seems.
We entertained a careless dream,
But now the storm has passed.
I should have known it couldn't last.

So I'll bury us in the nights we spent,
Back when you were heaven-sent.
I'll lay us down with all the days
That wouldn't last and stole away

The air between us, sober.
We were wide awake
On that morning in October.

Depths

Take me to the place where the mud is deep and no one can see us.
Leaves become sieves to the sun and its waning warmth.

We creep along for miles and pick up rocks, feathers, remnants of the land we walk.
We traipse like this as the light winds away. The fog within the forest depths is just that: deep.
Like staring into the darkest ocean, we see things that aren't really there while we overlook the things that are.

The heavy air drips with scent and sound atop a bed of silence.
We say things we otherwise wouldn't. We think things we otherwise couldn't.
The smell of pine saturates our noses and rests behind our eyes.
Mine share their color with the earth (the bottomless dirt and the grass that flecks the surface) -
yours are like the storm clouds we don't think will reach us (they do, and we are soaked).

Cotton clings, hanging on for dear life. We reject its advances and peel off our layers, thinning
suddenly under patches of pale moonlight.
I am chilled and you are chilly. I am drained and you are weary.
Bramble and branch has bruised my shins, and thorny claws have bloodied your ankles.

We walk until we reach the lean-to, a relic of our childhoods that survived well beyond its years.
A patch of dry wood awaits - we think it somewhat miraculous.
Just enough room for both of our bodies and both of our souls.
We sleep with wet hair and skin.

There is nothing to be done, no one calling our names.
By morning, the damp is lifting. It threatens to return and we do not doubt it.
Our clothes have almost dried, just as before, only now they hold the scent of rain.
Everything is different, yet we are both the same.

I want to grab hold of these hours and put them in a pocket. The one within my chest, where everything I stow inside is doomed to rot forever.
The decay will take as long as my life.

I'll borrow these hours from the forest.
I'll take them back to the city, only I don't think I'll return them.

I know this place isn't ours to keep,
These woods belong to wolf and pine.
I'll only come back here when I sleep,
For only a moment, our stars align.