

## Through Gritted Teeth

### ***Run Rabbit Run***

Run little rabbit,  
run from time.  
You know that those calloused hands  
will close around your throat  
in an inexorable snare  
but still you give chase,  
and your restless heart  
soldiers on.

Run, little rabbit,  
from the maw of the fox  
that swallows us all,  
from the tick in your chest  
that counts closer to the end.  
Flee like prey from the hunter  
even though you know,  
deep in your fragile bones,  
that this danger is inescapable.

So run, little rabbit,  
for the chase is all you have,  
lest you lay yourself down  
in the palms of your demise

like a sitting duck  
and surrender yourself to fate.

But the duck and the rabbit  
expire together in the end,  
pinned under the same fingertip  
as the narrow traps of our lives

snap closed  
into zeros  
and the expanse of time  
finally swallows us up  
as the hunt comes to a  
close.

So tell me,  
is it better to spend your life  
racing against the clock under your skin,  
or to marry your mortal weakness  
and greet death like an old friend,  
joining fingers  
as you step into his jaws?

## *Shame, My Tattered Coat*

Shame is the coat that our mothers dressed us in  
and their mothers before them,  
the patched-together dresses  
of all the world told us to be,  
everything we believe we are not;  
the iron breast plate meant to protect  
that instead pins us to the ground,  
until we truly believe that we are no more than dirt,  
content to be tread over,  
and we moulder into the soil from which we were born.

The weight of our collected inadequacies  
coats us like a second skin,  
sticks to us so insistently  
that it is no longer the jacket we hang by the door  
when we return home from our professional facades;  
we wrap it so tightly around our shoulders  
that it becomes part of who we are.

We are all seamstresses of our own shame,  
knitting this patchwork of imperfections  
handed down to us  
with every construct forced upon us,  
stitched with the personal wealth of shortcomings  
spat at our feet

by those who believe that we are intended for them.

We are all just dressmakers terrified of our own nakedness.

*I am a Bomb in my own right*

My heart shattered  
in my chest that day;  
a thousand fractals of bone and flesh  
pierced the skin that held them,  
and I became a bomb in my own right.

The biting pain is gone now,  
all that remains  
is a dull ache  
as my body begins to knit itself back together  
at ground zero,  
without you.

I am a bomb in my own right.

***Follow Me To The Rose Garden***

Don't mock me with your roses,  
each one of them a gaudy bleeding heart.  
They weep their waxy petals over the nightstand  
like fallen soldiers,  
redcoats, every one.  
In their wilting they turn their heads to me,  
wheeze: *come with us.*  
*follow us, follow us, follow us.*

Their festering crimson  
calls out to my own wounds swaddled in gauze,  
we bleed together.

A dozen rattling breaths break the night  
and they slump on their invisible nooses,  
beauty, convicted.  
Their prone forms hung  
over the lip of porcelain,  
their necks broken in a final bow to death.

The roses dressed in their tissue-paper best,  
and me in the answering white of my gown  
wed under the stillness of the early hour,  
the soft moon our only officiant.  
*follow us, follow us, follow us.*

## *Time*

Time in your palm is not control of time,  
just as feeling the sun's kiss on your skin  
and laying name to the stars  
does not give you claim over the sky and how she paints herself.

So often we assert knowledge of something beyond ourselves  
and believe that awareness exchanges itself for ownership;  
that to possess and have  
is the highest form of experience, of living.

But you cannot own love,  
or connection,  
or passion or warmth;  
they cannot be captured and quantified  
or locked away like treasures.

Those who have tried to cage these elements we live for  
will have found that even the most calculated of hands  
smother the flame.