

### **The Void of a Crescent Moon**

She is a half-person.

There is the occasional cicada,  
the rattlesnake song.

She longs for completeness.

In the desert, she walks.

    Their bodies are mirrors, she  
sees herself reflected on the glisten  
of their skin, she

wants for them to fit  
so she forces them in,

distorting.

Her hand trembles.

She believes:

you are a piece

of god.

Your flesh is her daily bread.

    She consumes you through kisses

Your blood is her wine.

    She traces your veins, intoxicated by  
the accelerando of your pumping heart.

In the desert, the patient rainclouds  
make the air damp with anticipation,  
give the creosote a sweet odor,  
shadow and darken.

    She wants to be whole  
even if it means

a fracturing of the soul.

Puzzle pieces disfigured--

they may connect,

but make no picture.

Her feet grow weary

of walking on the cracked-dirt path,

where the mirage of oasis

and the angels once were.

That gaping emptiness screams

inside her, growing

with every step into silence,

broken by the cry of a crow.

She digs her fingernails into you

before the crescendo--

your body is holy, she won't let go.

The desert sun retreats,

the nightshade blooms.

A moth twitches in a feverish circle.

Her void is that of a crescent moon

but she's become  
drunk from  
communion.

### **Stitches**

She once dreamt my lips were sewn together,  
my mouth was stitched shut.  
But in my dream last night, I spoke so loud that I  
woke myself up,  
the words of defiance lingering on my tongue.  
My dreams are still haunted;  
these men reside in my subconscious.  
But the stitches have come undone.  
My lips are so raw I want to cry.  
Instead I take the bloody thread and use it to tie  
a string around my finger:  
a reminder for each time I awake  
in my dream, and mistakenly think this is reality, that I am still asleep.  
And that although the shadows will not go  
when I truly do awake,  
my voice hurts because it works and  
I am strong enough to ache.

### **Knocking Quietly**

As I sit at the pond  
at dusk alone  
I smile while  
the ducks laugh,  
as the water ripples,  
as the tall lush grass  
nods at everything and nothing.  
I think, This is Life.  
Look how easily the pond reflects the twilight sky,  
if only I too could calm my waters enough  
to reflect the beauty passing by.  
The reeds live to sway, reminding me  
that everything is okay.  
I eavesdrop on the birds,  
I watch the bats come out to feast,  
a beautiful silent frenzy.  
The sun's rays shine through the clouds  
like someone just polished off a golden lamp.  
Like someone just invited their own soul  
to dance.

I do not know how.  
I do not know why.  
I only know Yes.  
I only know Thank You.

My gut whimpers to me, like  
a child tugging at my sleeve;  
it is the small voice  
deep within  
that begs for more.  
That knows there is a whole world  
to explore.  
I have gratitude for  
the crunch of dried leaves under my shoe.  
And I pause to acknowledge  
the sunrise light  
tangled with naked birch branches in the sky.  
Each moment pleads:

*Look at me. I am beauty.*

*I am fleeting.*

That is how I know.  
I must be on my own.  
There is too much that needs to be seen.  
We will not settle for downcast eyes, or for  
sleep-walking.  
This life—  
I grieve the day  
I have to give it all away:  
my skin to the worms,  
my energy to the light.  
my room to another,  
my memories to the night.  
My desire to hold on tight to  
what numbs me from  
this ache (you),  
also numbs me from the beauty,  
the view.  
That simply will not do.

Wildflowers remind me that petty things  
may come to my door but there are better things  
to occupy the insides of my mind.  
Like don't forget to let  
in the silhouettes  
of trees,  
the bird's swoop,

the autumn leaves.  
They are always there.  
They just knock more quietly.

### **Palm Reading**

The creases in the palms of our hands  
are as intricate as  
tangled city roads on a map.  
Life lines like highways.  
And when you squint your eyes and look real close:  
a thousand little side streets, dirt roads.  
No one said we had to take the highways.  
    Well, they highly recommended it, but  
    we can brave the byways.  
Sell everything that owns us--  
    the trunk in my lungs  
    your treasure chest full of shame  
    that drawer of letters addressed to my unchosen name.  
We can build a big boat out of the lines in our  
hands, the splinters in our ink  
and we will not bring anything  
that would weigh us down, make us sink.  
We can uproot our wooden fence posts  
and lay down railroad tracks.  
When we were kids we knew we could become  
blood brothers with a single scratch.  
We can get scars no one could have predicted.  
We can go  
off the map.  
Carve a road.  
Besides,  
it is the lines at the corners of your eyes  
that speak your story in the language of creases.

### **Honey and Vinegar**

Honey and vinegar,  
smile lines around our eyes,  
you're just picking flowers and  
I'm just catching flies.  
Tilt back your head;  
look at the sky tonight, with me.  
I want to see  
the stars and feel small.  
Sometimes the best souls

have trouble with living at all.  
I want you to live. To thrive.  
I want to save you but  
to say I can is a lie.  
You borrowed my ears;  
I would like them back  
to hear my friend strum the banjo and  
to hear myself laugh.

Your back is rounded, curved  
from years of being bent over.  
Skeleton creaks,  
bones warp like ivory vines.  
You need  
a regeneration of the spine.  
You were never meant to be  
an accordion, an instrument  
for someone else.  
You are divine.  
Curled into yourself  
your mold is hardening.  
Crack, if you must.  
Arch your back, yes you must.

If you feel the yawning ache,  
the scrape of shifting plates,  
it only means  
you are transforming,  
it only means you are awake.  
Please,  
stay awake with me  
just a little bit longer.

Honey and vinegar  
one thousand flies  
peel open my palm,  
...let them buzz on by.