

[Footfalls]

Firearms of every shape and size echoed through the streets
Like the footfalls of an angry stampede.
A thousand Mary Fisher's painted in a Warhol-esque technicolor
Are waiting in the other room,
Their voices blaring over half eaten T.V trays
If you believe you are safe, you are at risk.

An awareness that should be instinctual getting beat out in the balance.
She is sitting in the middle of their storm.
The perfect statue of a girl, who had never been taught much about self-preservation,
She clutches a stuffed bear to her chest pretending she can feel its heartbeat.

They used to make love in a bed filled with down angels.
Now they spend their nights preparing for the 21st century Holocaust,
Finding new things to fear.
They turn the hallways to trenches.
Build a box around the girl dropping in cheerios and juice boxes.
The man-made beast is scratching at every door.
They swore by all the hair on their bodies,
By every grain of sand dug out of their trenches, that they would never let it in.

I'm sorry. It was out of my hands.

All I wanted was to hold her hand.
She perched at the top of the slide.
They bit their fingernails to the bone,
Visions of a 21st century apocalypse burning through from behind their eyes.
They held their breath as she descended into Eden,
Not knowing whether or not they should call it hell.

She told me to duck down.
With fists so hard she pulled the hair out from the back of my neck.
She pulled me down out of the sky,
Twisted my body underneath her own like I was one of her stuffed animals,
As the air erupted around us.
I held her hand, prayed into her lifelines.
As the war waged around us,
I held on.

All I wanted was to love you,
She whispered into my ear and I pressed my head to her chest,
Tears in my eyes, pretending I could still hear her heartbeat.
I begin screaming, the loudest sounds to ever escape my lips,
I scream into your chest knowing that the hand I am holding onto
Is no longer attached to a body.

The First Stone

When your trenches are dug into clouds you train yourself never to look down.
I never thought we'd have to.

[Red Queen]

The Red Queen dropped an apple from her coarse, taloned fingertips,
Laughing horribly as it fell through the atmosphere of wonderland,
Falling into Adam's lap as he sits in the apple orchard of paradise.

This one? He calls to Satan from over his shoulder,
But it is neither the reddest nor the juiciest looking apple in the garden.
This apple could just as easily be any other apple.

"Ah, but it is not."

The Red Queen shrieks with pleasure from her spot in the clouds
As she watches Adam's lips surround the apples surface
And she hears the crack of his teeth breaking fallen ground...

*I am not afraid of her.
I'm not afraid to fall for her and love her the rest of my life.
It doesn't mean that I am any less for it.*

She had expected earthquakes,
For a swelling fissure to open up like two pulsing lips
Ready to obliterate Adam between their teeth.
She wanted hell fire and rage.
For Zeus's mighty lightning bolts to rain down from the sky
And shatter the garden.
She expected grandeur and when her dreams continued to go unrealized,
She stopped believing in God.
Confined to Wonderland the Red Queen ruminates over a mediocre redemption.
Deciding that if she would not be given what she wants, she would find it for herself

[Molly]

*When you're a kid
The world goes no further than the end of the block
You have a mommy and a daddy
And you're just left in the middle
Wondering where you fit in.*

She dragged me down the stairs by my hair
Strapping foreign bras to my chest, crushing my small breast
Under the weight of underwire kisses.

"Molly is the precursor to Michael"
She shrieked with a reverent certainty.
Her eyes burning like the fires of hell.
"You cannot play with Molly the same way that you play with Michael.
You cannot *play* with Molly."

*When I was young, most of the girls had this idea that they would marry their fathers.
I was certain that if we'd met under different circumstances,
My father would have never married me...*

I was too bold,
Too curious,
Too much more a son than a daughter.
My father thrived from structure
People grow up, they go from school to work, to marriage with 2.5 kids and then if they're
lucky they retire before they die
Other girls cured themselves with pills,
Rubbed their chapped lips with valium kisses.
I was a silent witness to my life.
Pulled out at both ends and unable to scream.

[Secrets]

We carved our wedding rings from wood.
No preservatives,
All natural sugar.
We knew that like those rings,
Once born,
Everything slowly disintegrates out of existence,
Just as would our marriage when the time was right.

Our first night together,
He climbed on top of me,
Grunting with desire,
He bent his mouth towards my ear and whispered promises of fidelity.
He choked out...

“I love you”

Dug kisses into the corners of my mouth,
While I practiced my breathing.
Steady,
In and out,
Lots of focus on the air entering and exiting my lungs.
I focused so much on air
I started to feel a euphoric oxygen high.
Realized that if I breathed heavily enough
I could produce a tingling feeling all over my body, especially in my hands and feet.
That feeling that mimics butterflies and love jitters.
If I faked the tingles to myself
I could pretend they were real.
I could pretend that we weren't living right in the middle of my lie
And I swear it was better that way.
I could have sworn I loved you then.

We all have our secrets.
I lived for years in the spaces between lies and truths.

The First Stone