

Pyrophoria

The envelope curled at the corners:
that glorious name, once
the proud signature of a celestial pen,
is now writ in fire.

The orange, liquidating tongue taking for its own
the smoky palimpsest of a denied possibility.
Paper wonders fall into the scorching wastebasket;
every promise, every dream,
sacrificed for the ease of memory.

The Awful Din

A loud bang and then beautiful silence.
The eyes return to their objects of fixation
and the delicate art
of giving a shit is returned to
its former state of illusion.
I strike a match and the flame springs to life
with the hiss of phosphorus.
I light the loosely-held cigarette
at the corner of my mouth and inhale
until my lungs are filled with the flavor
and then I force the cloud of smoke into the air
above the crowd until a wispy, makeshift halo
rests on the tops of freshly-gelled hair and lace-garnished shoulders.
They've disguised the worst parts of themselves
with the best fabrics from Italy
and they hide their scheming smiles
behind the rim of a martini glass
so that their wickedness is only visible
through a window of vermouth.
It's hard to feign sincerity when it's been reduced
from its one noble status
and turned into a mask worn for all occasions,
but it gets easier.
No one remembers what happened to fidelity,
but they remember that they stood and cheered
at its hour of departure and told it to never write them again.
But there will come a day when the film reels
of their memory will grow dusty, when the projector no longer works.
And when they can't watch their hedonistic movies
they will all look out into a world they swindled
and recognize for once that no army of charlatans
could ever rob such a thing of its luster.
They will beg their victim for his forgiveness
and they will receive no response
because they never knew how to call for redemption.
They never asked me for his name,
and they never bothered to look up the number
even though it was in the yellow pages all this time.
And when the crimes of a lifetime
become their only living memories,
the vapid will know despondency.
And when nostalgia becomes an inescapable longing,
they will finally learn the awful truth:
diamonds will decay, but lamentation is forever.
A loud bang and then beautiful silence.

The Viole(n)t Hour

Can I bleed
this moment
of all of its time?

If there was a way
to use my only razor
as a weapon of
perspicacious gleaning
I would carry my steel
across that temporal throat

until the stillness ran red.

The Auction of Beauty

Behold! Derelict ribs and wilting skin,
The prize of this alabaster fairy
Is the touch of consolation, the misery
Of constellated skies.

Do I hear three? Three for the first bid?
Ah! Yes! You, sir, a fine coveter of a weeping
Destiny, the tidal mergence of sorrow and promise.

Her mouth may be weak, but her teeth are caked in blood.
Do I hear four? Four? Yes, you sir! Four! Four for the
Render of human hearts, for the fabricator of ghostly ills.
Dare I ask five? Five?

SEVEN!

Seven?! A hungerer for pangs not so easy to name! A
Pining soul, desolate and inconsolable, a misery yet to be written.
May you find her wiles a suitable pen for your purposes,
may your tragedy ever glow.

TWELVE!

A dozen for the liar! A dozen for the teller of untruths,
the weaver of nightmare tales, of grim, moss-slicked
fables with sickness and nausea.
I confess myself impressed, I dare not ask more
For this render of floods, this drier of oceans.

FIFTEEN!

Aye! Fifteen to the carrier of a valise,
The valise lined with membranous tears,
May you find in her an ease for your bleeding,
For she is a great author of terrible ends,
A noble consecrator of lowered gazes,
An exultancy of your purple hours.

That is all for today's lot; I hope you
Have all found something you like,
And I hope your restlessness brings you here
Again.

Propitious Winds

Held fast only by
the ephemeral tethers of
optimism and illusion,
the sheet rose
like an awakened serpent
and slithered towards another leaving.
The sea was grey,
but the sky was red,
and I knew that,
over that horizon,
she would find
a more welcoming dawn.