

Autumn Lung

Starved blue sun reflects
in the first frost—
villainous visitor
coating each blade
of grass, worrying
the woodpile.

I remember running clamped
thumb, forefinger
slowly over a long blade
scouring the taste
of the sweet frost while
the truck warmed up.

At night the winds pulled
all scent: down
to the valleys.
But for the residual,
crystalline cold—
squeezing up our nostrils.

At dawn the leaves came
alive with each
gust, spread to the field
and the smell was sun
and dying leaves;
sleeping trees.

Great inhalations—coloring
fatty lamb pelts, burdock,
great steaming humus
by day—and exhausts—
as the sliver moon
rises—all but the frost.

Dusk smells like mourning,
looks like bare branches
against pale blue
sunless sky. It pulls
on my trachea—elicits
soft sobs; asthmatic hack.

Fire radiant; warm shadows
shiver, adze-marked
beams—to keep the chill out.
But dusk lingers
in our cuffs, behind ears—
stuck between my eyes
and yours.

This Quilt

Lover,
Last few days driven me to brink,
too numb to think, too anxious
to quit. ‘Cry-don’t-cry’ echoing, still—
I’ll cry every night
cause the pillow can’t be prodded
into any shape but absence.

And my own stink invades the sheets—
makes me nauseous—for it only
becomes any semblance of sweet
when mingled with your hair, your breath,
and your neck. Can’t cuddle your blanket
cause I’m scared I’ll corrupt it.

Never knew the cool comfort of
quilts, till every night, us below the
old rose softness; tangled as two
lovers ought be, reeking of love,
sex and sunlit breeze. Regardless of
age or place, This Quilt
will always be Our Bed.

Who?

Who's there? Creak in the last stair,
Hush of the fire, groan
of the stove, snout of the dog
sifting through the contents
of the air.

Sated, she becomes a warm
stomach rising and falling, unaware
of the ghoul in the stair,
tripping me up, daring
to haunt my house, for all
its innocence—beware
for he will hide
in the knotholes
and the bottles
of my father, downstairs.

A quick wink and toothy
grin, silver hair,
silver fox hair—
your wide-knuckled mitts
knock askew, unmail,
put a creak in my stair.

Dancing Shadows

Turned out the lights to write this poem.
Page and pitted table
flickering along with a solitary flame.
Wanted to encourage all the dark corners;
I wanted whispers & yellow eyes,
forked tongues, hairy snouts of monsters—
only the cat came.

I thought maybe, since the woods are stirring—
thought you'd wake up too.
When I heard a rustle last night in the dark,
my first thought was you. You
flitted away like an ethanol ghost
before I could let my eyes soften
to catch you—like a faint star.

Do you have any pity left for me?
Same story: alone & drunk on tears.
Ever cried so hard your legs escaped you?
They running off, chasing a fox in the dark.
Do you have any pity left for me?
I hope you do, for I'm hungry,
and if you let me, I'll eat you up—

bones & all, like a fucking dog.
If I were truly a dog, I'd catch you;
shake you up to bits. For a dog's
only as good as his master's kick;
easy for a whipped dog to learn nought
but death. At least, though, I'd have you
and I could lick your fur, smell
the life leaving you
and bay at the moon.

Fever Dream

I'm always scared a dogs in dreams,
always with the gnashing teeth,
harsh calls, no empathy.
Lights behind the eyes: none,
but a ravenous nose & scared a no one.

Two dogs with half a face each,
& grimy shirts & dog food in the sheets—
Old Man Dumpy too nervous to sleep,
peels a pack & slaps it:
a miserable defeat.

Waking warm with my lover—no reprieve
from two dogs with half a face each.
Two hundred ravens flyin 'head of winter's teeth,
saw them in December,
wings whispering dreams.