

DREAMS & DARKNESS

The Clock

In the depths of night
I dreamed myself a doctor
With twenty patients in crisis.
Every one of them was me.

I was strewn across beds,
Splayed across tables,
Panting with the labor of new life.

I should have directed
These opening acts,
But the nurses ignored me,
Faceless figures coercing my many selves,
Pilfering our possibilities,
Enforcing our defeat as we submitted,
Salvaging no voice between us.

So I lay,
Crooked across my bed,
Neither mother nor midwife,
Neither sleeping nor escaped
From the dizzy daze of dreaming,
And felt with fading first-breath cries
My soul slip into dawn.

Wishes

Would our story had been this:

That we had spiraled,
an accretion of bodies,
on your narrow twin bed
gazing up through your skylight
and used stars to navigate each other.

In the purity of empty space
I might have carried off
strands of the Milky Way,
tucking them behind your ear.

I am not so greedy as to wish stolen kisses.
We still orbited
with the cold heart of Pluto:
but my fingertips might have
tracked freckled comet trails
searing across your neck or shoulders.

And to have fallen asleep
In a vacuum of teenage inexperience,
watching the expansion
of my universe in your breaths,
my old life reduced a pinpoint
in the nebula of
your first love.

The Best Bed

Through the years, when sleep eludes,
there is one bed she dreams of.
Years ago, even then wishing a warm body
sleeping nearby,
in the unknowing way a young girl would.

But mostly savoring
incautious times when skin
might meet moonlight
and the soft fog of cool breezes rolling across stretches
the sun has never seen.

And eardrums might play that singular hymn
of a late-night whistle
so far across town she doesn't know where the tracks are,
not lonesome – cheerful
a call out to friends,
daydreaming or driven,
who work best in the dark and agree:
we rule the night.
Come alive in the desertion of daylight,
gather hearts only darkness can reach.

Epitaph

A perfect world would never pass
the third chapter.
Those magical days of exposition,
novelty and marvel!
Friendly wonders round every indentation.
Leave me here to explore
the dark corners and secret sounds
in rustling pages' peace.

But behind every hero
glowing with augur,
there skulks a minor character
desperate for a change.

How often was it us?
Paging through our choices,
unable to read another passage.
Beating through end pages
wailing to the writer of life --
Any story but this one, I beg you.
Thumbing impatiently through rewrites
to champion our own tales,
scribbling mounds of text,
laboring to leave behind
adequate words
to make a decent gravestone.