

## Morning Ritual

## Bullet in the Chamber

Blood of my blood  
you've left salt in my veins.  
Dragged our love through the mud,  
they took everything but your name-  
a truck and tools, a life, my dead father's land.  
Was your flesh still warm when they filled their hands?

Thicker than water they pretend, but love will kill us in the end.

Unc, with your finger on the trigger,  
in case you take steps to misremember  
the lies you claimed, ser-  
I'm the bullet in the chamber

leave no stone unturned, no one untouched.  
It wasn't the pistol that killed my father-

it was love.

A good thing

The words twisted and tumbled out  
of my mouth-

just-

like-

that-

And I couldn't take them back

and we became strangers on a park bench  
on our separate ends of the couch,  
as if the words themselves were the Atlantic  
spilling from my mouth-  
already worlds apart  
and your gaze felt a little colder;

I watched you put your shirt back on  
and just like that it was over.

## War of the Fatties

Prudish,  
brutish one  
with women at your knees.  
In the morning  
you're a warrior,  
dressed for everything but me.  
Hear that beat growing?  
Battle songs through the trees-

we wait.

And we wait.

Then we see you cross the tree line  
and it's time.  
Will you show me yours if I show you mine?  
This body like a crime.

Disgusted.  
My *xochitl* makes you sick,  
like the sagging flesh above it.  
Turn tail, run home quick.

The mighty *teyaotlani* fall  
like drops of milk from my breast.  
But the war goes on, you know-  
the wicked get no rest.

They might not be pretty,  
but our muddy waters run deep.  
Bring your dead, your tribute  
to their *mikitsli* sleep.

## Different, Sister

The blood is in everything.  
And you can thank your lucky stars,  
that she was there in the beginning.  
Pink weak thing, took you into her arms.

It's in you too.  
And I feel it in me move  
and I know-  
This is what death and birth feel like.

I feel it in me quake,  
the ancient *sanguis*-  
full of the first heartbreak,  
the original anguish.

If you can't get your hands in it-  
delicate and weak-  
you don't see,  
you don't breathe,  
you don't bleed,  
with me.

But yours is nothing like the war my body wages on itself.  
Our hysteria laughs at your talk of heaven and hell.  
You'll never know either until you marry the two;  
Death and life together, revolving, in this womb.

We may be different, but there's no shame  
in bleeding to give the universe a name.

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I reach down to  
turn you on,  
feel your wet kisses  
sing out their song–

a pattering against skin–

and water dripping down my breast  
as steam fills the air,  
clouding out this mess.

I turn up the heat until steam  
pours from your mouth,  
growing denser, expelling winter,  
and presses against the tiles to get out.

Everything blurs, boils, burns from your heat.  
But it's not enough to make me unsee  
last night and the way *you* looked at me.