

## Floorboards

Today people talk about being free,  
And my eyes go blurry while I drive  
My mind no longer belongs to me,  
What does it mean to be alive?  
To be capable of unity and not choose it  
Where only some of us can thrive?

Floorboards creak under weary feet  
bones carry my carcass across the house  
I can feel myself rotting, my thoughts seep  
Into this stale, free air that consumes me  
Outside the flag snaps and my grief deep,  
I stumble toward complacency

One foot after another  
Floorboards, wood planks, cedarwood box  
I hear the estranged cries of a loving mother  
How do we define ourselves as what we are not?  
Shadows in the light, stars and stripes tied up in knots  
Breathe in deep, release the drops  
Tears roll down her cheeks even as yours do not

## Morning Song

My mind, in sprawling tendrils of black webbing  
Screams that we are impure  
Blushing arms wrap around pale abdomen  
Inside I scream  
Warm breath steady, heart-flesh squirming  
Can't you hear me?  
It's nice, for a little while  
To hear the maple branches scrape the sky  
But then they become nails on my back  
And the world lurches forward  
And we die, we drown  
In our own scarlet agony  
Can't you hear me?  
The early morning birds chirp  
But inside they scream  
Just like me  
From our mouths spill the blood of the lamb  
Crowns of blackberry thorns  
Atop innocent heads  
The sun peeks over the mountain  
Afraid to look, to see  
What we've become  
The idols we've created out of dust  
Can't you hear me?  
Galatea plummets to the bottom of the ocean  
Pigmalion finds marble blood  
In the bottom of the toilet  
She is human, she must destroy herself  
Even the most perfect must die  
Every woman must bleed  
Can't you hear me?  
The gray morning becomes dull day  
The birds cease their chirping  
The maple stills in the sky  
As we wake, we die  
Our dreams dissipating like dried blood  
On our hands  
Edna Saint Vincent Millay

Only writes half of Resonance  
Before she fades away  
Into the back of my mind  
Liquid soap in water  
Water spinning in the drum  
Our lives end when they begin  
But the beauty of death follows us  
like hell hounds on our heels  
Through every morning  
Exemplars of sleep, champions of paralysis  
Can't you hear me?

## Summer Cherries

Melatonin nightmares,  
cold sweat tangle  
Her soft breath like winged whispers  
In this world of our creation  
there is no such thing as guilt  
We name stars after our saints  
Clutch pendants at our throats  
Laugh at the runny milk of time  
As it devours us  
We are young, Cleopatra and Ophelia  
Snakes and rivers in our open mouths  
As the wind carries empty promises  
Across open orchards of ripe cherries  
In the end, we'll both die  
But for now  
We live in each other

## Wax Seals

In the eye of desire  
I pour my blood on the crown of her letters  
Sharp and cruel  
Fate laughs at my petty attempt  
Your love will never be safe  
Men leer with letter openers  
And my father lifts an eyebrow  
Asking why I seal my letters to her with wax  
Peace of mind  
Is what I said, but I meant  
Father, you are a man, you must know  
Men, they poison what they cannot have  
The cups of kings  
The hearts of women  
The knives of brothers  
When Sappho threw herself from the cliffs  
She thought the same thing  
It's her blood that seals our love  
So no man can break it  
No man can touch it  
In a hundred years the broken seals will be in museums  
And my bones will be in the ground  
And the guides will say, look, this is camaraderie in femininity  
And we'll laugh, mouths full of dirt  
Because we broke the seals ourselves

David

There's a great tumultuous mass of person in my bones  
There's laughter and gloom and adrenaline  
There's nights driving home in the dark  
And days spent stocking shelves at work  
But most importantly there is love  
In the deepest parts of my soul

The large right hand of David looms over my cheek  
And I cower under my bones hoping for salvation  
He demands perfection; defies reason  
The roots of insecurity poison my mind  
And dig their greasy fingers into my skin  
There's not enough of you, they say

But it's a lie crafted by the sculptor  
I am not cut from marble- I am flesh and blood  
My heart beats and so I cannot be nothing  
I think therefore I am  
I lift my eyes against the chisel  
And scream that blows of beauty are not meant for mortal things

There's more than lines of Auden under lamps  
And the disease that's trying to kill me  
There's more than my fears and hopes  
There are dreams and grievances inside of me  
There is breath in my lungs  
And a will to stay here

He might tell me I'm not enough  
But the truth is that there is so much of me  
I am expansive, endless-  
I have no limits and therefore cannot be defined  
It is not perfection  
But it is beautiful. It is enough.