

Expeditious Poem Set

Birthday Poem

There is no silence observed
in these unabsorbed years
that balance and braid
kitchen aprons to mortician gloves.

Beveled body sleeps lightly
as the cancer eats its way out:
Wafted suffering,
Inventory memory,
Exhausted longevity.

Her daughters crawl close in the night
To her sunken crib. But you
are still breech.
Feet baptized.
Purgatory escapee,
Gentle son.

You are her, 60 years before.

At night now, alone
in your own moist panic,
Her screams
bounce softly
about your heart

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girl

she will not be cute. she will be
a spark, a gazelle, scuffed-knee everything
because she will not wait. she will
arrive early, have lungs on her, love
her mama first but her daddy more,
know it all. take in.
she will not stand to be bonnets or barbies, not frills
or pastels, no dresses, no bows.
she will be Motown, the Descendants, the Beatles
on dad mornings and John Denver sung
out loud. she will be tree branches, monkey
bars, yellow dragons, curse words and
spit. she will not be the apple of
anyone's eye. she will not melt hearts
but break them. tender kind ones
and others that will need breaking. she will
stomp in mud puddles, play catch with
her dad, throw rocks into ponds and at
the windows of lovers and friends. she will be
Saturday afternoons, beer bottles, fast cars,
be too much like her mother.
she will love deeply and care softly.
she will be home.

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Sew It Tight

Scorched scorned murmur
seeps from my wrist:
“Heart lost woman,
Swallowed up and sopping,
Laid curled in with hot coals.”

Forgotten fervor follows closely
across untethered traffic –

directions home,
misplaced.

Blighted January afternoons
accompany salty anger
and wasted bourbon
and sardonic secrets
and trenched apart chest
and polaroid slicked silence

At the church,
Mourners are mimicked,
I can be the rock my mother requested.

Cheek chewed raw and bleeding,
Hands smashed calm
from swayed oscillating pressure.

Wrist, sewn
tightly closed.

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Flood In

Your molasses heart
is seeping through the levy,
flooding the rivers
and creeks and streams,
Trying to drown
my scratchy hymn

And I will let it bury me.

In a carved out
hallow splintering thicket I wait
to be washed away.
The crackling depth,
overturned and tortured,
pours closer.

But your heart dries up.
Cracked clean and flaking
like backyard mud pies,
like workers' winter hands,

So you concede.
You will let me sing.

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