

Pride and Peaches

Thin-skinned peaches with pulpy insides we tremble
in the home of stiff lips and hard knock
harbingers of bruises
Fight for your country!
names are called like personal bell tolls
but now is not the *Fight* now is just the physical
Fight is to be flaunted, worn like a hat,
names of opponents
cast into the chasm of
contempt—

it wasn't a regular check-up for us plums—
we stood half-naked with knees touching
squatted to prove our muscles could
harden like rapid-cycling rigamortis,
thinking, *this is what Fight for your country!*
feels like. Wiry hairs springing from panties
with lace-lined seams—
everyone watching—two clothed and
clip-boarded women scrutinized
the puffed pink ribbons that striped my thighs,
These look self-inflicted. I'm
scratched CD.

Fight for your country! flesh is to fight
like butter to hot knife slicing and spreading
decadent pride that tastes of copper
smells of sirloin sounds like
fireworks Yes I scored my skin Yes I am
unfit to serve a country where man
asphyxiates man in the nudity of daylight
with a straight face—
from a country where you can claw
out the cave mouth of destitution
like poverty is some wide wet womb
like we're all born of unpaid electric bills
and broken homes and families
without fathers

I pissed orange and stinging in a cup
for pipe dreams of joining the U.S. Marines.

Pork-fat flesh wobbled before probing eyes.
The whole thing ran late and they
forgot to give us lunch, but the guys
were fed and happy and less
violated than we were. *Fight for your country!*
didn't tell the story. There was no
Fight!—no waving victory flag—no brawns—
no fourth of July fireworks—

There were people clawing
out the cave mouth and proving
their worth to abusive mothers, wanting
a different option, not having one.
Man hating man and woman because it's easier
to do from a distance, harder to prove
with a bullet, but possible when
Fight for your country!
gets so loud
it muffles the shot.