



**MY
LITTLE
BOOK
OF
FLESH
AND
BONE**

POEMS

**CAROLINE
GEOGHEGAN**

Catharsis

I'm scrubbing blood from the stage like a slow dance:
movements rhythmic and tender. I clutch the wet rag in my hands like
I'm cradling a lost daughter. Smothering her in kisses
baby don't cry. I hear the audience murmuring outside.
a deep voice shouts something about the stupor of fantasy.
Too preachy for my liking. I do hate when things are over-exaggerated.

My shoulders sink as I drag a bucket full of crimson to the back exit,
kick the door a bit and watch the gristle pile on the pavement.
Vanished in the night. I glance into the dark and there are millions
of eyes staring back, teeth bared and ready to devour.

There is a dead girl curled in every gutter. But I must walk home.
It would be silly of me to think myself so important as to predict my place among these ghosts.
Besides, the violence is over. It has already passed.
Only hysterics leave the theatre with the scent of death still coiled in their nostrils.

Crazy Bitch

I

So I'm eating his liver
until my jaw is so sore it bruises purple on my pretty face

I'm curled over him the way the sun curves over the horizon
my nose stuck so deep into his lung his ribs scrape my lips
his heartbeat so heavy in my ears I chew to the rhythm
without even realizing

binging and purging

That's the problem with women-- he begins
we are always hungry i choke between bites
he thanks me as it grows back
blubbery and swelling my teeth digging to find a vein

II

I'm sitting at the edge of the tub watching the shadow pour beneath my toes
my body bulging with the dark until my fingernails weep with ebony
clawing as my face shrivels and blossoms burnt and haggard
ghost within ghost within ghost

I go to bed a tiger and cry when i wake up human
I go to bed a man and cry when i wake up human
I go to bed myself and cry when i wake up human

III

I render myself prophetic
Sensing omens in gooseshit
in wormwood
in the creases of
catatonic hearts
The end of the world is foretold
in the hitch of a baby's breath
and

the hours i spend pressing dirt to
the cut stems of daisies
can't you remember to breathe?
don't you want to?

IV

If there is a God I am in love with him.
all his double faces and
all his dead skin
i find unearthed in alleyways

V

She invites me to her apartment and giggles velvet when I plunge my arm under her heart
fingers all tangled up in her ribcage
You should have just asked
she interlocks my bloody hand with hers to escort me to

her kitchen, where she rummages through the fridge
and hands me it all sodden and squishy and hastily
wrapped in butcher paper,
so damp with grease it
drips with glee onto my shoes

I flee like coming dusk
leaving my teeth for her,
on silken sleepless nights,
to tuck under her pillow.

Hamster Pups

wrinkled flesh raw like the
crux of a wound
little paws flailing like branches
splintered in a hurricane
eyes sealed shut left to bulge like poppy
seeds sown under skin

they mewl whispers to each other,
piled so tight they would suffocate
without the knowledge of
how to breathe through their siblings
distended bellies

and the mother, destined to become
the plaything of a child,
who suckles her young in a nest of
shredded aspen, warms them in her fur,
dreams of cannibalism

of baptizing them in blood and spit and stomach acid,
curling them up so close they thread their needle thin
bones through her maw, their
rubber skin to immortalize itself
in their mother's fat reserves

what ferocity chains her to such violence?
what love claims her to tear her own creations,
rip her children with the promise of teaching them
how to breathe between her own
bites of flesh

what love lies dormant in us,
so steep and heavy
it turns to hunger?

RED

Bulged from the dirt
My siren blaring crimson
Warped and distorted
Blazing spire screaming

Sleeping in the underbrush
Sides heaving as I stumble
Stomach carved out like a smile I stay
Sanguine and desperate

Ripped my heart out tossed it to your open arms
Let the cherry weep between your fingers

Locked to your backside
As you stare straight forward

Only color to my name

RED

Like
Embers on the altar
Like
Needles through my tongue
Like
Leeches at my throat
Like
A slap to the face
Like
A slip of the knife
Like
A punctured lung

Like

Us together, bundled up
At the ends of hallways
RED LIKE
Collars turned up
Against the cold

Wrench this heart out from your chest
And squish it with my sneaker.

Convenience Store

You walk downtown to get groceries and come back sans tooth, hair, spit. Lighter.
You're ecstatic. You're saving money.
You're reading each label and cackling, everything is so
cheap. A jar of pickles costs a
jar of fingernails,
hardened in the sun.
You need bread so you
eat pizza for two weeks straight and
forget to shower until your face shines
slick with oil. Cashier scrapes it all off
with a bobby pin, flicks it into the register,
here's your change.
jam is some pimples, erupting like
firecrackers. Cashier must hate you but
it's ok. You're saving money.
She plucks your eyelashes when you
buy mascara. *no one will notice
with the makeup, dear*
Wipes your lips as you retch,
bags each can of
tomato sauce.
thank you, come again!
When you splurge on
shrimp cocktail Cashier sighs
and pulls out a hacksaw.
a bullet to bite.
*do you write with
your right or your left?*
The pain is quick, and then
it's like your pinky was always
that short. Each shrimp lies cold
on your tongue. You're ecstatic.
You pick up your cousin's tenth
birthday cake, blue with white
fondant icing. Cashier frowns. Calls
the manager. *just a second.*
Manager comes. Burly with a
stern face. Puts his hand over
your heart. Counts *one, two,
three.*
Asks if you want a receipt. You
shake your head. Stumble outside, cake pressed
to your chest. The sun is shining. Icing is

melting. You're lighter. Everything is so cheap.

Walt Whitman

For all he knows I enjoy
fizzing out
words bubbly and
irreverent as
I ask Walt Whitman just how
I collide with this earth

Because right now I am detached
 Right now I am steaming
 Right now I am diffusing
 into this tepid night
 Right now I am perched
 on my windowsill
 purging this gelatinous body
 to the midnight sky
Glaring into the eyes of the building next to me
Gripping the gaps in the bricks underneath so I
 do not spill
 into my neighbors' rooms.

Walt Whitman says
 this is supposed to be a moment
 of spiritual revelation
But all I am is nauseous,
 panting,
 begging for this to stop

And Walt Whitman says
 my eyes are buried deep within every mind
 little shards to squish and shatter
 or choke to warp away the flesh
 dust under my fingernails

Walt Whitman says
 this is the process
 of the poet to seethe
 scrape against the concrete
 scream until my teeth
 lie scattered on the pavement

and don't you want to scramble in someone's stomach?

Walt Whitman is a fucking liar
 so I expect no roses

because as my brains
billow into the clouds
I cry out and

no one dares to answer

MOONCHILD

"Glory unto the Scarlet Woman, BABALON, the Mother of Abomination, that rideth upon the Beast, for She hath spilt their blood in every corner of the earth, and lo! She hath mingled it in the cup of Her whoredom."

-Jack Parsons, *THE BOOK OF BABALON*

like eve you came from man,
his mind at least. weak and feeble they
call you whore they call you goddess they
call you theirs. you're shackled to
their attic. warped through
their walls. they draw blood just to
catch a glimpse. scarlet woman.
here, come here. gods you're so
beautiful. you could kill me if i
let you. consecrate the ritual. birth the
divine. holiness begets unholiness.
forked tongues scratching at
your womb. a nativity of delusion. spectres in
the kitchen. BABALON rides the beast all bent
and ragged. the wine is spilt. who's the
daddy? no matter.

the scarlet woman gets an abortion and
the world is saved. the beast is
slain. forget about you. sweetheart you're
all washed up, write your
biography now. cash the checks.
die human while you can.
the sun is up. time is awash with
your face. don't you know you're
BABALON? come here, my sweet failed
antichrist, let me see you. you're so thin. all that
moon-chanting caught up to you, what will
Peter say? what will Horus? just another
woman aflame.

the universe is slowly curling
into itself. all that religion
for nothing. the stars are out. you're so
beautiful.

Stealing Dirt from that Little Courtyard Behind Bliss Hall

So it seems,
 Under the cover of a purple dusk
 and the spotlight of a full moon
 I have joined a long line of women
 who stoop to the earth

Hands cupped
 Backs arched
 Eyes watchful

Doing something not so much wrong
 As it is natural,

primal,

human,

lonesome.

Not sinful yet secret,

tiring,

Not dangerous yet

my breath hitches
 spine tingling in the frostbite.

There is witchcraft in this-- in everything
 my meadow mind reminds me,

Whether it is curses

or spirits

or simply the college

I bring home under my fingernails.

And as I walk back,

the squirrels stir to
 leer at me with their
 coal coated eyes

We both regard ourselves the

Monster,

Yet as we interlock eyes,

Feel nothing but

Delicate.

suspended in television

fingers smeared against the
tv screen i'm trying to unearth my
skin from its layer of glass.
smile,

you have armor. like a bad
movie i'm watching myself
trying to guess the genre.

here I am,
losing the plot. trying to sleep.
lost in the park. feeding the birds.
poor girl. don't think her soul will ever
find a nest to lay her eggs.

here I am,
driving out to sea.
counting each grain of sand twice over as
if to prove
there is something holy here,
you'll see.