

Juliet Cook

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(B)URN

(incantation)

locks of black sheep, old rosary beads,  
dried rose petals placed between pages  
with a small ceremony you can only imagine  
my desirousness, covetousness, little sprouts  
that grow into twisting tubers, climbing me,  
seeking entry, this calligraphy that writes itself  
on the body, imprint of desiccated flowers, strained feeders  
I'm holding my hand out in the shape of a reliquary

(motes, spoils, bindings)

if beauty marks are eyelets fastened with  
electrical tape, another bloody telekinetic female to be  
drained (if I dream of red motes, spoiled meats,  
ripped off bindings, my bleeding...),

is my calligraphy parasitic, my calla lily carnivorous,  
my call stymied with crushed petals, lodged against

a windpipe that still tries to hiss  
a voicebox that still tries to kiss

bent tuning forks, pretend this dark strip  
is crushed velvet blindfold, dreamy game,  
but I can't see through skin to the vein;  
can't read what this vessel contains (ashes, ashes

words, birds?) my sticky lashes,  
mouth a rift, a sickly trickle (treacle?)...

(botanical animal)

a freight of chimney swifts and rosehips  
rises out of a parapet with animalistic bent  
how can small birds and flower parts be so hungry?

chimney swifts: rarely seen perched... high-  
pitched twittering... nest made of twigs  
glued together with saliva

rosehips: aggregate fruit...consisting of several...  
enclosed by the enlarged, fleshy, usually red...  
cup used for jelly or tea

can you read a vertiginous swirl  
even after it has been smeared  
onto bread crumbs  
and swallowed?

(b-urn)

host a thistle under my tongue  
thistle, epistle, spiny bird wing,  
tiny wishbone floating in holy water

how it burns inside  
my urn, what could be  
urned inside my burn,  
what could be inside  
untouched, but needing

(an)ointment

smear a certain way, sticky  
jelly, incense stick, black lamb  
locket, a (para)pet, a prick

struck a certain way, I'm fiery  
changing leaves, unread tea,  
mulching, a paraclete

how my heart beats faster,  
a bird inside the vessel

a (w)hole flocking

(trying to escape)

this ice is not preservative;  
I melt like a witch

resin, honey, pigment, blood,  
tar, feathers, my tiara, my reign  
pelting the oubliette, animal skin  
stretched taut across the opening

I am holy no more

my skin still smells like the fire

(still trying)

I am broken bread and bones  
shaped like twigs

I am red feathers and spit,  
trying to clot,

trying to nest  
inside the right vessel...