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SIT SMOKE MOPE BROKEN

"APPLES FELL, LEAVES, STARS"

That was his story.

Not truth, as there was no truth, not in the way they wished it would show itself.

The heron's canal;
the grateful snuffle of salvaged textbooks;
the slap of water against his home –

she thought of those, not as truth, but as shiny, ephemeral fish that wore expressions of ecstasy.

There existed exactness, yes,
in the crease of the surgical drape and in the hiss of the induction chamber.

But the rest of the words she heard, and the rest of the words he said,
were only the inaugural pieces of a chain-smoked conversation,
later multiplied to rival the jaundiced canons of the archipelagos.

HEUVELRUG

The running hills, running spine, up the hard candy at the base of the neck,
up the green, a green one sees in magazines: altered.
The gobstopper at the base of the neck is the only purple thing in the room,
purple from tongue-bludgeoning.

I sit the night with the lovely critter, a gentleman, half in his hospital bed,
half on the vinyl chair I dragged over from the corner.
A blood smear on the chair. Not the bug's, or I would have licked it. As it stands,
I've licked enough blood. From his eyes, his nose, his urethra.

Our enchanted conversation of ticks and clicks and blurps bubbles through
the viscous mess of pus and vomit across his lips.
How I picture my lovely bug, fighting back? He has almost lost, but he wins.
The tragic gap is that I can't witness him win;
I can only lose him as he recovers.

FRAIL FRAGRANCE

My night moth seems baffled
And flickers her wings against my nostrils.
I suck her into the vacuum.
I tell her about the building up and tearing down
Of beauty and civilizations, and the language of fashion that falls.

She tells my smooth teeth
That she knows, it's her secret, and to keep it down.

DISEMBODIED (for P.H.)

I try to do this without looking at you,
because that's how I know you: without looking at you.
The witness senses lie
often enough.

I have touched the changeable pelt of the
feathery and coarse mound of Venus;
I smelled the snow tonight;
I saw the wrath of raging pit bull terriers
with center-cut beef sewn to their cheeks;
I heard the song, blithe, chirped by a man I once loved, on Tuesday,
and it ran like tinny echoes in my cold kitchen;
I tasted lust, aspartame, sour sickness of morning, and the kiss of a waitress.

And none of these had me on all fours, over the toilet, or dropped down
in my driveway, shaky with fervor, fear, and genesis;
None of these found me walking for linear miles, until my face fell numb
to an imbecilic grin and freezing rain;
None of these had me ripped open, with blinking visions that swung from
the arcane to the clarity of icy blue awe;
None of these had me spew malison and worship in one hoarse breath,
in homage to the days I have been unseeing, and how I choose now to see.

But the no-eye, my all-eye, sees you, finally,
without needing to see you.
All-eye, wispy, orange, piercing earth's core, refracting satellites of grass and minerals.
The unfailing, no-witness all-eye intuits
–damp sheets, warm skin, foodstuffs, inked-up fingers;
–black sweater, delicate-double-skin, sofa-cushion, sketches;
–thumbnail, scars, tangerine peel, bread-wrapper, book-spines;
–chocolate, shared sugary laugh in shared air, salt, your mouth;
–lolling debate, pace, putter, sigh, yawn, every song of your body.

I see some things now, more things,
and yet I don't need to see anything.
You changed how I will live.
Your finger pointed to the moon,
and I close this, still in disbelief, and having wept in bliss.

BECAUSE IT WORKS LIKE WATER

My eyes watch stills of Alice – off-kilter beauty –
coltish, cloudless smile, and blonde; a solar bark and conscious sun.
My eyes report no longer to my hips; they report to my knees,
Which fall unsteady, and it is the first time that this report has ever been filed here.

Alice is a Mondrian.
Alice is Courbet when one could feel Courbet dying;
Caravaggio when far from God, when not.
Alice plays Titian on a Sunday,
Rolls a pretsigaret for an Escher-graph on Wednesday at billiards.
Alice is the rat-stencil tag on slumdump crumbling concrete.

In Alice's eyes dances the root of living,
and it circuits from toes to lips.
My eyes seep data to my knees.
These homo drop-down lights are making my teeth itch,
and the ceiling's wild with dots. I watch Alice eat carrot and peas.
Eum, he, aum, I understand now that I don't have to want to fuck every piece that's beautiful.
Only sometimes is it the right time to get my mouth loved by the art.