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Haunting this Garden

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Endosymbiosis

Trust me to
cross your morning skin like a solar flare's oily shadow
and know I have wanted to heat you
from the stomach outward ever since those old love
stories built me round the desire to live within,
woven nerve close, so that now I cannot rest until
my heart beats heavy inside your rib cage,
some furry, burrowed creature in fitful
hibernation which, yes, might be rearranging the tetris
tiling of your organs, pressing your lungs against your
spine until it claims that last gasp, but which promises to
leave you holey if you take it out, so, maybe
instead, when you finish clawing at the
hollowness of your pink pumpkin chest, hold me there,
tie me back in with your green ribbon, feed me the
plums and cereals of your breakfast, let me grow
into your clothes and spoon the spongy marrow
out from your bones for me to swallow and to take its
place as the wire that will hold you, articulated,
squatting, long after the rest of you has fallen to
the museum floor in wet, mossy clumps, leaving
behind only skeleton and metal, organized for the final
viewing, the last memory, of those who knew
us

April

April
rolls off my tongue,
 a fern
 fiddlehead
 un furling,
sways in lime grasses,
 pink patch
skies crack over
 forget- me-
 nots bloom
 under
 the dogwood's lichen licked bark,

April cracks open wide,
 edges eggshell thin
poppy-yellow yolk
 runs
 messy
 over
dates fed in handfuls to cautious crows
 carrying powder blue
 warmth
 under their
grease-gloss wings they
 fly
 off
 to chew cherries

April green grape

 p O p s

in my mouth,

 spitting out

 honeysuckle petals,

 look at the stems and watch

 the aphids, full of their

 daughters and

 granddaughters and

 great great great

 granddaughters,

march across into

 May



They say you cannot see color in the dark

Your sixth-grade camp crush is
belly to brine-wood on the dock.
You watch the sinew
of his child arm pulled
archery tight as he waves
his stale sunscreen hands in
minty bioluminescence.

This night is black and white cinema,
mute backdrop blind shadows—
sleeping bags
dry-rustling in clouds
of red
smelling cedar dust
cabin must
and then before the milk-
light comes:

the hot twang and
sting of adolescent-
flung rubber-bands
whizzing over leaf-litter
towards the tenderness of your leg;

the pink-scorch of
 Kool-Aid powder
dumped
 between brace-buckled teeth and
 called stardust
by giggling counselors;

 the lukewarm splash
of laughing raccoons
ankle-
shallow
in the kiddie-pool
 leather hands
 dancing in the chlorine;

the citrus-dipped
 bell honks of
 Canada geese
 cruising along
 the shore outside
 your cabin breathing
in the last drops
of dew-air;

and
on the last night
the air honey-thick
a half-assed science lesson
 about eyes
 rods and cones
 and light
 and
 as you catch
 the last smoky
songs of twilight
they tell you
you cannot see
 color
 in the
dark.

Sometimes Eelgrass Reminds Me of Snakes

cling to my scalp like
clumps of sea-bathed eelgrass on
rocky shores, dry to
first touch but

sponge-soaked when I work my fingers
inside the knot and
uncurl something
still living

in there, breathing
in salt air becoming
sheet-thin and bone-sharp like
the shells that used to

cut feet until
I carried and bled onto the tongue
of the water, lapping till
it stained my toes blue

and I scrambled
up the bank as fast as
I tried to drop when it was over
but when I try to turn

into namelessness
become
all the empty
all that space in the passenger seat and

all the still air around my face and when
I find a bare space
I see right there
ready for me to run

the flank of my
crayon along
ribs to reveal
there like a watermark on

every breath I take because
lie
in wait in every footprint
I have yet to make and

hide under the barnacled
rocks that my feet will overturn and
live under my skin,
ready to grow

green with my hair until
cling to my scalp like
clumps of beached eelgrass on
sunburnt shores



Herald,

Would you promise
her again:
to look after me (once her girl);
to look after the city,
the seaside town,
in its brick and mortar gloom?

Will you promise me,
if I go,
these little, difficult things:
to help the crows watch for fallen bagels;
to hold all the rain and seagull shit you can;
to keep the light on for us both?

I promise you this:
the night here does not fall
but for you to belch out your
six toothed grin. You've lit
your red letters in each
of my bedrooms.

With love,
Anna

Doomsday

McLaughlin says
when the Big One hits/ the Arb
will swallow/ all of campus//
Everything will go
down/hill after this//
Bad/ luck cannot be fought
off with hands/ words//
Maybe
I don't want to die/ a martyr//
Maybe
I don't want to live/ life to the fullest//
The people I sit next to in class don't/ act/ually want
to talk about that//

The papers say
COVID is on the rise again//
Sometimes
I think the disasters started
with you/ leaving//
Sometimes
I think you leav/ing is proof of
my own catastrophicness//
You won't come/ back
even when I fall ill//
I know that
one is true//
I say that one to/ psych-out the universe//

Scientists say
the melt/ing
arctic will re/lease new diseases//
This is not actually
the worst of it//
Some toxic gases are
invisible/ odorless//
Some sick/nesses cling
to your body
for as long as it breathes//
Sometimes
there is no cause of death//
The bad can die/ young, too//

The weather/man says
the flooding will only get worse//
In later years
it will hit
close/r to home//
Kirkland/
Costco will drown//
My parents will die
even/ if this does not happen//
My parents will find
I'll never make these
22 years/ worthwhile//
There is nothing in my heart/ besides fear//

Emma says I will get better but
My bad/ habits are
the ones I'm proudest of//
Being a bad/ driver
because I'm gay
will have consequences
someday//
I will feed someone
the brown/
ing orange/
I am afraid/
to eat//
I have a mean/
streak/
I don't
know
how to
br
eak//

I know
I k/now
I know
I
will
be
the
death/
of
thou/sands//

In which my shame is a haunted house

This must be the place—

Pears swinging low outside the windows
Fig wasps dying in threes on the sills

Trying to escape the buzz of heat—

Where you will find me
All torn fingernails

All grinding teeth in the night

All pee-in-a-cup dirty but
I've dumped sugar on the cranberries

You'll find gilded sheets on the walls

And the trashcan full of sidewalk plastic
I picked up with dusty fingers

This must be the place—

Hydrangeas bruised blue by my arm's arc
Walk lined with crushed china plates

Paint peeling under the windows—

Where you will find the words
I scrawled across the floorboards

The vows I crushed my toes into

The dust—it's mostly skin cells—
Left behind in the pen furrows

But you'll find the list I left by the door
And it will call for honey, chamomile,
Tissues, bandages,

365 sheets of colored construction paper
To make 365 birthday cards
For my friends

This must be the place
Where you'll find me
On my knees

Wet-chinned
Moaning
Before every mirror

Every
Skin cell
Simmering

But then you'll see me
In the bed
In the attic

Holding all the dust I have shed
Saying thank you
Thank you

This must be the place

