

## Just Between Us

We walked a twisted gravel ribbon  
In briny rain and around spindly trees  
Each marked with a drenched, pathetic knot of plastic  
Our hair will be matted obsidian and we'll carry in remnants of the spiritless sky  
But no one else truly makes a point to revel in a downpour's sanctity  
It remedies the harsh lines of buildings, blurring  
The landscape in dewy romanticism;  
It drowns soil and infuses air with petrichor when the clouds move on;  
It's insistent, monotonous pounding is punctured by nothing;  
When you could hardly see, smell, or hear  
You perhaps said anything you'd wanted to;  
Laughed or cried or screamed as much as you needed.  
Rid your self-preservation when the sky gets mercurial.  
Pathetic fallacy is for once a harbinger of grace.

These days I beg to know how you are  
And who you are now  
But pleas have turned to wonder lately  
I hope the ocean still  
Kisses your head softly.  
These days I pray we'll never meet again  
We weren't torn apart  
But interlocked fingers  
Remain cowardly as ever.  
These days I know I should've screamed for help  
For the both of us  
In my disgusting heart there festers a thousand reasons  
Why i did nothing  
But i know it's only because  
I was just a child.  
But you were too.  
And somehow that was everything.

Your mother carried you between her ribs  
Both carved and caged you with her bones  
And spindled black fleece to tie around your neck  
So tightly you would choke  
Until your airway crumbled  
and your valor fell with the hazily swimming lights of 'motherhood'  
Your childhood lies in torment  
And latching onto door frames while aged hands try to drag you out  
Making a trapping fist when it mattered most

So the pavement wouldn't know your blood  
Or the contours of a 'family's' carnage  
At seven.  
Your grandmother's bruises came from flights of stairs  
She threw herself down  
If anything runs here it's only blood and masochism.  
You tried to stop her  
She said you pushed her  
Then dripped ink until your tears ran burnt onyx  
She gave you a knife four times  
To mock you as a coward for kindness  
And told you to stab her each time  
At twelve.

These days I feel hatred  
For old women I never knew  
All I knew was that  
They hurt you.  
I'll scorn every witch hunt  
With the deepest vile tongue I can muster  
Except for this one in my mind.  
These days I drink lychee tea  
Out of plastic cups with heart-shaped stoppers  
And find sanctity under gazebos  
Resting under the soaked wood  
And hoping it won't give out  
And surrender me to the whims of summer rainfall.  
I never wish you were with me though  
You're a figment of my absolute worst intentions  
And that truth is brutal but so mellow.  
These days I also wish I could destroy them  
For what they did to you.

Your one stroke of saving grace  
Are your lucid dreams  
They can't bend you to their delusions  
When you walk through tarnished wildflower fields  
Even if only in the lurking gloaming  
Drenched in the perfume of magnolia bark  
Finding solace in a bracelet you'll leave out from your corroding grave  
The youngest who thinks she'll die first  
So you put double-edged meaning and future extrapolation  
In silver pendants

In the hopes that they'll find it and understand  
How much you wished for their love;  
Vague metaphorical references  
That can't be slashed like tongues;  
It bodes well for the bliss of abandonment  
When you're the one leaving  
Leave all your pain at the edge of fallen insomnia.

These days when the smoke clears in my dreams  
I sometimes think of you.  
We both had scarlet battle wounds back then  
And I'm still bleeding in your name in the aftermath.  
These days you cling onto me  
But I'll never regret you  
I can only feel that about myself  
Letting you slip and fall  
Into the darkest currents  
When i was on the cliffside  
Impassive, half-dead stare into the moon  
With the ghost of your palm  
Over my smooth fingertips.

My house isn't an sanctuary for you or me  
Not with a cracked kitchen window  
And mismatched bedroom door handles  
And a now-repaired, jagged hole in the wall beside a closet  
Two people who would cut each other  
With the silver of their wedding bands  
If they could somehow dig them up now;  
For someone who grovels for dregs of reasons  
To simply like someone else  
Explanations like these are pitifully horrid.  
How could i tell you that family  
Is an inconceivable privilege  
That we'd found in one another  
And I still couldn't help you escape?  
My carpeted floors and brick walls festered destruction  
So I couldn't be your safety  
No matter how much I cried.  
You would've been my sister  
If anyone at all loved us  
Besides one another.  
But misery breeds resentment  
Resentment forces space for silence.

Now I hate that I couldn't feel guilt  
But legacies always cut deeper.  
And I still hate that we were both lost causes  
With nowhere to run but our whims of getting older  
And dreams of digging up gnarled roots  
Of our willows' limber extremities.  
Every family we've ever had has fallen apart.