

Two Poems

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Unavailable

Saturday nights a year ago,
you opened your legs to strangers and their words
bloodletting to cure your feminine hysteria.

in the dark, you slowly learned that
there are two types of bruises
that can be left around your neck.

she tells you that there are echelons to pain
and empathy necessitates experience,
so you burn and burn and burn.

but from most angles now,
you are invisible in the after hours
of this recreation complex
and the neon of the exit sign
ripples in the dark water around you
like bioluminescent flames.

indole is found in both perfume and coal tar
and redolence is a matter of scarcity
so you submerge your body to dissolve your scent.

you are certain there is movement
in the bottom of the pool where your feet cannot touch
and there is no one to tell you that you are imagining this.

in the dark,
your eyes familiarize but will never adjust
and slowly, the night, too,
can make blood look like water.

Purity and Polarity

I

the humming of the refrigerator hollows out
the space between the last of your words
that have been absorbed by the bedroom.

unkindly preserved between the mirror and electric currents,
you are a creature paled and washed down
by the dense velvet of rain clouds and small traumas.

your last guest is lemon rind,
bitter and fragrant,
a thing you cannot stomach
unless she is diluted with sugar and butter.

you pause before closing the door,
familiarizing yourself with the equipoise of your own presence again
and conclude that letting others leave with your loneliness in their purse
is theft.

a siren wails in the city's distant streets
(she would wonder whether it is rushing to or from disaster)
but you mourn all the same.

2

at dusk,

untuck me from your cellar
and core me with the unripe fruit in your sink.

my skin is maroon wax
like chrysanthemum petals
unfurling rhythmically from under
your copper thumb and the knife.
half of me is in your hand,

seedless gut exposed,
as you tell her
there are leftovers in the fridge for tomorrow.

3

hunger dissolves the butterflies
in my stomach and my tongue
curls over the soft wings and waxy bodies
of their little corpses.
i chew what has been swallowed.
i have eaten worse than this.