

**burial no. 1**

brother, this land is fine

dust the Creators brushed off  
their tables and saws.

my shovel resents this burial.  
it tells me this dirt tastes green,  
sickly, unnatural.

you are no longer here.  
i am glad,  
but i need to grieve.

your right arm carried your dances;  
it mocked the Space meant to contain  
the giving god.

your two eyes, now judgment-blank,  
would be easy to eat. i would wash them  
down the gullet, wine-slick.

your handsome face, with the forehead  
i kissed when we were young  
and you adored me: i love you,  
but one of us had to die.

i grab the spent shovel,  
the bag with the rest of you.

red doves fly full-speed  
into your grave to join you.  
their necks break in time with my every step.

**hide the body**

brother, brother

you are too heavy to carry.

i drag you two feet  
to the tomb and break sweat.

out in cali some guy  
cut up his god

mother nasty bastard

but a smart one.  
gods cannot be created

or destroyed. i'll divide

you into collectible relics. i'll toss

your dick to the pigs.  
they eat anything

ain't any more of you

gettin birthed in this place.

**return to self**

upon arrival in this arid stomach,

i got a body  
made from caterpillar underbellies.

, my reflection in a puddle of gastric acid:

so fuzzy and fragile, like how i saw  
the world when loss was limited to broken cups.

my skin is my own again: no earth has ever touched it.

**I went to the woman with sheep for eyes**

as she whipped the coast and fog  
into a French meringue for her divination.

Traffic lights stipple the horizon like pinpricks,  
blooded vials for testing.

She teaches me the secret word Chemistry and Curses conceived.

I pick up one of the minuscule figs we walk on.

She gnashes her woolen teeth  
to suggest my consumption of this shriveled fruit  
we kill with decisions.

Her fingers plunge into the spongy meringue,  
and begin to knead what prophecy she has summoned  
with egg whites and sugar.

She retrieves from its core:  
hair from a baby's doll;  
a glass flute with honey keys;  
a sack of five pearl bullets.

Fog slithers from her fingers, and forms  
a skull over the hairs;  
a jester's hat hung on the flute;  
conjoined snakes to purse the bullets.

She asks if the trees are still alive;  
I hesitate, then say yes. The sheep  
smile, she smiles, and thanks me  
for the lie.

## **In the Talking Monsoon**

vocal cords rain from the woolen smog.

*once, on earth, i forgot how to talk.  
for forty days, i coalesced  
with metal, blood, and a sting.*

a set of cords whaps onto my face.  
they wriggle like earthworms  
and force an entry through  
my gated jaw. they lock  
into my throat.

*when i broke my silence, it was late.  
midnight peace was a pane of glass  
over my mother as she slept.  
i woke her, and told her  
i tried to die. i shattered  
the illusion of life.*

all these voices landing everywhere,  
with no throat to house them.  
they writhe in drowned soil.

i have the power to choose  
my first words here.  
i could voice what despair  
it is to find this life after death.

**I am trying to remember a word I knew on Earth**

it meant the abcess/absence of obstacles  
in the murky channel  
which separates the self from

*(pick yr virtue)*

*brain.*

I'd say it, and mush slipped  
from the skull like a squid  
through loose fingers.  
It meant the absence of need.

*body.*

When said, I stayed the exact same while  
becoming sacred, like our world in the moment  
I met you. It meant hope was the only choice.

*gasoline.*

I'd say it and the air hung around long enough to have a thought. It  
meant our hurry was too late, our shit was fucked.

## **The Ache**

The ivy in my apartment has worked  
its way inside through the blisters on my feet.  
Childhood nausea lives next to the heart.

I open my mouth and Death makes sure I see Her  
at home in the background. My mother the gardener  
is well and asleep in my home-house—

my grief for her eventual end presses in my eyes  
tonight. It's subconscious; I pull a woman out  
of the shadows in weeks. I must ask what it means to lose

the mother I have before myself. I am sick  
with torturing myself. Show the possibility,  
deny the work. I kneel at the toilet with fuzzy legs

and recognize death might not feel that different.  
We are here to learn how to die in peace.

## **Cathedral in Horizon**

The air turns, tight swirls  
around your steep spires.  
I, the pagan, sing adorations.

Cathedral, you're closer to god  
than I give you credit for. The thieves  
who shelter in your belly,

they've done us the same harm.  
When I was twelve, they dissected me  
alive on a schoolhouse desk.

They pulled my appendix, then strands  
of ink, then a meaty, green, fist-sized thing.  
Miniature Jesus hopped off the cross

by the clock. He swallowed the Green  
whole like a starved boa. One thief  
stitched me up (the appendix was returned)

while the others ate ground beef raw,  
and spilled their beer. Cathedral,  
I have thought of climbing you

to catch a view. Has the Green grown  
like me these fourteen years?  
Did it kill cheap Jesus? If it's dead,

I would be too. Cathedie, do you think  
about death the way I do? How would we  
decide who would jump from whom?



## Portrait of a Woman in Enlightenment Swamp

The Painter has me pose nude on the rock.  
I lie on my belly, and stare at the moorhens  
who gossip from the shore.  
A mud-imp titters by my eyes,  
and braids them shut with the lashes.  
The humid marsh turns darkness to sleep.

When I awake, the Painter is eating gooseberries  
and horseflies. She calls out to me to swim back  
through the Murk. I shake tiny Mysteries off my skin,  
and take my clothes from the willow's arms.  
I join the Painter by her canvas.

A limestone woman stands in a cracked  
swampbed, the Mysteries dried up.  
She is a woman. Uneven breasts and a face chiseled  
by long days. I see my scar above her left eye.

The Painter puts her hand on my shoulder blade.  
"You've seen her before, haven't you?" she asks.  
I tell her yes, I had a dream once. All the ocean  
was my skirt. A woman floated above the surface  
and told me real secrets. I awoke in a garden  
sobbing; I felt purpose's paw tickling my chest.

## tgirl

To whoever I wish I could tell right now:

Imprisoned in a jewel for most my life, I've been cramped:  
all the shallow ceilings and skinny hallways.

The sun can hit it from a certain angle, and on the wall, soft red shade  
catches the eye.

One girl remembers a glow in my cheeks as I stood  
in a tan skirt with a sky-blue striped shirt. She  
called me beautiful.

Shame is the body's betrayal.

I wanted to be a girl when I was a child. It could be a  
coincidence, or maybe I always knew.

When I tried to kill myself,  
it was to deny truth.

But now, I believe in the future. I sit in an  
all-white limbo and breathe cold static.

Freedom from this ruby has a cost; I'm in love, and I could lose her.

I don't want to make myself a guilty woman,  
but I am a woman.

Sorry mom, it's me.

I beg you, have a second daughter.

It's a good word. *Daughter,*

*daughter,*

*daughter.*

See? Now, there's a queen of the night where our words fell. She is out here  
letting all of herself show.