



CHORA 0

2016

This zine is comprised of poems written from 2011 to 2013 (all before my transition). Most could use work, but I felt the urge to spill them out onto the riverbed and swim away.

Insect

Crawling where wall meets ceiling:
your sibling from the windowpane shone
like a black seed spotted with red.
If I crushed you, would you turn
into cochineal, once-white braids churning
in a bucket of silken entrails?

(When I fled the poem it remained, hovering
just behind, papered over, luminous:
The first time I nearly wept. And after that

Blanket

Gray skin covers the fused body,
pockmarks resolving themselves
as floral print. Under it, pressure
which says, this is my flesh, that
is your flesh, separable finally
not by any act of the mind
but through cruel proprioception,
arriving with the dawn by which
our skin was flensed.

Waking with a dead limb
doesn't frighten you anymore.
Even if the blood refused
to flow again, if the limb
withered and was cut—
at least some nights
you'd forget what went missing,
or dream how, like a starfish,
you had grown it back.

I reach out for you

in the shape of a laptop

light stains my hands and upper body

At the moment the rain stops there are still
drops falling but no more will

follow — they cling to the red maple,
seep into the soil, unattended

The silence does not break easily
I open my window to moist air

Gutters burbling
lines of glistening beads

Outside a woman describes a series of ex-
lovers, each more pitiful than the last

Somewhere someone I do not know
is writing the same poem

Winter was over before

We knew it. The groundhog is wrong
Sixty-one percent of the time.
Here in this light-filled room,
Forecasts could not predict
A kiss, a failed liaison.
I had forgotten — days.
Days press on. Still the body knows
It is spring. The eyes cannot
Stop tearing. My skin
Inflamed with pollen. Now
This fresh-mown grass is trying to
Impregnate me. Broadcast its seed
Along the wind. When I lay down
In its field for a time unmarked
With shadow, I felt it seethe
Beneath me, struggling to rise.
Where I crushed it, it is growing
Into my body, slowly.
Red marks on my hands,
Bumps on my knees.

Jokkmokk

Open your eyes: let the forest darkness
rasp across them, the low gray fog
spread its dim line, cutting off the trees
at their roots, occulting the river,
the shapes of islands. . . North
of the Arctic Circle, summer light
long gone, heavy black curtains
folded unused in the hotel room.

Night fell who knew how long ago.
We could not tell if the earth
stayed pinned on its axis.
In a subterranean place,
within a dream,
my body vivisected itself
splaying outward like a flower.

Cold Out Tonight

There can be no excuse for you
however young, however beloved.
Oh, you are graceless; you elbow
him in the head with each slightest
shifting of your slight body, making
restless orbits like a distant moon.
Prone to tremors as if of remorse.

Don't hold the night
responsible. It is not
what kills them. It is not
why blood turns sluggish and dark
in the soft hollows under the eyes.

The crisis is always all around and just
at bay. Come to bed, love. Cold out tonight.

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