

Suburban Birch

Light is golden and sinking into our skin. Most days,
The streets don't give way under my feet.

*But this moment feels like it was
melting for us.*

In this reserve next to the M5,
A birch has swayed its last.
When a tree kneels in suburbia,
They collect its remains only when notified.
Tomorrow, when the neighbours scout
For the runaway pomeranian,
They will report this enamelled demise.

For now, the birch is aflame,
And you have yet to reach me like this.
In swirling blue, you paint a bin chicken.
They are sacred on another soil.
Suddenly, you are my slanted sun—
What fills my breathless, empty hands with
"I want."

We do not know what we are on most days,
But we know what burning feels like—
Stuck in foreign asphalt with laces of bark by our feet,
The streets won't spark because they are still too wet.

*Yet there is this ruinous
burning.*

the heart remembers

I'm thinking about destiny
again, my
back in sciatic pain
slouched over my white desk
there has barely been poetry this *weak*

Mid scroll, i see a woman on the hospital bed,
Twitter says: she received a 19-year-olds'
heart in a transplant. She loved meat before
but couldn't stand it after. The boy whose heart
was now in her, was vegetarian.

My heart remembers too,
the first time my mother
turned to the light
her eyes full of water
 asking me
what she did wrong to make me this way

The first time I found how
they made us, and put it to practise
how it didn't feel quite right.

I remember standing to a rising tide
 at 7. I didn't want to be washed away, just feel invincible.

I remember how I asked for this.
 how often, I asked for this.
this boy, his hand on my thigh, his heart in my hand.
 I remember, I remember now, falling at my father's feet.
Preparing in Delhi. preparing in Mumbai, preparing for Melbourne,
falling. falling in love falling out. Coming out.

I remember, red flesh, eyes full of tears,
mine, my mother's, my lovers', mine,
my father's fist, my mother's flesh, my lover's betrayal,
I remember. my doctor's hand, how he stitched me up, I remember,
I remember. I remember.

I am sky bound, not in the way that
I am dying, but because I am dying anyway,
 I must reach these heights
before

Sweet Mortality

And suddenly the world stops
In the kitchen, hands full of dish soap
Destiny-making often feels like *this*,
Visions of greatness slipping between chores
What makes you breaks into you first

I like to think my father finally saw it
This hunger to claw myself out of tin roofs to tinsel towns

Ringed with destiny larger than myth,

Paying the price, but never playing the part,
This is for the mortals they tell me—
You make it eventually,

But what if I am divine now,
And *only* now?

This body is breaking,
Muscles unspooling and
synapses gathering wool.
My father saw it first—
When his father hunched over
Asked him who he was
And died not knowing his name

My name is Parth, I remember it, still.
I am only forgetting
what ambition feels like
The voice in my head that told me to reach
It is slipping like the dishes
in soap. I catch it,
The dish, the voice.
It is static, this night and I have moved here to
Make
 something.
Despite.

Young One.

Picture a grave like water,
The womb my first site of crime—
You could have been my brother,
But now you're just a wound in my mind.

Breath. Death.
One exists. The other cannot.

A twist of the tongue is an elegy in the making,
I took something away when I didn't know
What it meant to be taking.

I first learnt the word: 'Murder'
When I was chanting the word:
'Mother.'

Mother. Mother.
Mother?

Murder. Murder.
Murder. Murder.

To be a survivor and weapon
Is an incredible wound to bear.

I am being made so brave.
I am teaching the body that bears guilt,
To learn pride. I am learning
To apologise to myself.

I am, when you could have been.

Run, Anita

You thought it was transformation—
When this man swirled
Your name around his mouth,
And spat out spite.
Anita, you have loved men
Like creatures you feed,
So they don't tear you apart.
They have looked at us like
They hold a knife—pointedly,
With the intent to eviscerate.

I wish I found you before
My father's fist found your

Flesh and this infinite midnight
Found your eyes.

All these men—with their
Waning moon hearts,
And stars on their shoulder
Will carry you to your grave.

It's never too late,
To run, Anita.

Run, dishevelled curls,
Wounded body.

Run, home burning and
Heavy bones. Run where
These hands marinated in myths
Don't reach you anymore and
Where their knives don't melt your name.
Run, tiger blood, barbed
Wire tongue, and dead child.
Run to the yawning edge
Past your father's garden,
To the skies over your brothers' pride,
And the field past your husbands' carnage.

Anita run, till your grief
Starts to taste like thirst,
And where you can quench it without questions.
Leash this world, let it follow you for a change,
Watch the night turn to the day,
Run, your sun will find you someday.

Chimera Makes Hipster Coffee

In dreams, I am of divine stock
Half man, all myth
I wake, head of serpent first,
Hissing in want and belly churns
The dawning wasted in foetid breath

Blades whirr and blunt against the day
I turn scales—weigh my injustice
and then see the world
This isn't the day for pity,
Fill your cup, tamp and turn.

Through steam, my lion head rears
Suddenly, the fire-breathing halts
Pour perfect, still hot—this fantasy,
It can be moulded—I think,
Till my many eyes focus

Bile stirs, in mirrors, I see more man than myth,
and isn't that a tragedy?

august

i have been dreaming,

and in the last dream, i forgive her
but never you. there is this
dance i have learnt on the bridge
between having and having to lose
and i never wanted to know how—
falling feels, but it feels like remembering.

it takes an amethyst blade. august.
i utter an absurd litany, august.
it gives me an omen, with sinew around it—august.

i know grief now, but not yet how to grow around it.
down by the riverbank, i invent
hope in the evidence of all that's happened.
isn't it rousing how hyacinth mimics water
but kills every creature under it?
how many cadavers will i need to kiss
before i am no longer tainted by their ruin?

i imagine, this is when i let the sand
out of my chest. i imagine this is what it means
to breach.

Silk, Soil, Star.

The town wears ivory, bows in your garden,
Knees to where your heart froze in your garden.

The site of loss becomes a shrine,
What made you god? Faith sowed in your garden.

In freckles and fruit we're abundant,
A flower of your name still grows in your garden.

Mouthfuls of jamuns, their indelible purple—
We feast and forget all our woes in your garden.

Ajoba, your blood and bones are strong,
We still tend to every red rose in your garden.