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Clarity

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Abstract

“Clarity” expresses the connectivity of a lifetime’s events and the human inability to direct lives.

Keywords

poems, abuse

Disciplines

Creative Writing | Poetry

Clarity

All week long, I have been mourning
the old windows from the house's antique integrity.
My father segregates bubbled glass
from withered siding, his fingers still miracles
in sunlight and splinters, fixing my mother's house.
Each hammer-chord splits me;
before, the metronome of metal on roof
and wall was the sound of my father's success,
the way he could transform a moldering foundation,
encase it in chrysalitic tarp, rebirth it
with wooden floors and new paint.

Now I hear the beats and see skeletal hands.
Every nail my father forces into the boards
is a scratch on my arm. How much can a body
survive before it breaks? How long until
cacophony overruns the mind and cracks it?
From the beginning, all I wanted to be was someone
other than the crumbling statue of my mother, ten years ago,
staring everlong out the kitchen glass and straining
to hear my father's truck tires on the broken oyster-shell driveway.

I am haunted by men. The window panes,
new and clear, reflect with eerie perfection
the body I have become, shrouded and waiting
in a courthouse, waiting for the scent of love
and fear mingled on my lover's neck to draw me
away from the witness stand, so that I never have to say
yes, he hit me as I speak to the gloss on the attorney's bench,
in which I can see, reflected, the lover who built me
into nothingness, so like my father, his ghost-knuckles
purpled and cracking above his polished shoes.

At home, my father scratches his beard
and installs the next window. My mother pours
cold tea into green glasses and they sit
in an accusing silence in the heat.
How long until he forgives himself for sipping
my youth away in slender brown bottles,
for making me this kind of woman?
From the beginning, all he has wanted is the universe
to explain itself to him. But hearing its silence,
he leaves the cup, emptied, on the table,
for my mother to wash.