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Disorganized Speech

Pamela J. Thompson

Gettysburg College, thompa01@alumni.gettysburg.edu

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Disorganized Speech

Author Bio

Ela Thompson is a senior at Gettysburg College. They are an English major with a writing concentration, a Classics minor, and a WGS minor.

Disorganized Speech

Ela Thompson

The white birch,
 bare at the end of fall,
 stretches over raw umber grains.
Black eyes peak out between its papered bark.

A Wet Moon hanging in darkness
 like the smooth, curved horns of a bull.
 The night fog billowing up like kicked dust.
With a blank face, you insisted the moon was the wide grin of a cat.

In the rain, you said, the lightning spoke in quiet
 brain whispers, connecting you to earth.
 We saw a strix owl, the omen of death, perched in the wide oak
staring at us with perfect, round, lightless eyes; you called him your black-
 eyed angel.

In the early morning at White Pond, the bullfrogs sung
 in deep throaty chords. You lectured them on the nature of god.
 We were lonely together, on the porch, sitting on damp cushions
as mosquitoes bit at scalp and hand and foot, causing our flesh to swell.

There were figures, I'm sure you saw,
 dancing their own tempoed ghostly walks
 through the white veil over the mirror.
The dead could be trapped there, between glass and stare back.

Fear lodged in our brains, an unwelcomed guest.
 It was polite not to talk about it. Only you spoke
with a god tongue, only you spoke like you knew.
 You drew your angel, again and again, as if he were made of ripples,
with so many lines and shaky hands.

You said the white tree was a hand,
and hands were more mouth than mouths were,
your gesture cut short by a look
and a whisper at the dinner table.

I wish you had advice for me, Uncle of mine,
but prophecy swirls in your head, disordered.
Everything resonates in colors and voices unseen.
Instead, spin me a memoir of a life that didn't happen;
translate into words the things the moon showed to you.