

pious suppliant

should i let myself take root, burrow
 deeper in the earth
 deeper, deeper
sprout and bud, blossom face-first toward the sun
i may lose myself completely

only know her shine and warmth, tiny
 servant to the sky
 basking, basking
til i dry, whither, feet stuck in the mud
become nothing but fresh rot

it is not the sky that calls me, but the
 urge to disappear
 moving, moving
mold and grow, fear the blazing unknown
yet her offer tastes so tempting

without her i may be nothing, aimless
 on my lonely path
 yearning, yearning
her rays kiss me, for once i feel alive
end with more than just a whimper

sun is bright and warm and meddling, charming
 me to meet my death
 pretty, pretty
petals bloom, i devote myself to light
fragile corpse to be devoured

Pantoum for Grandma

On a stool at the counter, she would teach me her ways
Once you perfect the method you will create your own
Wrinkled fingers pinch and measure, delicate voice hums
Your taste buds should be your ultimate guide

I perfected the method and then created my own
Forgetting over time the precise way she would season
Letting my tastes buds be my ultimate guide
Using the same herbs she'd hang to dry with twine

Thinking about the ways she might manipulate flavor
Always with a long-stemmed glass of red wine nearby
Using tools reminiscent of the ones she would use
Recalling folk tales she recited while she worked

Having had one too many glasses of red wine
Buying the same cheap brands from her stash
Dreaming of fae she conjured while she stirred
Scarred fingers pinch and measure while I hum

dwelling

beams hold steady my tired form, stretching deep into the earth. foundation akin to vestigial gutrot, groaning a loud wooden yawn as it shifts in the quiet dark. i always love the way you glance over your book and observe the space, gasping softly in alarm. *it's just the house settling*, you mutter to yourself. but i can see that you are never so sure. as you peek over your shoulder and down the dark stretch of hallway, i like to imagine you can sense my presence shielding you. adoring you.

lines carved into paint by sharpened graphite indicate more than a decade of your life within me. beneath several layers of paint, the obscured marks are etched permanently, tattooing the soul of me. i remember fondly each year that brought new growth. i, too, grew with the addition of a patio; with the excruciating but blissful gutting of superfluous walls to make way for larger spaces. my heart, too, has grown larger from you. fuller of you.

footsteps patter softly from years past, of your long-dead parents and myriad house pets. echoing whispers of the history of you. of before you. drops of blood and smudges of sweat are felt in traces on each surface of me. seeped into the wood and linoleum, into my bones. our detritus coalesces into an altar of you. how empty i will become once you join the others and die. how my beams and foundation will creek and rot at the loss of you.

Seasonal affective homesickness

I simply cannot adjust
to a dark, cloudy winter
without snow

he has a hundred cat toys but prefers trash

i.

green metal tamper-evident band
from a bottle of soju that was
flick flick flicked off its cap
by a thumb and forefinger
much stronger than mine.

ii.

tiny plastic appetizer skewers
in the shapes of neon colored swords
which somehow found their way
into every crease and crevice
of this house last friendsgiving.

iii.

black and brown hair ties
stretched beyond their capacity
one strong twist away
from snapping.

iv.

ill-fitting seafoam green
spider ring
from a multipack
of halloween trinkets.

v.

plastic purple and white
straws from many delivered
cups of iced coffee.

vi.

used q-tips
pulled from the bin
in the bathroom.
disgusting.

every corner of this house reminds me of you

i want to burn it to the fucking ground
lay waste and start anew in a different city
the window spider makes
for a terrible conversationalist but i do my best
the weather is slowly warming and soon i will need
to open the window wider and disturb her web

i keep putting it off
a fly has found its way inside no matter how hard
i try i cannot catch it to ferry onto her web how
disappointed she must feel to watch me blunder
and hop and grasp the air outwitted by an insect my
four limbs are no match for her eight

as my grandmother would say:
tá brón orm—the sadness is on me i do not merely feel
sad inside but i am crushed weighted down laid flat
against the linoleum gasping for the same air i
grab at in desperate fistfuls blundering aching
with a sad so deep i will surely drown incapable
of catching of holding of sustaining

it is a wonder
how this corporeal bag can feel so heavy and so empty
all at once a wonder this bag wakes in the morning makes
coffee eats food and doesn't simply stay in a fetal
position on the bedroom floor and die in that spot
where you bled open-mouthed in that spot where i knew
that day would be your last

another poem about grief
how blasé