

The Recreation of Night

TAMARA FULCHER

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Contents

O	9
Zeroed	13
Ceremonial	14
Ms Spring	15
Precious	16
<i>Security</i>	17
<i>(there is always choice</i>	18
Digress	20
With thanks for Maxine Kumin	21
Face	22
Choirsinger	24
Mouth	26
After the Flood	27
Light Pollution	28
Of Gay Adultery	29
A Primitive Truth	30
Filling	31
Sarah Said, I Let You Down	32
Small Irritations While Film-Watching I	33
Small Irritations While Film-Watching II	34
Small Irritations While Film-Watching III	35
<i>oh man, and I think</i>	36
On Death	37
I Don't Know Why	38
<i>you say you do not know</i>	39
She is His Fantasy as He is Hers	40
Man	42
Blinded	43
Climax	44
firelit	45
EWCM	46

<i>where are a butterfly's bones</i>	47
Adult'ress	48
A Dream of a Gun at the Temple of a Child	50
Of Suicide, Compelled	51
Cataract	52
Child, Watched	54
Nostalgia Gives Me Tumours	55
Pink	57
<i>should not have said</i>	61
The Influx of Poles	62
Asleep on the Sofa at Granddad's House	64
Baby	66
Love, being underemployed (I)	67
Love, being underemployed (II)	68
Love, being underemployed (III)	69
Night, Whoring (I)	70
Night, Whoring (II)	71
Night, Whoring (III)	72
No Meet Today	73
<i>Her daughter died on December 15</i>	74
Ex	75
Orbis	77
In Passing	79
Photograph of Anne Sexton	80
Autumnal	82
Game	83
Mother, Come Down	84
Two Ugly Carpet Fitters	86

For Beau
sine qua non

O

He wants to root himself in my earth.

His root is pale, opaque,
the blind searching for the invisible
and for the nourishment of years
of death, decay;
searching through all my years, my earth,
their earth, their ashes, all their dust.
It seeks the water sprung
limed and rock-filtered from the core,
my core, the core of me.
We are indivisible, by his wish,
as air from the earth it smothers,
water from the earth it drowns.
We are one and together, we are one
in two, we are organic, we eat
each other.
Day, night passes, we grow into
pieces of ourselves, falling off
ourselves, our skin sheds, it is all
our earth, his earth, mine.

He wants to root himself in my earth.

His tongue is his eyes is his hand
and white in the way of paper,
still seeking, always, a flick
(err) of life in the woods, in the dark,
like a match lit and extinguished,
like the yurl of the fox

hunting and hiding.
I am post. I stand for
piss and acid air and knives
to scrawl over me. He wants
part of it, the flesh part,
the cut earth where
there is standing water,
the third part of it. He is opposite
in sense and physicality, and
in constellations. We look down,
his root is watching and it knows
it needs earth. Any earth. Warm
earth. My earth. My earth is
his dust.

He wants to root himself in my earth.

It continues. Pale and agape
mouth dry under our silence
and the watch of the owl who
mutters. The water is black
and bitter and grains float in it like
clots of mud, or blood, black and
sweet to swallow. The root has to hide.
It scours and ploughs a furrow in my skin,
my fur, as if it should have fur.
It has none. It has nothing but blood,
its face is blooded. At night I hear
the suckling cubs and the beak of the owl
tearing blood out of flesh and swallowing

bones like white splinters of wood.
It all passes through me
as earth through a worm, waste,
gestated and now fertile, now slick
with swallowed water.
What comes out of us is excrement
with a wet skin of skin, it is now earth,
it is ashes with the fire still inside,
white, it is the dust that circles
in the circling air, uplifted
into air, air to catch our eyes.

He has rooted himself in my earth.

(It is over. I faked it. The skin
the death
the water
it runs in, fills the hollow of me, runs away.)

There is no air.
Ashes are grey and among them are
broken things.
Earth is a circle
hollow and solid.
The owl dies too
the fox makes milk
white turns to black
with the small and sudden coming
of ink.

Air can turn to song
when he is inside

we grow
vines
in one another's hair.

ZEROED

I cannot quite believe it. Have just realised
the implication of your asserted statistics
and that they render me one unmatched half
for the rest of my living life.

Alone in a ball of utter squillions –
folk and molecules and pieces of air –
I will soon find a new inability to breathe
a sweet habit of looking at my toes
and a total corporeal dryness
that will never be dampened out.

You have are not divine but have divined
the road of my future,
the bend of its curve,
the up and away of my final fall.

CEREMONIAL

We begin at eight p.m., precisely, because between then and quarter past we expect the small offering from (always) a woman, wearing white or wearing blue with (we know it, always) red inside, pushing her wood on silver wheels before her with, perhaps, a shawl, wool, over what she wears. We seat ourselves upon the floor (no chairs but his) chewing cake we brought, which was refused, our elbows on our knees, and after her the door remains closed. The music is already playing, just loud enough to hear cadence though not words, the way (he says) he likes it. Then he comes. He wears a nightgown, dark though not quite black, and brings a bell. The threads of his hair shake as he nods and he says, 'You know, my best years by far were playing under Louis XVI,'

and we agree. Then he reties his waist so tight it is beyond accommodating the inhalation of air, surely, and asks, 'Have we had sufficient?' Throws his crown behind him, opens up himself so we can see the purple of his mouth, his throat, and swallows. Mother reaches to his cheek and smiles; he rings at her, shows his teeth and turns.

I clear the plates and check for crumbs. He does not appreciate remains, and has not eaten since a slice of seeded cake, which left atoms of itself between the clean ridges of his gums. It had not actually been brought for him, and on that nightwe had already wrapped the knives, and left.

Ms SPRING

. . . your face looks fine.”

(and amazing
considering you’ve fed it for fifty-two years
on unfine white wine

so

I guess it must be genetic
and how greedily I want it

looking too long at your
(descended from Hungarian aristocracy)
silken nose
(maintaining their right to
anti-semitism)

wanting to touch it
wishing I had the blood
to take my drink)

PRECIOUS

Dressing yourself, you have found leopard-print tights can be made to match a tiger-print top and ruby slippers, absolutely flat; that you like yourself in denim only if it has spurious stitching on the sleeves and something odd about the collar, preferably something neon pink; that you prefer to buy rings, laces and chains yourself, others tending to base their choice on numbers of digits, price. Down the road is your boyfriend, not three hundred yards. You know that if you leave at 3 the navvies on the tarmac will be packing up and looking for something live; that if you wait until 5 all the sad fathers of all the angry kids will be bringing out the dead – racks of lamb, chickens separated from their feet – and looking for something, anything with warm blood; that if you leave at 8 the car headlights coming on will shine right through you, making your legs appear white, your shoulders wide, your hair a buzzing halo of red – scarlet, actually, because such a colour can be made to work, any time, any place, in the right hands – and the drivers, all of them as if processing, looking. So: some choices. It's a short walk but you have all sorts of jewels to hang from yourself and you do it slow without stupid, almost a dance. It's only when you get to his house that his door opens and the dark hurries in behind you, before you've even seen it. Something he once told you: that a survey of 700,000 plus proved the no.1 point of male affection is for the waist-hip ratio. That, he said, is science. Just in case, you wear a plastic belt, though because you prefer the theory of colours, display, you wear it amber, because amber means Stop – No, Get Ready To Go.