

I Won't Leave Quietly

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## *Grave*

“Me Too” cast a spotlight  
On all the grave sins perpetrated,  
Vulnerable women castigated for  
The wrong clothes  
The wrong time  
Daring to dream she’d be fine, walking solo  
Out of mind, out of sight,  
Female lives  
Blindsided by hateful crimes

## *I Won't Leave Quietly*

I have a headache, a heart ache, a brain fade; thoughts glide like begonia petals as I slap barefoot through corridors,

Swathed in phantom folds, no one knows the shrieking missteps which led to this implode.

A cataclysm flowers electric strobes, nowhere to hide from strip lights, heart lines bloom mandalas of neurosis, muted diagnosis,

Please! One kiss!

I won't leave quietly.

*i didn't try*

Can hear the bubbles crackling, the clock ticking

Veins are threaded under the olive,

I could unpick them like a corporeal tapestry

Skipping ropes to swing on

Red don't circle no more

The computer is humming, drowning out the heartbeat

"Go ON, do it!" say the voices grinning.

## *Skin Shed*

You think you know me, got me all sewn up, with one look at kinked hair and a shade darker,

Asana queen, dancer turned yogi,

Micro-aggression assumes athleticism, not wrong, but what of the poetry?

What of the loss, the appreciation of stone masonry, the cost

of code switching and ditching persona after persona, skins shed during corona,

No longer squeezing into boxes that fox my true identity which is human and hurting,  
heart-driven and certain

We all bleed the same, but your prejudices remain.

## *Honey*

The time has passed for you to call me honey, or babe.

Thanks heavens at last, I won't be contained by sweet notions from your lips.

I've found a deep swell of nectar called self-esteem and you can only dream  
of what I might achieve.

## *Sepia*

The cracks appear, thoughts fracture a weariness with life itself.

The point, the purpose an old soul heavy with dust and knowing,  
her eyes never showing the opaque spaces behind closed eyes.

A terrifying blankness, an echo chamber of past lives,

each a concentric circle on a lake,

never waking to anima

instead floating somnambula

through one sepia scene

to the next.



## *No Rest*

I fold deeply, heretic like a supplicant in the hollow of my chest, but there is no rest only  
recollections regurgitating dreadful churning of innards

winnow heart scissored by grief

No relief other than cravings carved on vellum, crenelated fortress with crown

A vale of tears but if I stripped down my pretence and fears

would the universe know me?

## *Origami*

Flutter, float paper cut

Stings the deepest, deceptive

Parchment presses sleep away

You with your deft hands, practiced,

Tarnished, hackneyed

Make the bile rise

Here's the truth unvarnished:

My heart folds away.

Go play with the other girls

## *Reduce*

Bone thin, I cling to tapes and treadmills, an apple a day keeps the chaos away.

Porous, brittle, I reduce until I could slip inside a matchbox.

At what cost this self-willed disintegration?

I should rise like Circe set incendiary the voices that will me to hollowness.

Callow, trite lay fallow inertia,

I bite not food but words.

## *Shape*

Maybe the shape you crave is a confection of procedures and angles that I'm unwilling to kowtow to.

Or bow down to, bent out of shape orthodoxy dictated by pixels on a screen.

Too keen

To meld my appetite to true nourishment which comes from books, good food,

Not you.

## *Violin*

No Cello could do this damage.

An Oboe not fit for purpose.

But what is this force of quaver meets bone?

Hollow hollow wood

Intercostal

You should choose your weapon wisely

Incise a violin in my ribs

I'll bleed notes in the Mid-section

## *Out of Place*

So many boxes they stuff you in, but my nature is to evade, always been out of place, mixed race amongst other grey areas,

Why the distaste for non-conforming?

I'm no longer mourning being out of the rat race, mistakes are my own,

like a Rubix Cube, identity twists and turns incarnating to complex combinations,

not fixated or stuck but selves mutate, I make my own luck.

No crowds to follow, the path is my own, shallow with footprints of those less travelled, stasis unravels and I

Unspool gloriously into myself.

## *Raven*

Raven flails,

Indigo spent,

Ebony crush of feathers.

She bites my finger in fright,

Never fought as hard to save

A wild urchin crone,

Sinking in muddy waters,

Wretched moan.

## *Typewriter*

Twin-set anachronism, clacking blank time away

Truth is, she's bored.

This job anathema to the hordes

Imagines *Pretty Polly* nylons chained to the typewriter

Vermouth

Liquid truth

Ribbon ends.



## *Marionette*

Etched into being, unique to speak in a curious cadence latent in me, though beleaguered with doubt and low self-esteem.

She sees her dream creation, idiosyncratic manifestation,

I prance like a marionette to her tune, a lute heart quickens, soul shriven, I gasp through space in an artist's schism, anachronism of her will.

## *Spur*

Like Boudica my sorrows are a source

Bitter, clove-filled elixir

Each spear clears the debris of doubt and taps in ambition

My tears are colored with revolution

Purpose fixed, perennial

No dissolution

Break your weapons on my armour

The dreams I harbour

Spur my defiance

Self-reliance and zeal peel me clear of your judgements

## *Rose Madder*

It's holy

Rose Madder pot pourri, incense-lashed

Stashed musings

Taboo receptacle

Shrine of her concealed thoughts

Self-taught censorship

To evade the jokers and keep impressions canary-caught.

## *Pterodactyl*

I grabbed the wings of a pterodactyl

His horned head thrashed malice and smelled of cinder

Still, I grasped, sinew bulging, his eyes sunk marrowed sponge in a land mass of bone,

His cry sliced glass in my eardrums thrilled me to obstinacy

And I knew I held venomous will, the wildness in myself

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