

KANIA

by

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ABSTRACT

Kania begins as a poetic revision of fairy tales, an attempt to extract the potential female narratives buried within the source texts, in their stifling archetypes. In the spirit of Angela Carter, it attempts to manipulate the most recognizable fairy tale motifs in order to explore issues of violence, deviant desire, sexuality, and monstrosity. As the text evolves, the archetypal “monster” shifts in location, becoming increasingly internal to the woman/speaker. First “he” is the abuser, then “she” is the errant woman, then finally, “it” is the interior anxiety, the self’s nightmare, ungendered and constantly in flux. The manuscript strives, through this cacophony, to render “monster” a blank slate, capable of housing multiple connotations beyond the original fairy tale archetype. The monster is also the maiden, also the victim, also the good. The monster is queer.

These queer-feminist concerns are soon joined by a wider existential fixation. The third and final section of the project, “Paralysis,” acts as a foil to the preceding fairy tale sections (“Lesion” and “Little Read”). If the latter are populated by speakers striving for a volitional selfhood, then the former is concerned with the inevitable loss of that self-spoken “I”: in sleep, in mental illness, in encounters with the Sublime, and finally in death. Sleep paralysis is in many ways like “practice” for death, a real-world manifestation of the fairy tale’s nightmarish logic. And in its throttling of movement and voice, it seems a fitting parallel to (patriarchal) oppression.

But though patriarchy and death are both oppressive, they are in no way equivalent: the first creates hierarchies, divisions; the second promises to shatter them. And because death is natural, there is the desire to read it as good. The manuscript's (desperate) solution is to focus on death's ambiguous potential: it can obliterate the hard-won "I," or it can widen it, past selfhood, past hierarchies, past divisions. Death could be the final/fated/fatal queering, both terrifying and good.

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LESION

thereafter

overgrown freckle.
overzealous lovemark not love
mark, you lie
in wine red rivulets. your lattice
of circlets, your perverse symmetry
offends me double. you seam
me like cloth, with even little
writer steps. I cannot read
your put-upon pretty

that woman whose hung
head is not praying

this gaping neck not lace

body be honest you
are more than this you
are throated entropy

rice was thrown

we were met upon a chapel
lawn. I wore white he wore
his features gentle, his feet
bare to merge with the earth
gave me secret thrill like to
sight a darkling fawn

then he let me step upon his hand
or he took my foot up in his hand
or my foot fit small inside his hand

whichever and
in every incarnation
my mother wears black

prelude of wanton yessing

he bought three bridled mares
to keep me in his absence
I named them readily
I held their mouths and kissed them

he brought me red-lipped stones
and I cut my teeth upon them
I put my feet up on them
and fancied me the taller

then he got the corsets out
and I bid him make me smaller
to fit my waist into his hands
like the stem of a glass or rose

the fairest flesh is swift to rose
and I, best rose in seven gardens....

once, a man

his first plate of olives
stained him so, the man
woke to a thirsting that
no goblet could punish
so he stripped the rivers
and he split the trees
and made spurt from every
dry, unwilling crevice
enough to cleanse himself
and was this not a goodly reason
 this he said, on our marriage bed

when do I ascend to throned womanhood?

mother, you are unabashedly,
and I am mothered. I wore the slippers and
suffered the slips of hands. still I am
unchanged but for the changeless
bleeding. And I met a man.

I read books, write letters home but he
reads the fortune on my back and says
watch the ceiling, watch the ceiling

this is not my native bleeding

this is not what daddy did to you

this is not what good brothers do

market-women titter

“what became of his
other wives?”

“well, they became wives
of course”

“of course”

“but where did they go?”

“nowhere. perhaps they died.
or worse.”

“what’s worse?”

“perhaps they became mangled
and lived”

“of course”

“of course”

“of course”

“of course”

bride me, or bridle me. either way
I grow hoarse.

I sought womanhood

I thought if I could be bed
it would be enough.

Or even slightly rouged sheets.

Where do women live? Where are
those sure papers?

I tried to write my own and
they said do not
want for pens

the layman cartographer

he emerged on my two hands
each star of andromeda
(I found her likeness
in a book, when I was still
a whore for reason)
there is the chained lady
in all of our flesh;
to bring her to surface
in so many little
hungered mouths
does not unbind her
I hold my palms together
for a glimpse of sky
like a beggar born

the fairest flesh is swift to rose

and I, best rose in seven gardens
I, the living document of raging, am told
"wear it open on your skin like a gifted thing"

"look how far desire goes
to give so deep --
the length of nails!"

and I, convenient temple
when fingered morning
disturbs him

the mares that I called mine

that I named for the cooing clucking
of a girlish intelligence
stamp at the ground about their feet
heavy from the wet unwanted kissing;
do not run anymore, do not eat their
once-loved grain; become skeletal,
like pictures in books, like
stars approaching the likeness
of a thing but never the flesh of it

upon the bridal
bed of my skin

he reads my
labored breath
as a phrase
for desire

Pleiated

I know seven spots of womangiving
Some are and some become
hollowed ground

Throat slack like a secant
My lack is always visited
too soon for my early castles to stand

I have only breath for euphemism
He was in the milk mood and I
put my pen down.

in his library, I am finally alone

I read of all the other
constellations
that remain
to be sown

I read of a mother
who turned her
girlchild's heel in
struck it with a rock
in a single breath
she was maimed and unwanted and good god she was free

no mother I
am not his first
plate of olives
he has pitted many
and does not pity me

how now brown bough

my fingers tarry over the
injuries of pears, and how
they overswell there, as
if to expel the skin made
other, the otherskin
at proximity between
scab and nail, I become
an animal. there is no time
beyond the hundred little
nipples he's carved me
he says stop and no
(pins my hand to table)
it does not become
a girl to pick

when It became a Girl
we should have all sunk
to knees and cried

“lucky to have married such a king-dom”

his chambers number forty
hollow as the virgin womb
he wears them on his belt
as keys, a parody of feathers

I dream the sound the
heavy shoe
the dirty blue, an
almost-song
the remnant of a war-beat

the others

his hall of offerings
for each wife parted
(down the middle,
or through the sides,
like the widened smile?)

perhaps he does love girls
he who altars them
up on the wall

he has kindly left
a space for me

it is never enough

war and water
he will not
share his keys
(the way he fondles them-)
and says “do not pick”
or “do not open”
to a bittered bodied silence
how jealous and how frail
but has opened, opened me sprawling helpless into landscape

the first chamber

I stole the key and
slipped it in its hollow

everywhere the bounty of
breasts stripped bare
encrusted, jewel horror
writhed hips and mouths
so long writhed and
ridden into ground

I came to be womanly

Throat tore like a secant
Throat tore like a secant

Why can't I say when it is
full before me?

Not the normal, mother,
gaping like trout

He took her bone out, mother
he dug out new spaces

I will not see again
but in corners of red

What could I say
that has not been

constellated, and burned past star

The key will not stanch

Aster from her frame,
looks upon the bloodless wall.

There are many bloodless walls
in a bled house. This is how
it plays at clean.

The key will not stanch.
It is womaned.

There is a distance between
red and read that I know
no feet for. What language-

“He ground our bones for bread.”

- when so surely, so sorely, fabled?

Forth language/ froth language

First he asked and then he told.
 Then he took. Then he tore.
 And tore naming from me.
 And cunted me, over and over.
 Where cunts do not go. And each
 cunt bore a stillborn
 jewel for his coffers.

Do you think me rude?
 Look at my arms and see
rudeness. This week I “earned”
 the Pleiades on my back. No
 do not hand me I am
 not hysterical. I am
 rude. I am
 rude. I am
 Rude. I am
 Rued. I am

chooser of the name.

LITTLE READ

this not the tale you knew

stemmed from the end of the
hasty cleft, foil upon tubered
flesh / the not-mouth,
the wrongmouth retching
one primogenial seam

a footprint rising- what big and
and what wide they have-
through unpared skin or pelt

of woman under / the woodsmen
sunder her too-ripe belt,
and *redd* from her this
glut of feet, and *redd* her
of this excess teeth,
and *redd* her-

and this first thread
of a later cloaking
creeps from her
stomachmaw to be
spooled

my mother's mother blanches

breasts bound, first month
hushed under red skirts

head down and don't you
speak of this / do be a

good girl when the big bad
blood comes / how to

goodgirl when I can't fit in mitts
you made me years ago?

and you, pretending snow,
now that the color's long leeches
from your limbs with your
days or children

do tuck me under
prophylactic eiderdown

and kiss my too-ripe mouth

fed me in place of mothermilk

the shadow on his chin,
the nettle or pin to
sleep me unsoundly

the kindless pricking, and blood
worsen than I know

the wolves in the black brush
paw the seam where
torchlight fades; this their
howl, hence the
cowering of pretty babes

I do not go where-

his face too strange for speaking
and muzzle flecked with my
familiar red, his fur against / my hands
do not go there

my mother stole another's radish

past bodied need, her
stanchless bent, past script
of any moons, and crawled,
poor weaver,

hem pulled up her thighs
over wall or seam or margin

from the thread of her
raveling sleeve, the first red
woven me, lest I become
her living word

make a girl

wrench it from its slough
 of skin, hard butter,
 thin of ester and warm
 graisse / and from its face,
 the limbs of blooded myrtle

past the common fontanel,
 its haunches caked with
 hairs, like copses
 smother air and loam
 wrench whole fists of fur
 full wolfish, this the
 wonted yowling

curtail the howl
 scour the prickéd
 nail/ the curls to crown

bundle and call baby

*baby, made an apron / made
 an eyeful / made a maiden*

"Coronis" is not "Crown"

I am the canvas for your verses
stake in my your spinning skill
make my hands
make gold for
others' coffers
make me queenly so to take
my princes

Oh no don't I spin quick enough?
Do I not turn your trick enough?

skive my stomachskin to cornhusk

speak fair and call me daughtered

bloom me to exhume
your many-yearred investment

what cure for witch's broom

her tree erupts, overlimed,
foul upon the bashful groves
like wilded hairs or rat kings
weaved of tails/ weaved of

wrested spindles, turned face,
stunk in hen's bane and
blight of cockerels

made capons, made pears /
pares skin and undoes curing

her ribs of paned hose, hornpipe
in throat, skirts wrested from
overlimbs / teeth torn from
teething

my mother's strange eating
without need for food, her
mares go unmarried

so call her witch and
teach her how

Girl, you

cannot be
penitent and
penetrant in
a single breath

your labor reads
as a phrase for
mirrored want

your pallor as
permission
to steal the slipper
from your left foot, made
cradle for a someday baby

your lips your
blackening, all poorly
read, and never
yours to speak of

you do not speak of
losing skirts
when your skirts are
lost from you

but sleep instead, or
count the pulse of linenspread,
or name the ceiling tiles
into constellations

come in lieu of going

our poison is blood-wrought,
milk-borne, this the Eve
of spindles incarnate in bones /
what need for other's pricking?

will the nicking, self-sworn

the wolves in the black brush
paw the wound where
gardens tear from wood,
pretending gold

the tree erupts and ambles so
no thread can hold (it ravel
in hands), poor weavers

the bad blood
throbs the ear,
sunders song/
the knot unwounds
from skin and signage

the willing

the dusklit willow pressing
feet / the soot beyond
reach / his chin and her
unfurling severance

all like-dark and hands
do not go there

your cant cannot tread
where plums are spent
unseen / the girl and
the wolf and the
wolfed girl

too many monsters
for the word to hold
or sure the tongue

Poor Harvest

the dogged footpress, that
 toes the feeble membrane
 pulled limpid / here
 a face, gearing penetrant

[The Woodsmen Enter]
 and huntsmen and fathers and kings upon

my sleeping mother's stomachfull
 my sleeping mother -spared-
 through paring, her wilded
 hairs hastening grey / made
 trees burst of her throat / made
 grey thread and red / strung
 with monkshood and made
 slept made prone

and seized her living words
 (ankles furred and pairs
 of hooves, past counting)

mount with stones then sew
 her stomach full

become a girl / that picks

subterranean tremble
 languageless itch if I
 could rend the folds of this
 flesh if I could strip the land
 of its teeth.

where reading is rupture
 of ancestral lack.

I am not meant to self-name but
 bodies are
 in the absence of eying.

make self-sore as plucked hens or girls.

make self-swell with insects
 pendulous in dew.

read, read a maimed girl

scab unlike the scabbard's stifling

wed a dog to have your
 fingers torn into
 so many drowning phalluses.

will the fingering, say
 I am impregnate in my hands with the Eve of seals.

feed of my palm as I

part the sea the folds the page and name the blood or brontide.
 proliferate unmotherly, unmotherly

grandma leaves / my window open

this seventh moon
strange through where the
willows press the loam,
horns my shadow, owlsh

and shadow cast
like cloak discarded
upon windowsill, and
on still onto clouded trees

prolongs beyond the shroud
of desperate kindling,
trembles the nothing of its
last membrane

*pass three times through
the coupling of birch to
rose spine, that snak-ed arch*

*step like an erring / step
like an e loping / step
like an*

I found

two furrows on my left palm
deep into the wood work
of the meat; crescent
each, approaching circlet
form / darkening slow and speechless
into sooty pitch

the honeycomb of nestled teeth
the hairs emerge, unremitting /
*the o'erflow in those that are
possess'd*

*lay your cloak upon the ash
and remember water*

all mountains are trees

fettered in the futile word,
 the un-thing, the null-phrase; as
 mountainroot, as ravenspit,
 as breathy fish, as hearing
 of the unfelled cat hoof / so too
 my would-be length of
 womanbeard, too sick to say and too mouthful and pools the rim of your venturing

wipe the slip of ink from your jaw / remember
 the *from* the *of* the slit that rends bodies
 into bodiedness

the wreathed earthsky that chokes each single breath
the wreathed earthsky and its swell of darkish children
and their breath their breaththeirbreath

says Zeus says Tereus says

"the earth had brought her forth," and
"the [] had killed her." The selfsame lie
his excision of his name. And I
do not say her name/ each time she is
she is the same quiver of unspoke
wheel of arms reeling arms racked
past measure, breadth or body, made
firmament upon a base upon your baseless your baseness
each time she is unnamed, first from her bands
and then her limbs and then her hands and eyes

then she the ash that men will give their eyes for

homo homini lupus

"the unplaced, untended
 letter of woman's swollen
 girth, every belly swollen,
 and this one in the main,
 this that stole another's:
 husbands, brothers, sons
 and sometimes sisters, if
 the yield was ripe/

the sigil of her upturned womb
 its migrant fruit, the small, the
 ill-placed sacrum and the
 sacrum and the sacrum the
 the sacrum the

ill-placed *the* that kills the line/
 the lavish hunger of a bitch's brood

and lineage of blood but not of name
 is not the weaving that we weavers do"

why I cannot be too overfond of I

the wreathing of the earth and sky
that chokes each single breath,
remembered in the fingers pressed
to fingers, hard fist of war, hard fist
of fetal curl/ the girl before the girling,
her shoulders unemerged from under
weight of an immeasurable could-be

that girl is not a girl is too a girl she is
two girls is many girls and also boy
but also boys and also not and neither too/
before it's born it couldbe bear
it couldbe grove and always wolf
the sweetbad wolf and maid and hood

before I was, I was the forehead of some darkish vedic god

Luna strange so you can serenade

the moon and its shifting lack
repulse you: uncured womb,
siring light for needless feeding
spurring water from good sleep

you wake behind the membrane of
the still-closed eye, to find its torch
has found your lip, unasked/ has found
the lack that is your throat

yoke it to your harvest myth
give it breasts and make them good/
and make her good but also strange
as women are/ strange so that she
has a name besides the one you
will not risk to say

then send your hardest men
to clip her monthly tree

little killing

Gwion, being young, put his
finger to the cauldron, put his
finger on his tongue and then
he knew. I, too, scald my palm
upon some open mouth or bite/
call it what you risk to say.
It is a hollow thing.

kings and woodsmen sate the earth
with wolfsblood (one more knotted
word to perish, one more gape
to fill) and wear wolves on their
swords as sheaths.

I hide the slaughter on my hands
my twinly shame (bad feeding/
bad bleeding); the first sister
I have known

O Medeina

"gunnr's horse and grior's
 steed, those varlets best
 in all our myths of men
 can boast no better
 than our thricely broken
 mares, the tender buck that
 crops our northmost sedge"

we who have named our
 mothers into babes, grow
 slack in our sure tongues/
 and in our prophylaxis,
 our indiscriminate
 slaughter, forget the names
 of wolves/ name unplaced
 women in their stead

the gunnrhorse, the
 griorsteed, the
 sedgebuck, the
 ill-placed *the* that
 kills the line, and she,
 emergent kenning

this is how you lose your skirts

a footprint of my feet before I've gone
there/ the there where my footprint stands
clear as cut trees. I feel there is a

crick within my spine, not the pain but
like some thread of pond that
answers to a pull. I dream of

red skirts raveling into thread/
thread ripening into trees, each
limb a finger and ten were mine

each limb in every tree in every
space that runs the seam where
gardens end/ my face emerging from

the torchless gut of wood,
repeating fruit: me-girls and me-boys
and me the abundance of wolves
with faces, gearing penetrant

there was a their there

is not a phrase we say
when we say "killed her"
and I "born of the earth"

my mother euphemized into good white void

and I the goodest of a bitch's brood
I worthy of a name, oh but how

the nameless go free

Parul was saved; the rest flowered

seven champaks from a shared root

And she called them *brother* and pulled them from the thick sap of sleep

And the king their father named them names befitting kings

And were happy,

so says the book

I chose a silence heavier than sound

*then a tongue, abrasive as sandpaper
ripped off skin after successive skin
left behind a nascent patina
of hairs limbs trees/thick as earth,
dark as the dark where torchlight fades
this dark is the dark where torchlight fades
the whole swell of a pregnant firmament,
the womb and the wound and the mouth*

*is the wound is the mouth
is the nebula that made all nebulae*

PARALYSIS

Somniloquy

this space
is made of primordial sound

I have no real language to measure
the margins of primordial sound

my self concaved beneath the drum
of a footed darkness,

if darkness were a lapsing into cells,
a bloodless dying

if darkness were a filth-tipped resonance
a learned unbreathing

a negation
into bedrock

I cling in language:

I do not wish to throat a tree:
I do not wish for trees to spring from throats
I do not wish for throats to
become trees. I do not wish to throat- to *throat*,
wordless and soundless as
trees

I will carve my self
back into bedrock
into bone
through negation

Somnambulance

brutal and indiscriminate flowering
of bruises

a conveyor belt of hands turn The Torso's left wall into pin cushion into abstract painting into beaten dinner. this logic of canvases of carcasses changes each second. The Arms become a ringing backdrop for tribal ritual, a thousand lilliputian throats and thighs singing "look how far the *I* can go."

some relief in soft-lit translucence, in floating nudity. upon large white curtain spaces, automatons of movement pivot about my fixed point of self. they serve. they suckle. they seek new spaces Pelvic crumbling into

flowers

in the chemistry of waking, I would not burden flowers with such signage, but WHAT DOES "I" KNOW ABOUT I keep circling into different levels of Inferno, self-stuttered-stuttering self and self and self-

I cannot this chemistry YOU are intent on submerging me These are not MY LILIES
I'VE
STRUNG THIS NOT MY POETRY I SPOKE for Bring me back

The Chemistry of Morning

| I am fine I am fine in the fell of a singular I
its slim shadow

| I refuse to lisp my own name

| self is firmly templed; no mutiny of hands,
no bleeding of ear, can touch *self*

but it returns
again, again
its wings enormous
and filth-tipped
and takes me first by the shoulders
I feel it first in the shoulders
which droop
like a settling crow
awful and fed

I am a ghost in my childhood houses
Their chemistry has grown apart from me
I can name nothing altered, but the axis itself
has shifted, not a shift like left or right
but a third alignment. A shift in blue. A widening
that makes all my past and future scales
balk, then quiver.

The front window faces otherly. This means
nothing but lives in my bones.

I want to tell full of this.
I could show a blueprint of the rooms
but you would hold them, stupidly.
I would take you, but where memory
grows monstrous is not an address
that I can mimic with my fishmouth

Fullness is a thing of teeth and this is not.
I could say a lot about what it is not.
I could spend all my allotted pages
gesturing towards what it is not. Sometimes
I think I am the very flesh of its not-ness
and that this is the sole purpose for waking

I am the crater of its stepping

the subject, aware, while the body shuts down

for *paradoxical sleep*

the subject should not sleep supine
should not face direct the inner membrane
of sleep should not let in such swift access

this illness is linguistic:
acknowledge me acknowledge this
lest it remain endometrial
the lining of my inside skin

this a bloodless dying this
a friendless dying I cling
to names like *mother*
like *sister*
and imagine atonia as sibling
of a shared limblessness

viibryd ode

inborn in the name (if pills are souled)
 the cleavéd I, now the I's are
 eckleburg blues, awaiting
 english major symbolism

(coffee cup religious, exercise
 in pursed palms, staunch materiality)

inborn in the name, *toothless*
 the thread of sleep into word
 the tread of sleep upon word
 the root of word, uprooted teeth

(catch up on z's with
 zoloft, prozac, phenelzine)

my wisdom still covered in gums
 all twenty years
 of nervous tonguing

come time to finish off the mouth,
 "it's just a quick injection"

I know, mom, I've
 met its brotherpill

(the blotted pillow, and pillage)

hystera

conceived of stuttered breath,
the untimely menarche of a
wholly templed self, a degradation of
walls into stuttered breathing, the
girl, the girl is seizing she-

conceived of wanton sprawling
the gesture of admission and its
thin white veil (or naked feet)
woman you are prone
to ingress, you are bound
to sleep soundlessly

you, the mantle
to tuck under or into
for others' easy slumb'ring

conceived of *incubare*, root
of far too many names

For Beksinski

I dreamed the writhing of
disparate limbs into spiderlings
one neck into the crevice
of another's spine, heads
hanging like udders, fusing
like healing, but not

that in this fevered caucus
attempt to coax this limb,
this limb, this limb, to walking,
a mimicry of selfhood

into the crater of the skies,
the skies reveal to be
the mouth of Nyx, too
large to recognize, face
full of teeth

too large to recognize
for any one's eyes, or eight
and ate, and ate

freed of skin, and song

"Gardening at Night"

*...occurs as result of the
 interruption of rem, which
 is remnant (of what little
 language endures: mothers
 sisters trees), and thus also
 revenant (risen then roosting,
 cocklike), and thus also
 covenant (which I have signed
 none of/ nosebleeds onto
 freshman copy of
 Doctor Faustus does not
 figure) or perhaps you are
 foreign, and wish to say
 R.E.M.: they who are
 always losing religion,
 perhaps because they're
 never plagued by angels
 when they're plagued*

*is engendered by the
 rising of vapours from
 the stomach to the brain:
 usurped meat of motion,
 like itinerant wombs, or
 itinerant trees which
 spurt from sleeping
 throats and thighs*

treat by bloodletting
 blood*letting* blood
 is an allowance an
 admission a cure but
 the cause both sprung
 from a single seed

Lullaby

*I have heard old beldams
Talk of familiars in the shape of mice,
Rats, ferrets, weasels, and I wot not what,
That have appeared, and sucked, some say, their blood*

or milk or stolen warmth/or lullaby

as a child I'd crawl atop mom's belly:
holy, consecrated refuge
from those dream-begotten ants
that swallowed, in their swarming,
lines that I had drawn between my
solid hands and less than solid sleep.

The logic of my fourth year
did not reach beyond to ponder
the hard weight that I still pressed
upon her womb.

And now I feel the same hard
weight; I have inherited the
weight I am confounded
pounded by these hands.
I never birthed a set of
hands I never birthed a set of
hands I never birthed

flesh may coil under
imagined blows

the vacant
find bodies
in my nervous gesture

The Chemistry of Waking II

I inherit a chair. on first sight I find her face woven in the velvet movement of its back, awful in its nascence. like the early shadow announces the body coming, becoming. her lips are not yet here, but I am already thinking how all air is residual mist. every time I walk to food, I step named spaces I didn't name.

recycled breathing. I hide her behind a dirty towel, wide hands, loud phrases. but she is turning. she is roosting on my lashes. in the space between seeing and willed not-seeing, she penetrates my posturing. I dream of my old houses, but I am standing elsewhere, outside the childhood skin. the same walls are distorted. longer but not longer. wider and not so. everything is blued.

I follow the learned scripts. iron under sleeping head. wood knocked and water run. where my fingers twitch is microscopic prayer. i say words again as if for the first time. i say words again as if i say words again i say again as if i if I

cocoon the learned scripts

where skin distends in anger hives are her emerging

I am ghosted by my childhood houses
 They appear me on the balcony
 upon the brink of a city that still is
 when I am elsewhere

I count my steps as I walk them
 The steps become as I name them
 And I become as I name the steps and I
 diminish, as I am seldomer
 and seldomer
 named

in this constellation of voices

past the paan shops
 past the corrugated gates
 of stores stilled for the night

where my memory of the landscape fails
 the road folds into the mouth of the sea

No one learns the color of death.

In my retelling of the sea,
 I will add a dock out of
 courtesy for your feet.

I will try to write or exorcise
 this umbilical ache
 this knowledge that there are no
 “withs” in total proximity

the sea is named only in its absence

Before the Ear of Diagnoses

in the absent gaze, all things are faced
wood and cloth once mine grow sinews
and sudden movements like falling hair

fell the hair, fell the hair
for meager preservation

I grew it too long
now it reaches off of peripheries and known spaces
fingering toward the northern rooms
their dripping faucet
the window overlooking the stairway overlooked

curling loudly / back to the scalp

pick the scalp
so there is less of it

hand stilled by slightly altered *drip*
why altered? how altered?
i imagine hands don't imagine hands
don't think of dripping faucet lest you be
thought of

we do not look at mirrors before sleeping
we do not put our hands upon our chests while
sleeping

i never brought a doll to bed
but i breathe quick and frequent
like two bodies

how long before my questions
grow bodied / like a second scalp?

Quiet. sleep so the night is bearable
sleep so the snouts overlook you

this is the time for coffin play

i think fear came first
and sleep was the inevitable kindness

My Iasis

the unspoke cave, the larval
pouch, not mattock-born but
built around a fated rooting

logic of honeycomb, I sprout
my mother's hair who sprouts
her mother's hair who sprouts
another mother none of our
mothers know. Are tilled to sow
a honeycomb logic, gesture of
yesses incarnate in bone
in cancellous bone (or cancerous)
that cancel our hours and ouring

the hair the teeth the nail and we
possessed of phrasal loam

(and Cannot stanch from cratered
OHm the swell of POppies)

A Someday Melinoe

I spend half the year, neck-kissed
waist-caught, drunk off granatum
(that halved bone, that had bone
glut and purging chyle), threshed
throat and long past Gods or

mothers shorn and sundered
lineage, the neck-kissed I
unfit for spring or to be seen;
play nice and good and chthonic

I tongue the hard pearl fathered
of the ousted tooth/ I jar the stone
I loose the bad milk bathdew
of larval teeming, augurs for a
steady seething granatum

and this my teething daughter,
my someday mothermare. I call
her honey and teach her how

Likely Fig

full aureole, the wide-ringed
mouthpress of a senary seeding

Kore's strange eating, remembered
in all our wreaths of benzoin,
this hexadic, this hectic binding
of superstitious herbs

what old Greeks hold in this my
apportioned pessary? Good
doctor, what words would you
feed me through the mouth
or bite, the mouth and bite?

*black tonic, red oleum wrought
of fires pro vigil, the monkly
salt, the six seeds and the six
seeds and the six fluorescing
seeds, where I fluors and [] emerge escentum*

Lycan Planus

breath-stunned arc of my reach, made
membrane, and now each striven phrase
turns blue-black whorl, thick crust of a
fledgling parchment/ hard dust
of a parched hull cleaves the lips
into a grisled smiling, parts
the skin tectonic

seat of lichen, promised
nest for harpies/ eat my livers
nightly so I grow may grow
may grow unrelenting,

my "I" torn ichthys

the mongering of fish

presumptuous tongue/ indiscriminate grasping of slips, of skirts/ my made-lost skirt and
sole denuded, my ankle

seized, my bellow seized, recoiling off the woodwork of my meat/ returned to throat
returned to throat/ absorbed into a stilt/stalk/shank and then returned to choking throat

itinerant tree/ transmogrified mouse/ Old Hag, Newfoundland / all this my grasping for
some name to cull it, this my feeble prophylactic for

feet revealed in my concaving chest

Beksinski who was an Utopian

the thrice-bent limbs, the bundled
face in bloody gauze, haunches
sprouting black and sooty brush
stroke

the sockets in the nameless wrists
beget an overglut of hands which
seize the horn which is the body

the infant's corpse held by
the mother's corpse astride
her filly's corpse

are better than the unremembered
unpronounceable dread

ride my chest my bed so I know I am

threshold consciousness

errant pulse, spilled from its
 allotted seam, rings about the skull,
 "where you hold your self
 at height of eye/ he lifts
 the chin and enters easy"
 breeding smog and woolen feeling
 like the rooting of an inward fur

the girl will always maunder from
 the counseled stream, and enter wood,
 thrum reeds so to deplume them/ tread
 a circle logic until grandmothered
 door/ she the hag,

*when maids lie on their backs,
 That presses them, and learns them first to bear,
 Making women of good carriage*

I Electric

founded synapse, the spurt
outstripping bridled paths/
rat nest of fettered arms
and feculence/ "the you
you know was not the you
you should have been (your
self hood its own straying)"

flax thrust under fingernail, flux
drunk, to make clean or sleep
easy

to make Self easy, a short
receipt and full receptive

and not this illegible schizophrenic

too late for stemming/ all nerves
resemble trees

no language

see me, my throttled semaphore/
 me the monument for lack/ me seamstress
 of hairs and page of marish raging

me the seat of ravens, me the bread
 for unfettered ravening, my

treed tongue and limb-pitch,
 froze in gesture of desperate
 clinging, splintered into
 so much earless corn/ "I"

undone and forgets being

no language

*see me, the human semaphore
 monument for lack, seam and
 seamstress both of marish raging*

*myself the food of mares and
 mares turned victual, unfettered*

*tree wrought from limb-pitch/
 in space of tongue and limbs, the lack
 itself a sign, itself a semaphore
 for fewer ears and greater corn*

and done and done and done

GOOD COOKERY

1
serve with bread

take an earthenware pot. fill a goatskin with foreign milk. weave it closed to make one ripe

belly, then thrash until the clots form [*tongue of gods, immortal navel*] until clots turn seed.

eat butter but never flesh/ the flesh wormed through with mulletfish or taproot. find one up the bright rump, positively raphanus, forked as ready legs.

break an earthenware pot. slice the radish seven ways, for it is vulgar. find a tree that marks some butter's grave. find salt sown in absent water. call it by its risky name. *salivate*. eat and be eaten.

streams of butter caress the burning wood

I cannot tell / the men from girls / or selves apart

steep his root in brine. in time, the reds emerge

2
ladies of shallots

to induce a roman sleep, pick the bulb of a small red union [*nesting sleeves, mothers in mothers*] wrest it from the telltale crater, the where his right foot fell upon

long fields of barley and of rye. find a bearded barley. bundle and call barley. *if this brings you tulip-root instead, take its head*

up in your hands. you know not what the taste will be and so you cooketh steadily. you take your guilt and make a stew. you feed it to the sea in your body's stead

3
strange eating

the rabbit offers you the milk of its pestle, and you eat him in its stead. you eat a fist of

apple-seeds. you eat a lit grenade. you the *dust of ten thousand ages/ the rabbit on the moon mixes his medicine in vain.*

take an earthenware pot. fill with aloe. with rhubarb. with every desperate word wrung from old greek. stir/ in your sleep. all words already trees.

4 nightmare triptych in cream

feed your rats your cellar wine until their stomachs purge; this will form a starch. weave the tails into a lattice. stuff with shallots and serve raw.

take the hard fat of a first lochia, stir with sowbelly and cream. dip the handle of the broom into. procne cooked a son. you have no sons and cook unmotherly.

place yourself upon a bed of sage to stir. pull the lark tongue from your throat, and churn. this will form a cream, a you-cream in nightmare. a you and you and you-cream. slather upon each/every jaw.

5 recipere/ fabricari

some Rosaleen asks the wolf if he'd be girl instead. the wolf outgrows its skin, all at once and brutally. a fleck of his throat hurls into the milk pail clutched between her arms, pinking it.

the fairest milk that's swift to rose
there the throat is neither his nor mine, theirs nor hers, me nor I

the girl begins to bleed