

Cracked seed of the feminine pronoun always
planted, rarely sown, at militant earth's tectonic lips dig to see

nothing like it.

steeple of I still dozing on a makeshift church

when doubt was a public luxury (masculine and tactile)

other steeples did the probing

on the other hand

all the women were not called Mary, and surely the Marys were not all women

the murdered sons were simply charming; full of breath

and explanations

as they stood there smiling by each exhibit

everything bespoke, disinfected

with mint and cloves and eucalyptus. They had made a display of excavations

nothing, like it.

it's good to have something to show

but spare the side still in tact, eagle palms with lines of life

spare the spear that fails to pierce and the non-consensual follow-up finger. Still, believe

in outside-in and the vagrant myth of symmetry. Death act, life act. Certainty in gradients

in double dealing, pokering

pokering kings now pokering hearts at the portable CASINO

stretching-ching the probéd slit —

doubt in the holes, doubt at the slots, doubt still sagging at the intercostals

trickling down to doubtful waistbands

doubt queuing up, hungry and squealing, *Give us smithereens!*

getting chips with our bones luck with our chips

just to be

afforded an I

(un)gratefully received in tiny bowls while dying

for more and asking

how much I can I hold

how many tiny bowls stacked inside tiny bowls

how many Is lined up and meted out

struck through in a tally of I, I I I do not count

what's left behind

face of a woman with everything to play for

torn off and held, loosely, under the table

to render expression on a single plane: this is her commitment

to unreadability

Gone is her name. What's in a wound?

[muffled rigging] the deck, her hand; she knows
she reconfigures. Ups the stakes in the final round: full decap
lolls in her lap

sleight of a newly muted neck
stumped by transmutation
starfish spasm
smarts the croupier in the face
of his charm. How she gushes
red beads pour
another. And up spurts the quick mimic

unwitting opponents nervy syntax of crossed wires
anagram of I
but she sees with the whole flesh
drinks the room more quickly
opportune view from her bluff reverie from her bluff
martini still in hand
jostling the dead weight between her knees
creaking, quotidian, and so revealing
just enough

She downs the room:

neon strip light beating fan clink of ice in glasses blue vein in every temple ash dots green baize
dust flies fan spaces between whisky crystal cliché throws itself from every miniature aspect
handshake a twitch eyes meet deal brokered eyebrows finish sentences
her slender hands: their too-big gaps let light dribble through light dribbles through to harlequin
carpet and the mirrored ceiling is still
mirroring rogue magician on the phone to his agent scorcher sun doesn't get a look in other beams
(lechy) coolly refracted grim silhouette at the tinted window beating fan flickering electrics

tactical gain from muscle memory kinetic needs
identi-dreg
sensing needs a fonder dealer

The sense that he primed her, nothing more
than cracker fact
in this
prismatic den, in that

competing interests
+ slyer gambits (inverted sacrifice)
result in disparity
in mutilation [power

cut] Let's hope
hope in darkness gropes

spotlit eye in the dark party
for chat, a wheel
flinch a tooth-flash
old sick hearts discarded

he pushes another mound of chips her way with a stick: one for every
body in the cupboard
where hopes of being and of being legible
are growing fruit and the maggots are thriving, are even more plural

than they were just yesterday — sickly plump and full
of promise. Who will inhabit her now

or what

fictive remnant, deck of blanks
what spotless dice

it doesn't count if it doesn't last
if the King of Hearts wrote headlessness
in Rules of Play a victory would be pyrrhic

a spray of aces! o faces! the changing odds are stacked

for her WIN

[power on] I'm a dynamic occupant

spin me a self spin yellow air spin regular feats

spin the self a stand-in witness spin that one a vantage point
historically, histrionically

I will not wipe the lacerations.
I will not cleanse each faceless graze or peel the dirt
from under every blackened crescent probing life — they will remain
a stench, a stain

now *spin*

for a double a dummy a proxy a sub

Gentle wrist cradles chin, or what is left.
Fingertips on nape of neck, or what is left. Other hand directs the
gaze. I light a candle. Gaping hole, held aloft, forms a pout. Spasms.
I kiss the finger's gem. Rough garments clawed from skin. I tie my
clothes to a stick, push it into the ground

a locum a changeling a backstop a ghost

I light no candle, kiss no ring, I stick no flag

one more spin for a sallow shadow, trying tone, a wisp
of reflection here I am!

shut up and sing, vintage witness Round

of applause. Gathering suits are forming a circle. I must gather my
selves without standing

thank you, thank you, it's almost a pleasure
almost a prize

a timely bouquet:

Snapdragon, Larkspur, Canna & Cosmos *for singly sown multitudes*
Sunset Freesia *for casualties of narrative*
Cyclamen *for the body lived as unknown caller*
Ranunculus *for the frivolous*
Snowdrop Anemone *for histories buried, histories burned*
Tricolour Buddleia *for the tongue's profusion of vanishing points*
Periwinkle *for querying motive*

A single Grape Hyacinth *for symptoms of ambition*
Bougainvillea *for shame without vocabulary*
Slipper Orchid & purple Foxgloves *for soft mottled cavities*
Jasmine *for constant vigilance, risk assessment, self-surveillance*
Myrtle & Wood Sorrel *for joy and relief prised apart*
Common Knapweed *for non-compliance*
Cornus Sanguinea (Midwinter Fire) *for invisible years*
Black Adder Hyssop *for lack of proof metabolised*
Aster, Amaryllis, Amaranthus, Agapanthus *for fear diagnosed as cyclical psychosis*
Dandelions *for reproductive value split from worth*
Narcissus *for saying no, the moon does not look lovely tonight*
Phantom Petunia *for hope's first synonym, rage*
Agave Ocahui *for The Hard Precision of Blooming*

cut from the desert cut from the meadow cut from the farmyard thicket city cut from the gutter the sill
and the piss-soaked alleyway cut from the heavens and cut from a dream cut from the prison the panto
the parlour the protest the greased-up pole cut from the porno the party the poem cut

Forget-me-nots *for Mary Mary*

her garden of refusal resembles closely another garden
resembles closely her former acceptance

range of exits through opposing doors identical doors
a single plane
flashes of disgust curl up behind and warm her lusting eyes

no rings expose her ageless neck
her infinite depository
call it the feminine

or call it a vase: thoracic heaving
active carrier (no passive vessel makes the cut)

will it be more by holding less?
will it diminish by holding more? is there certainty in gradients

when a rose puffs up and threatens a crocus, what do we do
when a crocus protests its nurture? when riot equals care

what does we do?

maim and maim? reinvent? assume concordance?

I take the bulbous toad lily
strap it to my head
set the tilt
to dimly firing off all raring pistil flagrant style
on the breezeless occasion there's an us and a we, we revel in us
or do we
or does we feel deciduous
when trampling fields to gather the dead
alliums their Eurocentric single stems and violent root-flare
headless and strewn

little haunters

or does we invest
in perennial deadheading

to prune the well-hung flesh verb?
operatic vowel for the bleeding heart the bud the phlox

no body is defined
by an outline not all dead heads fall off

has we invested
in the already-pruned dry stub ends, the thorn in the side, pre-discarded outer petals marred
and browned, *excessive* foliage?

pronominal branches deprive and flatter me.