

**SO TALL
IT ENDS IN
HEAVEN**

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TIN HOUSE / Portland, Oregon

Ode for Dark Matter

Watching animal
silhouettes in darkness

shift, I feel attended
though I'm alone:

I think I'll be
ambushed by possums

I often see
nosing the compost

and retreat to bed
with a faintheartedness

jump-started by nothing.
Thirty years, and still

I'll believe
I am shepherded

by the invisible—
which is,

after all, all
around: blank notes

lashing me to action.

Tonight, I'll eat

a plateful of shortbread
and dream—possums, probably—

wrapped in the pilled blanket,
the body sleeping

like a tree, slow
like a tree.

It's almost a heaven,
neglecting you.

Peacock at a Garden Party

All the Fiats
have clambered up the hill
on the old Roman road—

Reformed, it translates—
and in shallow ditches lining the villa
have parked nose-first.

Their owners, skinny-suited
Slovenes and Italian
Northern Leaguers,

orange-cheeked and already
in their wine, go
slipping up the hill. I am in

my father's garden
holding a tray of undercooked,
clean-cut pigeon breasts

skewered top to bottom.
There's talk of a wild peacock
none of us has seen.

It cries like a child
from the bordering thicket
while I make new rounds

with a tray of potato dumplings,
dainty mouthfuls: the yellow dumpling
like an allergic eye,

flushing with clusters of meat;
the bitter green;
the pink one, lidded and sweet.

I am in my father's garden
in a silk-lined suit
and a thin, European tie,

watching two young boys—
Umberto and Lorenzo,
I think they are called—

dig a limb of charcoal
from the outlying grill.
Umberto drags black lines

beneath Lorenzo's eyes, arms
himself with a stick, and both boys
disappear down the hill.

Our wailing peacock quiets and hides.
I am in my father's garden
where a south wind runs off

with the sun. My father
tries to ruffle my clipped hair.
Here we are: love, it seems,

is a lack of alternatives.
The pride-and-joy
cottonwoods, flaring

hierarchies of branches,
flap their papery leaves.
Underneath a juniper hedge,

the peacock folds and flattens
its plumage of doped, bright eyes
and holds its breath.

Love Poem

Imagine
a day alone
and call it *Love*.

Let it mean
All things are equal.
Let it mean

you have eaten,
you are *Filled*
by an assortment

of quick-sale meats.
Use the word
Delicious.

For yourself,
use the word *Collected.*
Complete.

Let it mean
All things revolve around
a wet, living stone.

Call it
Heart. Let it mean
that Earth

moves with you,
loop after loop.
Never mind

what you are
known for
or last night's dinner

of cheese bread.
What is sadness?
Think, *Sadness*

was a friend
across the table.
Never mind

the man
she named for you
over dinner on Friday.

What was his name?
Anthony?
Never mind

Anthony. Anthony
is blond
and blue-eyed

and a waiter
and, it's said,
quite funny.

Think, *Anthony is not
a day alone though,
not Love.*

Let this
break your heart,
but don't say

Break your heart
here or anywhere.
Nobody wants to see it

wild and out.
In this poem,
ask *What heart?*

Let it be
the wet, living stone.
Revolve around it

this way:
Alone and Alive.
Remember

you are equal to
anything equal to
the earth.

Say *Little heart*,
for all your murmuring,
I imagine

you're textured like
a persimmon.
Say *Little heart*,

if you are
at all
like a persimmon,

I'll seal you
in a jar
of limewater

to rid you
of your unbearable flavor.
Say *Little heart*,

which of your ventricles
is your favorite,
your hardest worker?

Drop your little heart
in a mason jar
and set it aside for the day.

You will be
truly in *Love* then,
won't you?

You will be
Complete?
This poem won't mind

what you're known for
or what you've brought
with you.

Nobody will love you
like this poem does.
Let this poem

fill you. Let it
wash your hair.
It will use

egg whites
and honey.
Maybe you'd like

something different.

Tell this poem
what you want.

Anything.

This Earth.

Say *Little heart*,

let me

*thumb you through
until all your stones*

are turned and

all your meats sold.

Say *Little heart*,

let there be

a primacy in you.

Let there be

a primacy in you

a poem

can get to.