

THE QUARRY

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Being: Mark Four.

I.

The winter of '92 had infected my mother with its frosty failure

It clutched her womb with barren hands

She haemorrhaged a me, mark three.

With a grievous contraction, she expelled

The coagulated nothing

Spurned by her body.

The stab was familiar.

In 1980, first blood seeped from her young form
Rippling tides of relief.

Summer of '92, it had gripped her viscera
The day after the miniature cardiac throb caressed her ears
And the surge of maternal love sparkled in her chest.
Her arid figure cracked and crumpled.

My father's shirt had promised them a daughter.
Draped in the vivid spirits of the Violent Femmes
His mind incanted: *Let me go on.*

My father bought a bounding ball of puppy fuzz
For my mother, as consolation.

Later, I heard 'constellation'
Picturing all my selves that never were
Coalescing into celestial objects.

Doctors told my mother
Her anatomy was the great antagonist
Bellicose, designed to obliterate.

And yet, this determined speck
Clambered out of the mire of non-existence
A scatter of atoms, at first
Uniting into lungs, a brain
And a heartbeat.

And so I was.
Born all aperture, drinking my surroundings
With large brown spheres
Gleaming. Winking.
Slung from stellar oblivion.

II.

I was fourteen years, crushed up
A thousand tiny shells spat out by the sea
With its wringing tide.

Sinking in its mouth
Until my bones lodged in the back of its throat.
Life coughed up my skeleton.

The Violent Femmes and their jagged colours hung about my ribs
Fluttering, gored into strips by a decade of spin cycles.

I had grown from a clot of cells
To this, a self-immolating bush
Destined to blacken and burn out.

They said God's hands had
Plucked me from the astral plane
Of their empty bodies
Flinging me through incandescence
To this dimension.

Why would God waste his divine fingers
Stitching something to squander?

My bled-out siblings called
From the belly of the earth.
I ruptured and burst like a tired star.

I was the sprout that had struggled
Through the concrete fissures of the footpath
Poking its fecund face
Into suburban spring.

I wanted to crawl back down.

To slide back down the spiral at the centre of the world
To slink back into
The hull of my mother
To sleep within her dormant walls
Secreted for a century
Before my renaissance.

Instead I was an unblinking eye
Inhaling *weltschmerz*
Without slumber.

Eating the city's grime and feasting
On its acrid disappointment.

The shirt's prophecy unravelled
Me, a violent woman
Dreaming of gunshot wounds

Pockets groaning with stones
Weighed down in the river
Hoping to sink.

Diffuse like light pollution

Lying limp on the floor.
Atomised. Paralysed.
Shredded to a joyless confetti.
Floating away.

III.

The moon mirrors my mother's love
Luna urges me as she does the ocean
To lift its arms. To rouse itself from its bed.
To swell and embrace the salty shoreline.

My fragments, like iron filings
Magnetised back together.

I raise myself as a filament
Conducting light. Throwing it back
To my family, who so loved me
That they shovelled the soil of debt on their own shoulders
Just to hold me. Just to see my newborn face
And hear my infant giggle —
The mellifluous tinkle of chimes
Thirteen years in the making.

The shirt sacrificed itself to us.
Its vibrant creatures stretched and ripped
Beyond recognition.
I still feel the noble ghost of its ribbons
Stroking the crevices of my back.

Existential guilt still hums
A covert wasp's nest crafted in my skull.
I will spray it away someday
But for now, I will cradle this tender glow
Cupping my hands
Over the blazing candle
Of being.

Works Cited

Violent Femmes, "Blister in the Sun."1983. By Gordon Gano. *Violent Femmes*. Slash Records, 1983, Cassette.