

THE QUARRY

Sofie Fernandez

Hunger

Do you remember, Brother?
If you would listen, I'd ask you,
Do you remember when we were children of the woods?
Are we still children of the woods?
Are you hungry, Brother?

Mother fed us to the forest,
walking ahead of us, her face plastered with smiles,
her hands holding ours,
forming a neat line,
as we marched into the mouth of the forest.
The roots of the trees tasted our toes.
We could hear the forest swallow.
She rested a hand on my head,
Are you hungry?
she said as she passed us each a slice of bread,
her smile widening.
We've been fed.
I'm *hungry*, you said.
I passed you my bread.

We knew the witch, we knew food.
But I was hungry.

So was I. But I fed you, didn't I?
I gave you my flesh, Brother.
When the pangs of hunger haunted you
I let you consume me.
Watching my blood stream over your small lips,
I smiled,
your eyes begged me for *more*,
my sullied flesh was your all.
Are you still hungry, Brother?

I'm still hungry, Sister.
But we saw the gingerbread house, and I could finally be full.

That's not true, Brother.
The sweetness wasn't real, Brother.
But your teeth were crunching on the roof,
when its charming voice came from inside
those cinnamon soaked walls.

I needed her, Sister.
You had me, Brother!

It ran a nail down your cheek,
squeezing the meat, it licked its lips –
Are you hungry boy?
Greedy talons, down your spine,
it smelt you, grinning,
You're mine.

it fed you
to claim you
not to fill you

I know, Sister.

You didn't belong to me *anymore*.

You ate whatever it gave you

I don't know who you are *anymore*

Your veins pumped with syrup

more

Your eyes rolled back at the hit

more

Your hands clenched hers

more

The sting of peppermint

more

The rush of being full

I was stupid to think you'd choose me

over the witch's pull

I wish the forest had consumed us then

we wouldn't had suffered like we suffered.

You'd have no choice but to choose me

as we died in that forest,

the birds pecking at the breadcrumbs left in my apron,

your breaths swallowed by the trees,

your hands holding mine,

as the birds jabbed at our frost covered eyes.

Can you smell the pine?

My empty sockets now let me see

blood trickling over my cheeks,

still weeping for us, even in death

and I wouldn't have watched you disappear

within the walls of that sweet house

and I wouldn't have boiled the water,

my dear brother.

You killed her, Sister.

You killed the hand that fed me.

I did it for us, Brother.

and you came out of the cage,
a film of oil clinging to your mouth,
your voice jittering as you spoke,

What will we eat now, Sister?

I have nothing
Only hunger.

There's only me, Brother.