

Silence in the Asylum

Inspired by Francis Bacon's Screaming Pope paintings

I.

Fat, Lesbian, Insane,
I check abscesses on intake forms. Driving down
to Guelph, a land foretold,
little kitty makes biscuits, gnawing into the leather
pants hanging on to my rolls by a thread,
neon green thong arms winning the battle for freedom.
Fake eyelashes cling on
through tears of hysteria.

Impeccable makeup marches in
to the circus of sterilization. Quitting, turning in
a pack of cigarettes and three smokes in exchange
for the internet, sanity, and a little gold
pellet dropped down my throat.

II.

She promises to come around
on Visitors' Day.

Her blond hair to my black,
Porcelain to obsidian hides.

She promises to come around
on Visitors' Day.

One passes, three more fleeing behind her,
four weeks of people rings when
her putrid, vomit coloured car pulls in.

I've been feeling a lot better.

Breaks me out, careening into the driveway
of the A&W, grease wafting into our hair,
clinging to our bras, the orange and brown sucking our faces off,
white splatters, a drop of white, thumb shoved in
drawing saffron pus, breaking free
parallel white draw up
from our burger-stuffed, bloodied lips.

III.

He does not forgive.

Hypnos and Sons

Head spinning
She's meant to be dead
She's not supposed to see me like this

I've inhabited this world before
Those same double oak doors
Those faces and that forearm too
Carelessly scratched in colours and
Features bleeding into each other

I've plunged into that pool smoked
That very same blunt stolen
That very same purple Bic lighter
w-why is she here

I lost her in the blue
Frumpy floral XL swimsuit her
Black-brown moles in the moonlight
Glinting
how did she escape

My eyes searched
I've leapt through that auditorium before
Lines of people rushing savage tearing
At the skin for gossip for drama for
Mystery for intrigue peeking
Under that row of seats and finding
Nothing

I've inhabited this world before but
This world
Stops
When I stop writing.

The Cannibal who Masticates on Beetle Leaves

In my uncle's godrej almirah, I find a little
black automaton. He wears a backpack
on his pinkie toe filled with little dioramas /
of anvils of / coffee grounds of / his sister and his stepmother of /
seven grains of rice wrapped in poison ivy of /
a sublime egg / flipped into the air / carried away
on the nimble limbs of a partridge /
flying away on a chit of paper / of

He kicks me –
in the groin, when I try to grab the pack.
I chuckle. I take him
out to play.

I drag him to the beach with us, the sand
in his lips bloating his geared,
gnarling teeth. I hide him
in the mouth of my stomach,
his screams churning the contents of me.

My HCl spits up sindoor-like rust
on his little parts,
ripping off bit by bit. Until
all that remains,
is his precious pinkie / toe in me.

A Family in Disorders

A Serial, Homesick, Narcissistic Romantic (Read: Obsessive Compulsive) ¹

The Anxious, Alcoholic Anorexic ²

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A Bumbling, Blundering Patriarch ⁴

My Mother, the Hopeless Hopeful ⁵

¹ The Artist writes of elephants, and mango trees,
of saris and oil in the fryer splattering,
of the rush through the moat of a castle, of an extended family,
of lust spanning generations of the Subcontinent,
of mirrors, of leaving and becoming,
of milkmen on bicycles, of brown men leering and of brown men she wishes would leer,
of mothers-in-law hating daughters-in-law, of no one / in a reality.

² The less said about him the better /
wouldn't want you finding yourself in my poem, would I?

³ Middle child syndrome.

⁴ Grasping for control like the reflection of clouds through water,
choosing the dog as his favourite /
as a coping mechanism

⁵ Oh, how she rumbles through her world, so self-confident.
People who giggle at her English, / no matter.
A husband who believes in doling out monthly pocket money, / no matter.
A set of children intent on the land of no return, / no matter.