
THREE NEW POEMS

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POETRY

You wrote a poem about the techniques by which we keep things away from each other. Your images: sunscreen that mitigates the skin's pucker, red velvet ropes at museums and nightclubs, the internet. A thin barrier between two objects can seem like the medium that lets the two touch or the boundary between them, depending on your perspective. All art is this way. In a dream, my hands bloomed into a nosegay of arboraceous warts. They were so wooden, I couldn't feel a thing, though I used them to touch everything. Eventually, my fingers began to crack as the branches took up all the room between them. At a residency in rural Georgia, I listened to a bear snuffle along the edge of my bedroom wall at two a.m. When it's me being held out in this way, I suffer immense psychic cramping. When it's someone else, I only respond to their text messages in emojis. No need to rankle at this treatment—when it's me doing it to you. Poetry's picked out a place for you—a spot of dirt in the yard illuminated by the sun.

SMALLNESS

I have no names of trees or plants,
so their faces mean nothing to me,
an interchangeable mass. The woman
running the residency says, you may encounter
flora or fauna you've never seen before
because on this ridge humans
have drastically miscarried their annihilation
of the natural world. It's true that the trees
do usurp these paths.

Anonymity is license, we've found
via the world wide web. Believing
you speak alone, you enter the sphere
of the nihilist. In a forest like this,
you'd think you could call and call
and no one would hear you,
but there's another cabin through
those trees—you just can't see it.

A comfort to those of us who think
of getting ax-murdered in the darkest
part of night. The darkest part of night
has its own gleam, a kind of hard,
obscure shine, as sharp as obsidian.
It's obvious to me to call this sharpness
beautiful. Perfectly honed,
nothingness appears through
its murk.

SEVEN SKINS

“Violence and objectification
CONTAINED in hetero
desire,” you write next to Rich’s line
“What a body
ready for breaking open like a lobster.”

“Breezy. Feminine. Floral.”
is the subject line
of the Urban Outfitters email
you subscribed to.
Click the link
and you’ll almost think
these models’ clawed buds
might break into blossom.

