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Writing as Lament

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Psalm In Which Everything I Write Becomes Lament

my six year old cousin tells me a story she learned at church – a man told God *i don't need you anymore, i can make everything i need* & God says *then make something* & he molds clay into a pot & God says *I made the clay start over* & the man cannot & is sent to hell – moral of the story making something of nothing is sacrilegious – God made the world God made woman – woman eats a watermelon & the seed grows in her stomach – it replacing her with a new hunger – her replacing it with a new life & such is the lineage of my family – my grandmother was a horrible cook both sides raised daughters who know better than frozen dinners & cans of fruit cocktail but my dad still uses my grandma's recipes – spaghetti pie – a faux dessert made of government cheese stolen eggs & leftover noodles & somewhere in the translation of the language she did not teach my father – the italian you cant find in my face – it being replaced with an american dream hunger & my mom taught me to make a meal out of anything – the skin tongued away from lips – a meal – a cup of coffee comunion & if you are hungry enough for long enough everything becomes a meal & if you're hungry enough for long enough it turns into sacrament & if you're hungry you have a body & a God to thank for the pain of needing what he has taken from you

Discovery of a Jellyfish

I knew not to touch you. My touch
could kill us both. You were
supposed to die without me,
there to save you. Your plastic bag body
washed onto my feet. Found rest
in the hollows of my foot prints
more soft, than wet. A easy death
on the beach. I thought vinegar
would neutralize the stings,
so I held you, pink and alive
until you weren't anymore.
You had washed back to shore
before I realize that saving you was not
what I wanted it to be.

Family Traditions: On Faith and Addiction

He told me he was about to start drinking again
but a young girl said a prayer
and he stopped forever.

Although his spine can lead to my praying body
I am no longer a young girl
and I cannot make him sober.

I cannot make him go to rehab,
or forget the weight of that man's eyes
when they refused to see he was just a boy.

I know. I know. I know, brother. I know
fear and hope and want and prayer and
I know he hasn't taken a drink in five years

but that he'll always be an addict.
He knows, I want to believe,
that a higher power or another moment on my knees

will give me serenity, or at least another day of recovery.
I want tell him that my addiction isn't one you can buy.
I want tell him, I am sorry.

Addicts Anonymous

in a room of stagnant light
you say your name
a spoon full of men
with cough drop voices
echo

being called by what is killing you
assures you always have a name
addiction will gives you something
to do with your hands at parties

whenever your skin is too tight
you peel back a new layer of
sick like a reverse chrysalis
where you turn back into
A baby thing, you didn't know better
suckling fetus teaching you
what you had to lose

you stand paying serenity
forgetting your limitations
believing that this time
will be different

stop because there is nothing
left to be to be done
nothing left
to be taken
until you come
with a new worst next week.

Candling

The method in which embryo development of an egg is studied when bright light is shined behind an egg to show details of the embryo through the shell.

Hold a guarded sphere to the light
it will glow a sunburst of veins.
A naked bird with black seed eyes
trembles before it is alive. I understand
how you can fear your eyes before
you use them. Once, I held my eyes shut
so tight, unable to see him that still
that my flooded corneas blossomed
lavender slugs which slid onto my cheeks
finger painting pools of gray down my face.
But not looking into the casket didn't make
him more alive. The years assigned to him
didn't make his death more fair. Illuminated
wax drippings, collect on my fingers to show
that in a small glob there are eyes
that have not learned to see. Blinding
it in with my life in hopes that it will live
without having to learn to accept death.

After Watching *Poltergeist* and Realizing All Houses Were Built Where Someone Was Once Buried

How long do you acknowledge
the dead before there is enough
dirt between your feet
and their corpses
to walk comfortably over
them. When do you let
tombstone become rubble.
Start calling cemeteries
ruins. Hire someone
to deconstruct
final resting plaques to use
as bricks for buildings'
foundations. How many years until
you can build a house
over my spine.
Raise a family in my ribcage
call my body your home. At what point
do I go from being
someone who was loved,
to the dust on your radiators, the dirt
for your carnations, the inconvenient smudges
on your children's shoes.

Cricket Love

It's not me coming home to fall
asleep to the sounds of the country.
It's a midnight alarm clock that won't
snooze. The shrill repartition of chafed thighs
the rift of a mating song screamed
outside my window taunting
those who could kill you In the hours
you know they will not come. Each of them born
an orphan like the nothing I found
when my highschool sweetheart left
after I promised myself that this 5th time love
was going to make it. The 5th time summer
before I never went home to
drown out the score of canable love
with my own limbs quaking

The Body as an Affirmation

The body forgets pain
like the languages of infant
to adult. The sounds I borrowed
before I knew words
could have a meaning. I had once
opened my skin expecting
to find carved words
comforting. I knew I would heal
before I knew what my pulse
tasted like. My body doesn't
show the difference between words
and scars but I know now
that my wrists were never
meant to be an epitaph.

Stretch Marks

When you first arrived
purple on top of my
vains. I wanted to find
the legend you made
on my body. Red, blue
and white all over;
like a joke where my thighs
were the punchline. Raised
welts where my skin
had not yet caught
up with my growth.
Silver white landmarks
etched in my legs. I see
now that the muslin pleats
of my thighs are not
the map or the destination,
the canvas nor the painting. No,
they are clenched fingers
keeping my skin zipped.
A sweaty palm slip
away from opening.

While Attending a Lecture Titled Writing as Lament at The Making Literature Conference

My mentor drug me
to literacy
at a conference.
I snored through
the lectures
because
in theory
words aren't
something
meant to be
taught.

When I woke
in my set
he was not looking.
So I asked,
“What is lament anyways?”
“Praise”

Lament
to love poems
written
in the past tense.
Praise my first
love, parading
through this poem
as someone willing
to teach me. Lament
to my mentor
who hasn't written
a new poem
in three years. Praise
finding him
while we were
still young
enough
to be willing
to learn.