

Untitled

Megan Voysey-Braig

I am watching the street outside, from behind a greasy rain smeared window.

There is nothing to see. I stand here as thousands before me have stood here, at certain hours, certain minutes and certain seconds. There is nothing to see. The window used to be clean, used to be clear. Once I could make out the fine outline of hills in the distance, a bird straining against the wind.

There was even a curtain I could draw closed if I wanted to undress.

In the day the brown mud of the sun, moves across the walls, fills my mouth and silences it.

At night the sound of my bones trying to adjust, trying to accommodate, on stained yellowing mattresses.

Yes it is frayed in places, coiled and sleepless. From my hands where they cover my mouth to stifle screams, when I am alone and I rock myself, back and forth, so I can breathe again, short shallow breaths, I see that I am pinned; to this ground, the stars reel around me, the darkening black sky turns my guts. My legs are forced open. Objects are thrust into me. Cold objects, hot searing objects. Objects I would have never thought.

Today I think it is my sixth birthday.

The stink follows me everywhere. It is my own. They tore me up. Five, ten, twenty, I cannot remember,

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smelling of sweat and smoke. Sometimes and all at once I remember everything. I curl up on the ground, into the ground.

The roof above my head (in my head) disappears and it feels to me that all the people in the world have clambered the walls to look in, to laugh at me and to curse me. This shame I am made to feel, this rejection. They throw stones at me, I cover my head with my hands, my arms, I reach for the threadbare blanket, but it does not cover me. I know they mean to drive me out of my home, out of my body and my mind, out of dignity, and everywhere in my head the sound of running feet suffering the same.

The water in this place no longer runs. I cannot wash myself. I cannot rinse this stench out from the rag I have tied between my legs. It fills and leaks, runs down my legs, the dogs sniff at me and then not even the dogs.

No one knows my name. No one cares to know my name. There are no other voices here but my own. I keep my voice in my hands, inert in my lap.

I have accommodated this pain. How remote it is and out of the way. It will take me years to get there, to recognize the landmarks. Yes, this is where you once were, this is who you were. How absurd those vanished hills seem now, the ideas I might have had. Who will ever reach me here, who will ever find me here?

I can feel bruises on my body. There is a small square mirror here, that hangs from a rusted nail, the taste of my blood and iron in my mouth. The bruises spread purple and grey like thunder clouds across my thighs, disappear up my dress, grabbing and pulling at my hair. I can hear my bones cracking, my head snapped back. Copious fucked up drinking. The swinging bare bulb hanging from its wire, the room sways, lights up,

dims, lights up, dims. I am 30. My children in their intermittent shadow corners; watch.

I have been dried out, stuffed with leaves and bitter smelling herbs. He likes it that way. Walking is difficult now. I can sit if I lower myself slowly onto the end of the bed. It hurts less when lying down, not moving at all.

He will come again I know, when ever he wants to and whenever he feels like it and leave me no time to heal.

The minute hand lies like lead in my chest, the second hand brings a blade to my throat. I learn how to beg, just like thousands before me have begged to be spared.

The first time I was touched I froze. Perfectly, soundlessly. Hot breathe on my neck, strange whispering words in my ear. I was told never to tell. Never to tell. Never to tell.

Today the door has disappeared. I watched, as if removed from myself how they filled in the space (where for a second I could see the whole world and what it means) and sealed me in.

How they were happy and pleased with what they had done, happy to know that I would always be just like this. Bound, mutilated, existing in abject poverty, raped a million times over in any given year. The seconds quicken in me, coils tightening, and I can no longer breathe. I bring my hands to my face, I cover my eyes, I think of the hills, I dream them, I think of the dress I wore, the savage expression in his eyes, what it felt like what did it feel like what did it feel like what did it feel like I cover my eyes I cover my eyes howling I cover my eyes so that I will not see myself dying one more time.

I write words on scraps of paper, later I eat them, feel them pulp and swell in my mouth. When there is no more paper and no more ink, I scratch the words into the walls with my nails, with the blunt nibs of my fingers. This is what I liked, this is what I dreamed of. No, never this, I never would have imagined this.

I am old now and almost dead. In the day the brown mud of the sun, at night...

This is where I was, I was here, this was my life.