AN EASY PLACE / TO DIE

poems by

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Baltimore, Maryland
Dedicated to the memories of Alfred, Amelia, and Philomena Cellucci and Jowena Conte
Eyes / Bottle / You

Matter / For Mourning

keepnight / current

Armoire

If a river hollas in the woods

A Suffering / Breeze

finish lines

Moonbathing

Momentarily / Momentous

III. Death by Heaven's Bull

Partial tria

Me Gustaria / Muerta

I had a Room in New Orleans

White Azaleas / or Axioms for my Daughter

Grates

Port Work

How People Burn

Cleaning Up / Al's Apartment

Even heaven is blue

Audacity

Suprises / Lie
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AN EASY PLACE /
TO DIE
I. **Uruk—cradle casket**
If said reader approaches said poem as a mountain lion

Instead of your bringing the Flood, let lions rise up and diminish the people.

Gilgamesh, (XI, iv) Gardner

temptation gives slip back into soothing rituals or a pair of boots (one of my best friends staring at the crucifix again) re-read that favorite novel this time defying the protagonist is empathy hunting younger now promenade in the begonia garden that sits in nana’s lap than we’ll ever be again move back to your favorite waste land this time sans control replace: create rediscover our orbits and train moons to retain reclaim a lighter to re-align with Prometheus the longer this line the Father I defy gravity inhale toxic fretless flight (worth skipping a breath or two) half the fire requires we smother light spans dark twins ask the maenad why the skeletons bite epitasis offends husbands and never offers black dye suspect the expected

let’s not and say we died— snow taming time
let

Helios begin again—
share the armrest

Loadada and Loadmama
make universe
dance whenever they get horizontal

sun cries witness
between kernels of popcorn
and swigs of sprites

bare parents
nature rear:

Mountain down my child
Moon up son
Act like a lake little lady

adolescent orbits speed
earth parents
no choice but to let—

inertia thrusts more
than all the world’s pelvises

gravity attracts us like magnets
underworld
Partial

una

I’m not Christ
I don’t think clearly

some days
I walk
in the rain I relate

trudging
through
the pack passing sweat
laying on
alms
beads
drop on transparent hairs
ejected from the bicep
not resurrecting
posthumous hides
vestiges moribund

that chorus
seized us
apostles cannibals

earth lulls
longer than we hear
BlueDelta

Dedicated to Jamey Hatley

All forgotten grease
Crackles golden

Don’t throw none bother none
who eva you looking for idn’t here
come now depends
get on out my house

you know good and damn well my story’s about to fire
a warning bullet
piercing my heart
sealing my lips

Sure was walking by
on that gravel path back from the salvage yard
stopped to wipe my brow with my shirt and I see
Memphis Minnie pouring boy angels watering the magnolia outside wearing mother’s dead face

Shoulda known them boys wouldn’t grow
what’s left lasts too

set settled folks groaning
moons and stars amass moonnstarsnstarsnmoons

fighting like animals puffing up in their bellies
Every time
that grave parade
passes
that barefoot boy weighted in sweaty clothes
beats his drum hung
like a dingy apron round his neck
his trick to take off
dead up
not his face up up
magnolia limbs kept reaching

Right now I suspect
    anyone with any sense
    or them same eyes
pleading for help
so many years ago
dusk pinched her
kept her
Bumbags at Washington Square’s Gate

To Shippy

There’s a man next to me freezing
twirling a broken leaf by its stem

all the bums have duane reade needs
those bags best for the afterlife?

don’t quote the shadow playing guitar
on this
    but the squirrels are getting closer

around us
sun photographs
the park’s malaise

man with mustard shoes
mistakes me for a lighter

people like me         like him
stop
    mid street      shiver
curse themselves       turn
back to loiter in strangers
my thoughts follow

another leaf on the ground
dead trees holding hands
Kind Gardens, April 1957

To Ruth Ann Robinson¹

Spring is coming. Soon it will be here. March 21 is the first day of Spring. Easter comes in springs. We get new suits for Easters and good hats too.

I like springs when the birds come. Don’t they sings pretty songs? The robins lay eggs. The eggs are blues. Best of all my birthday comes then.

I like springs because there are blues birds on my feeders. They eat seeds. When Spotty the dog comes out all the birds fly away. Baseball teams come back too.

We have lots of flowers in our backyard. I asked mother if I could have some for school. I wanted a daffodil. So we took some dirt and put it in a pot. Then we dug up the daffodils and planted them. We put white paper around the flower pot and took it to school. We are going to watch it bloom. Water comes every day.

¹This poem utilizes verses from Room 202 of the Philadelphia Kindergarten (J. H. Brown) class my mother attended. Ruth Ann Robinson seemed an apt symbolic name of the American time period that gestated this work. Ruth Ann began the first stanza; my mother’s stanza is the last.