

YOU CAN'T QUIT ME, I'M FIRED

My war got set late
Tongue bitten in sleep
Any dune material likewise

Driving home, we heard
"Darkness on the Edge of Town"
on the edge of town

Apocalyptic romp attempt
The same white spider
I kept smashing and smashing

All hours I used it
as an excuse for bad behavior
I counted three broken mirrors

Can that be possible without
two three-legged dogs in sight of
one volcano mulched sugar maple

POEM FOR MY FRIEND IN MAINE

To agree, we say "Correctol 44," which
is an anti-diarrheal that's been taken off
the market. To scold, we say "Very poor!"
At Olive Garden my language got stuck
& I ticced. The rabbits we liberated from
your father lived a number of years. I found
your letters from Spooner, but I didn't open
them because almost nothing is worth
reliving, certainly not your first banishment.
Tucked in with postcards my mother sent
from the Mayo Clinic. This must be another
woman's life: wild greens & Icelandic yogurt
by the jar, the trucker barreling toward Acadia.

ANVIL OF THE MOON

As ever, mothers and fathers
paste in the code to make the
machine work, and they wait.
Out of fashion, wringing hands,
so whether you have the reach
get unstuck and ask below it
would I watch my teen son
bang the cymbals in a summer
holiday parade? Or, banning that,
not bar but ban, take the route
I cruised last decade through the
woods to favorite burned-out
concrete husks, perfectly alone?
I hurl this or that instrument,
the anvil moon itself, against
some bricks (the sun if it offends
me). When you say a child will
want for nothing, is that things
or ideas? The kind of time wasted
driving on state roads with no
witnesses might as well go down
the street screaming to upset
the dogs of my neighborhood,
that implausible the expanse of
time before I could afford to buy
sunglasses. It took forever and
then it was over, like a parade.

I HAD HOPED NOT TO REPEAT IT

Mode where nursing equals omniscience
Step through a portal into deep discount
where the governor proposes a pet food tax
the lack of mercy, generic last I heard
his sister's running a church out of an RV
Blink hard and through one gateway you
arrive to a flea market with a rattlesnake
in a big aquarium, stay a few minutes more
Thought you'd appreciate a relic but
you'd rather have the cash

A LIMIT TO WHAT I'LL LET MY ENVY DO

Inside the beach house I'm told that I
look like I belong. Meanwhile, the anesthesia
only paralyzed my vocal cords; I'm awake
trying to speak through operating room
theatrics. Rogue material travels the canals,
gets hung up. The house is incomplete, its
basement a hole I can't tell if I'm trapped in.
One tacitly trains others how to respond,
and in this half-constructed house, where
a party is supposed to be taking place, I am
assuring strangers. So what is weakness?
Some chintzy crap I wanted and was denied
arrives to save me—or my self at age four
barking on all fours pretending to be a dog,
woofing and arfing until the doctors take
notice. The team pats and praises her, gives
her a dog biscuit she snaps in half to share.
She holds it out to me, says this is my
body and your body. I sit up. She says
that's a good girl and I chew and swallow.
I am healed. I rise. I levitate. Why wouldn't I?
A rich girl with a dead dad said she'd heard it
all before, she was bored by other women's
struggles. I stick a pin through her eye in a
Polaroid. Her friend gets drunk and tells me
to key her car. I decline. The fuck I will.
Vast dream house echoes a former relation's
coastal one—can you cast judgment on we
who had to lie for every pair of shoes or new
album? She wanted that house too much, and
still it barges into my dreams when my mind
wants to tease me for my envy. I called a former
boyfriend a part-time job once to a friend, then
swore him to secrecy. Want does this, makes a
mercenary. In the house, doors lock or don't
in inverse relation to desire. All closed up with
me alone inside like the kid who falls asleep on
the school bus, wakes up in a junkyard terminus.

(Nerve damage) (Upstairs behind a window (looking down))
(with fellow feeling)
(averse to secrets) (much of the work) (under nondisclosure)
(bound to earth) ((to endure) body pain) (what of revenge)
(Their bad faith is necessary) (crisis of the small heart)
(connotation of a pledge) (curled toes over time (possibly inevitable))
(repulsion plus malfunction) (witness how (who) she takes care)
(her juice) (allover) (that big lashed eye)
(says we buoy our own) (a strain) (a query) (choosing who to cut)
(clashing) (in favor) (to rest) (send money) (as proof)

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