



beautiful
children
with pet
foxes
poems

Jennifer
LoveGrove

FIRST EDITION

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Incident Report: Describe the Dwelling

Was the door locked?
Was the snow shovelled?
Were the leaves raked?
Was the grass cut?
Was the fridge full?
Was the food rotten?
Floor dirty?
Were there fire hazards?
Was the smoke detector keening?
Were there any pets?
Any furniture?
Was it overturned?
Was the sink clogged?
Traces of bodily fluids?
Did the toilet flush?
Was the laundry done?
Was the TV on?
Was the TV on mute?
Was the garbage out?
Were there weeds in the garden?
A car in the driveway?
Gas in the car?
Was there any mail?
Who was it for?
Were cockroaches on the counters?
Were there fleas mice bats?
Was there ash mould glass?
Were there any people in the dwelling?
Were there any other people?
Were there any other people?

Dinner Table

The one in the dining room, the one
my second husband made and under that,
a much smaller table. Under that,
seven frogs blinking their third eyelids
open and closed, open and closed.

The dead still sit and fold their hands
across from us. They try to tell us so much
we don't even listen anymore.
Too many plates need gathering up,
and these days, everyone's a soldier.
We just slide back the chairs
and pull the pillowcases
back over our heads.

I sweep my forearm across the silver clutter
and dash it to the floor.
This is my ceremony, backed by
seven tadpoles, seven caterpillars,
seven young girls in black
reclining in the doorway.

This is nation-building. I keep
a pet grouse on the verandah.
Together we tend the cocoons
and pour water over those who need it.
We peer into the night field
and see shapes move,
then don't see them.

Self-Portrait as a Mollusk

A red shell grows over my forehead,
across one eye, as my cheeks cave
in retreat, shielding the dark wet folds.
I'm bereft of speech and bone
and the ability to perceive distance.

Bi-valved, hinge-less,
I'm trying to rest in this spiral shell,
but last year has snuck in with me:
all those silver hallways
teeming with mothers.

Branches scrape my slime,
their dry hands reaching out
looking for lost daughters,
ones they gave away
or ones they should have.

The Stains I Scrubbed from the Floor

Cherries in my grandma's yard,
the trim around her windows,
the cistern cap. Safehouse.

The less common trillium:
trillium erectum, Wake-robin, Stinking Benjamin,
birth root, abortionist.

My preference in lipstick.
Rock lichen. Girls' knees.

The binding of my first Bible,
though I wanted black like the men.

The peeling skin on the barn.
What if nothing at all existed?

Nothing is its own colour, exiled.

The first time I smelled my own blood.
Every time since.

Very few gemstones.
A heavy steak before cooking.

The parrot's tail feathers and how I know
he will mock my voice after I die.

The faux-Moroccan lamp's glass panels.
Antarctica's primordial glaciers.

The stains I scrubbed from the floor
after the cops stormed the house again.

All my guilt, wineglass after wineglass.

The moon I remember looming
over the apprehensive lake.

Dream Specimen 23

I was lost
in a seething crowd
of breeding women
who sneered at me.

My mother, milk-eyed,
the only one to help deliver it
like a parcel on a porch.
More like a planet,
she said, made of lead and slop
that you have to push out
and send back into orbit.

A doctor showed me
a video of the baby
decaying and grey.

Transitional phase.
Fear of responsibility.
Deteriorating hopes.
Warning.

Rejection of creativity.
Indifference.
Self-deception.

Gaining significant amounts of weight
and choosing inappropriate clothing.

Bad timing.
Bad luck.

Feast of rest,
crunch hormone,
transplant fellatio.

Lieutenant to self-starter,
semitone to lifespan,
renaissance of crinoline.

Badger tin.
Washcloth, wallaby, lullaby.

Cult hotspot: cuckold hospital.
Galaxy silk. Trauma phoney.

You, too, are blasphemy.
You are too bleak.
You bleat.
You bleeder.