

Fade In: Spiral biting a pinkie cuticle and Other Poems

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Abstract

The following corpus of four poems indicates a knowledge and engagement with the retelling of antiquated myths in art and fiction. *Chew and Swallow* was informed by Francisco Goya's *Saturno devorando a su hijo* (*Saturn Devouring his Son*), painted between 1820 and 1823. The poem investigates acts of masochism in terms of male-centric violence. *It was a pity about her eyes* is directly inspired from readings of John Polidori's *The Vampyre: A Tale* (1819) and Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber* (1979). Like *Chew and Swallow*, this poem explores acts of cannibalism, masochism and violence. However, *It was a pity about her eyes* is an exploration into the traumatic effect of sexual violence caused by men. I wrote *Fade In: Spiral biting a pinkie cuticle* in the form of a free verse poem that is aesthetically structured in the format of a script/screenplay. *The truest moment of reflection* is a palindrome; therefore, lines are repeated in descending order towards the end to demonstrate a reflective conversation between the speakers.

The selected poems focus on intricate themes of the self, horror and violence and the speakers go through a psychological process related to their mythological intertexts as each poem goes on. I close many of the poems with affirmed definitive statements reflective of newfound ideas.

Fade In: Spiral biting a pinkie cuticle

INT. ROOM - DAY

There's no witty title for girls with Anxiety,
and so I just sit here,
with my teeth gnawing at the same tendon,
of my slow roast thought,
the same joint, that won't seem to loosen
as the rest of the meat does,
the rest of me does,

but the biting never stops,
it's all teeth, all chew.

UNGIRL

Bite.
Bite.
Bite.
Bite.

FADE OUT.

LATER

There is a lot of screaming during this,
and perhaps this is too raw of me,
perhaps this is too uncooked,
unready, rare meat,
matted hair and sticky skin.

UNGIRL

Have I told you before that you have
the nicest skin I've ever slept in?

I want to carve permanent laugh lines
into my cheeks
into the claw marks of my face,
or embed all the stitching of happiness
with my hair and into my pillow,
maybe then it will sink in,
or force its way into my dreams.

FADE OUT.

INT. ROOM - THE NEXT DAY

Last night I slept on my back for a change.
for a second, I felt it work,
but Anxiety has a voice you see,
and it shouts:
she's sleeping,
she's slipped off into oblivion
she's jumped,
she's pool no water,
she's ligaments on the loose,

*she's feet twisted,
she's ankle click,
she's bone pop,
and it won't stop.*

INT. ROOM – THE NEXT DAY

I had a question midway through the chewing.
Is self-cannibalism a symptom of Anxiety?

FADE OUT.

END

It Was a Pity About Her Eyes

age 8

She should never have looked.
The First punches her before bedtime stories, when the lights are out,
she would not have seen.

age 11

Clouded are limerent memories.
On the playground The Second kissed her for a bet,
she should never have looked.

age 16

Blood soaks her skirt, fruit juice from a bruised peach.
Her body a discarded seed, nectar wiped off The Third's unbuckled jeans as
if a stain,
this is what it means to be seen.

age 22

Her mouth fills with it, blood, in her ears, up her nose.
She can still hear The Fourth's snicker, drowning in it--she wakes up
again,
she should never have looked.

age 26

The Fifth held her hand, as she felt out the cave walls.

They were walking in the wrong direction,
but she couldn't have seen.

age 28

Their portrait is on the floor, glass (like her body) smashed into the table.
Shattered! Embedded in her desperate fingers trying to hold a dream,
she should never have just looked,
maybe then, she would have seen them all.

The truest form in the moment of reflection

*In those eyes of mine,
I saw a face,
a gaze of one I don't recognise,
eyes lowered down,
she peers into me
with sad eyes,
and a quivering mouth,
bottom lip heavy,
bitten and stung,
the face is bruised,
blotchy with memories,
my eyes are open to her
and she sees me,
less than nothing,
less than nothing,
and she sees me,
my eyes are open to her,
blotchy with memories,
the face is bruised,
bitten and stung,
bottom lip heavy,
and a quivering mouth,
with sad eyes,
she peers into me,
eyes lowered down,
a gaze of one I don't recognise,
I saw a face,
In those eyes of mine.*

Chew and Swallow

Before I was afraid,
there was no light here,
I thought the head would come clean off--it went first,
like tableaux,
I could feel movement in my side,
they writhed, but I couldn't think on that,
chunks of chewed joint wrestle me,
I bite,
beasts come of monsters without the chains of reason
they each thrash,

Now I am tired,
there is no beauty here,
only crouched, ready to receive another,
I must continue,
there is only the ripping of skin,
torn flesh from bone,
this one does not move anymore,
I can feel the vertebrates disconnected in the soft folds of the back,
I chew,
the taste gristle and marrow is on the tongue,
the children are swallowed by fear,
raw their eyes are,

Soon I will cease,
there will be no *thing* here,
but there will be only blood,
and loose ligament caught between my teeth,
merging with tendrils of fine hair,
I swallow,
hopefully it will be the last time I do,
the abject will never return though they will claw without arms,
they will wretch and squirm, still babes fresh from primordial sleep,
I hope they do not return.

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