

The Girls Carve Out Their Names with Cigarettes in the Parlour

Cadence

It would be easy if you could give your lover
a pomegranate, to make her stay on the dark side
the underworld where the bodies burn with ice-blue flame
desecrate their family name to share
peaches with each other bite down into something
whole, and real its blood dripping down the pit
a wasted, shrunken moon. Burn chapbooks in
the parlour, taste the poetry scorch the gums
burn the baby teeth from every smile. After a Victorian party
the men would all unpin their green carnations which whispered
of (forbidden love) the girls would all slip the crown
of violets from their head and return home to
the emptiness of night. After a pride parade you
see the people wrap up their pride flags into unrecognisable
scraps of fabric and scrub the rainbows from their
cheeks: the moon watches them become just
like any other people on the train.
The blue bite of the underworld scares away girls
bad enough to murmur, good enough to fall back into



a nuclear family not a nuclear legacy let herself glow
only in the coolness of witching hour. Let the glow
scorch her insides write a secret history on the underside
of her flesh like the girls burned their kisses
into the pages of Greek plays that mentioned the
evils of the female sex (xoxoxoxo) their wantonness
(xoxoxo) their trickery (xoxoxo). Drowning them out
with the bite of a flame leaving behind a mouthful of ashes
that once found, librarians will never be able to
vacuum out that will float towards the hidden pride flags
in school bags fill eyes with the greenery of violets