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# [There is So Much Blood in Us]

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*[THERE IS SO MUCH BLOOD IN US]*

A COLLECTION OF POEMS  
by  
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SUBMITTED TO SCRIPPS COLLEGE  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS

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## Preface

Ginsy what did you gain  
when N.C. sweetened snatch  
and dreamt the unnamed item's  
ultimate cunt? Why do your men  
with their endless cock and balls  
always take, while your women  
are always taken?

Ginsy *listen to me* I could have written a poem  
about endless cunt and breasts, or dreaming  
of America's ultimate cock –

with well-placed words, I could have shown you  
how to sweeten the same scrotum America uses  
as wrapping paper for wage gaps  
and judicial t-bagging; but Ginsy

time has turned these words  
into news headlines, screaming promises of fresh blood  
and conversation starters;  
when my mother comes to pick me up from my first sleepover,  
Marion Mathieu's mother will ask her –

*Did you read about what happened to that poor girl? No?  
It's unspeakable, she was:  
**BRUTALLY RAPED / MURDERED**  
**BODY FOUND / STAY TUNED FOR MORE.***

And I will ask about her stance on semiotics  
And she will ask why I am crying  
And I will tell her to google Ferdinand de Saussure.

Now Ginsy I don't know if you ever got into theory,  
but semiotics says that word and concept / sign and signified,  
share a purely psychological connection; but if the words I hear,  
**cunt / bitch / rape / asking for it**  
cause my vagina to seize upon impact,  
then are they not in some way the same?  
Is the word not also its violence?

Ferdinand what's your rebuttal?

# I

Body dangling out the Boston seventh story window,  
I stretch / strain  
streamline cigarette smoke out,  
away from the student-loans  
wallpapering my university holding cell.

A saxophone makes its way down my ear tubes  
and into my mind; the song trembles  
with images of prohibition jazz,  
and I am a flapper, unfurling my limbs  
into sleeveless sequins / chopping my hair  
with a pink switchblade;

I am the unlocking of body joints in the morning,  
floorboards warming under watery sunlight.

## II

In an interview with LA Weekly, Hugh Hefner said:  
*one has to understand there is a connection between jazz and sex,*  
and I am angry, because we *understand*  
that sex is a connection between body  
and body. Physical / Subjective / Slippery.

Jazz is a nicotine hazy photograph of your best friends  
laughing wine out their nostrils,  
talking theory / talking trash;  
stomach lining ripples – euphoric nausea.

On the Craigslist Personal Ads, Allen Ginsberg writes:  
*great mind seeking jazz or sex or soup,*  
and I am angry, because even though the words say  
jazz is love / jazz is survival,

sex is not always love; for some,  
sex is  
a 3am nightmare wake up into a panic attack  
and soup  
is the Crystal Light of the food pyramid.

Fuck your interchangeability.

### III

Saxophone diffuses jazz into the city – my brainwaves melt  
into music, and I forget the cigarette between my teeth;  
it slips from lips, streamlining  
to the concrete street below  
with nothing but a broken parachute of smoke  
to make amends; and I am a spectator to cancer plummeting  
towards a stroller / into a stroller / into a mouth / into a baby's mouth.  
Baby sucks my cigarette like a binkie,  
shrieking mother takes the cigarette and stoppers her own mouth with it.  
Drawing a can of silver spray paint from the stroller, she writes on the sidewalk:

*Suck down their fires  
or watch our daughters  
burn in the flames.*

Cement turns tender under her touch,  
and I cry for five minutes.

## IV

My seventeenth birthday was poetic  
in the inverse – a reversal into the womb;

my mother is a paramedic. She puts defibrillators  
on bodies pronounced Dead On Arrival, and tells me  
“the thing is not yet missing – your body has not lost the person.”

## V

I make a womb of my mattress  
while an Amazon Original about Vikings  
plays mute on my laptop,  
and I promptly fall asleep on the keyboard.

I wake into a dream about a woman warrior  
who wears a chastity belt on her head like a tiara – no,  
like a crown; Queen,  
the Viking men they tell her  
that the holes in her hat  
are meant for her thick thighs,  
that the belt on her head  
is a weapon for a man to wield.

She says;

*I am stronger wearing chastity like chainmail  
than wearing chainmail over your “weapon.”*

And the Viking men, with their protrusions and bloodlust  
strap their horns tighter and tell the warrior;  
*woman, don't you get it? The less your desire,  
the greater our delight.*

## VI

*Vagina*  
in Latin,  
means sheath / scabbard / covering;  
or  
sheath of an ear of grain / hull / husk.

*Vagina* sheaths;  
a weapon,  
or life.

When I was wombed,  
my mother sheathed both.

## VII

I wake into reality with a keyboard stamped into my face.  
I sacrifice my confidence,  
and use the 10x zoom mirror on my desk,  
sludging makeup onto my skin like primer paint.  
It does not conceal the key squares.

I think about keys on my face  
and keys to chastity belts  
and how it never seems like *those* keys belong to the *right* people  
and wouldn't it be something  
if all women wore chastity belts  
that only we have the keys to?  
I hear a chime

and wonder if the saxophone has taken residence  
in my ear tubes, *but no that's ridiculous*  
I am hearing my key ring, a wind chime  
of car keys / door keys / room keys to double door knobs we lock from the inside  
every night, before dreaming of keys to the gates of our chastity belts.

Does a mother's baby ache  
for those cool metal gates?  
Can a mother *be* a chastity belt – a preserver  
of the untouristed snow  
that is her infant daughter's body?

Or can she only wait, until an unwanted someone  
leaves footprints in her child's skin?  
Will she plead with the clouds  
to open back up and cover his tracks?  
Will she whisper  
babygirl lullabies into the crib,  
about white vans and roofies  
and *don't wear headphones at night*,  
and "that's just the way the world works"  
she will sing as the baby cries.

## VIII

Celia Madeline Elizabeth June Roberta Shepherd de Blanco.

My grandmother, or abuelita  
(depending on the dinner guests)  
has eight names and a hymn  
that goes:

*A winner never quits y a quitter never wins,  
repite.*

I repeat, and pretend  
that the parameters of her mantra extend  
to addiction; I retrieve my Marlboro 27's.

But then I think of my mom,  
and how her body built my lungs;  
how she grew me legs to kick her with, a mother  
cursing, as her womb's unformed feet  
became my soles, straining  
to break through her belly.

I am Mama's little claustrophobic fetus,  
burning all of her labor into ash as I wrap  
chains of smoke around my wrists, walk to the window,  
and submit to the twitching in my right hand.

The saxophone has stopped playing.  
Boston screams into its empty air.

## IX

With headphones clamped over ears,  
I sit on the windowsill, and try  
to play my smartphone like a saxophone;

but the acrylic sounds of Spotify jazz  
send synthetic fibers of noise  
writhing down my ear holes,

so I flip the switch  
to “noise cancelling,”  
because silence  
burns slower  
than sonic simulation.

I light a cigarette.

## X

Surveying for babies on the block, I see only one  
on a billboard for Planned Parenthood.  
Below the baby billboard,  
Fox News broadcaster Tucker Carlson  
sits on a bench, Entertainment Weekly  
spread-legged across his lap.

As a public servant and compulsive anarchist,  
I begin to snapchat the right wing mascot beneath an ad  
for the holy mecca of abortion,  
but T.C. has begun to move his hand over his fly and oh god  
the shadows squirming on his crotch are swelling and oh god  
he's using his newspaper as a shield but *I am not in the safe zone*  
and my blood is nauseous, undulating beneath my skin as I'm dry heaving, now I'm wet  
heaving, spit out the cigarette but what about the babies and the fertilized eggs and why  
do we call it semen instead of fertilizer and oh my god he's still doing it –

## **XI**

Bonus Question:

Which Fox News segment does Tucker Carlson jerk off to most,

Breaking News?

Or his own?

## XII

Blackmail videographer,  
I am filming the patriotic acts of Tucker Carlson  
and fantasizing about chastity belts  
when my uterus shivers with the bloody release  
of another seamless month; I stop videotaping Tucker Carlson  
masturbating behind Entertainment Weekly.

As my womb drains itself, I am filled  
with a calm only unstainable black pants can provide.  
I think of Marion Mathieu's eighth grade slumber party –

### XIII

It was my first sleepover.  
With one light switch twitch of her finger  
Marion Mathieu brought darkness down upon me,  
and eight other 13 year olds.  
Rosemarie Carter rolled across the night-lightless floor  
put her lips too close to my ear holes  
and whispered –  
*I got this thing called a period last Wednesday.*  
*It's kind of like having a cut*  
*and peeing at the same time.*

She described these torture tools called tampons; little cotton bullets  
that her mom shot into her stomach to staunch the blood flow.  
Rosemarie was so scared, her muscles locked into a fortress  
but her mother insisted, *this is the way the world works*  
and used the Tampax applicator like a battering ram.

Horried and envious,  
underdeveloped and devastated,  
I folded my body into a fetal curl,  
making a womb of my Hannah Montana sleeping bag.

## XIV

I joined the ranks of women while sitting  
in my 10<sup>th</sup> grade History class.

While Maria Robins carefully tore her syllabus into note sized squares  
and the projector played a low-budget film  
about the role of female infanticide  
in the birth of the Viking Age,  
hot wetness spread out beneath me.

I became a warrior,  
spilling menstrual blood through my khaki shorts  
and onto the hard plastic of the chair bolted to my desk.  
I felt like the bolts had been punched through  
the stretch mark flesh of my thighs;  
I could not rise, or blood would pour from my body  
splashing a layer of red across tan tiled floors.

I would make a literal blood bath of Ms. Bishop's classroom.

## XV

Ms. Bishop, who's teaching voice crackled  
like burnt bubbles on a pizza crust,  
made dough of her words, kneading my shame  
into prideful comradery. She pressed three pads into my hand,  
tucked a roll of paper towels under her arm,  
and left a pack of Lysol wipes on my desk.  
She walked me to my car  
and lay ten towels on the driver's seat.

I began to cry.  
I called my mom. She asked:

*why are you so ashamed  
of bleeding through your pants?*  
I said *Mom it's disgusting what if a boy saw me?*  
She asked  
if I'd be disgusted by a boy  
with a fist-fight bleeding lip, and said:

*Babygirl, you're a woman now –  
like tampons, we come in all sizes,  
and some would rather drown in their own blood  
than wear it on their pants.*

*Do you think  
I would have taught you how to swim,  
if you were meant to drown?*

## XVI

In the dorm bathroom, there is a small trash bin  
positioned beneath the stall dividers, that reads  
**Feminine Hygiene Products Only**

The bin is brimming  
with blood soaked vagina plugs,  
and none of it smells hygienic, or feminine  
(and by feminine  
I mean Calvin Klein cartwheeling  
through a field of dusk colored daisies)

but it is beautiful,  
like a pile of ballerinas in debutante white tutus,  
faceless and floating  
in a swimming pool full of ketchup.  
I remember first communion –

the vanilla frills  
my grandmother frosted onto my limbs,

and the alcoholic Jesus blood  
teacher nuns forced me to swallow.  
I remember white jeans – my first “real” date,

and menstrual sabotage, and crying to Mom  
because Patrick recoiled from the period  
painted across my white denim crotch.

For the record,  
I’m not saying that Jesus and I  
have the same blood currency –  
but if it is holy to put his blood  
**in my body,**  
how can it be unhygienic  
for my blood to be  
**on my body?**

## XVII

I seal the leak between my legs, left  
with bloody fingers and a pink tampon wrapper.  
Plunging my bright blood hand  
into browning cotton,  
I bury it deep in the period bin,  
laying it to rest  
amongst the **Feminine Hygiene Products**.

The savagery of these tampons,  
our fallen soldiers, reminds me  
of the nations that we have wombed,  
the states our blood has swaddled;  
this is the vitality of our body / our blood.

I retreat to my room and confront the mirror;  
our body / our blood / vitality  
*our body / our blood / vitality.*

I smear my period soaked hand  
across the reflection of my face,  
and watch blood drip down the mirror  
like rain on windows.

## XVIII

America, when you watch T.C. perform the nightly news,  
with its body counts and viral videos  
splaying our guts like glory,  
do you find yourself

captivated? Thrilled, by the unlocking of “your” women’s bodies,  
our red-vessel veins severed  
into arterial drinking fountains.

America, is your thirst quenched?

Or do you lean in and sip,  
slip your hands beneath your waistband,  
and sync the rhythm of your masturbation  
to the cop car war cry  
that croons from your surround sound electrouniverse?

America I am afraid of your media,  
and its bodies / *our bodies* / man mangled  
and its voices / your violence / all cunt no vagina  
and it’s everywhere –

America don’t you think it’s about time you sterilized yourself?  
Soaked your hands in Windex,  
and let California's trendy heat waves  
suck the chemicals dripping from your skin?

America shake my bloody hand with that Windex skin. Your chemical blue  
slippery against my period soaked palm,  
as these lady bones clamp and I implant  
my cherry-lacquer nails into you; I puncture  
four red half-moons into your blue veins.

With our blood on my hands, I cover you.  
I clean you – I disinfect with windex; **Feminine Hygiene**.  
You cry like my mirror, and red Windex tears make a mask  
so that when I look at you,  
I cannot see myself.

## XIX

I accept the impracticality of a blood painted mirror  
and begin to blast it with a Windex spray bottle,  
but then the Windex and blood synthesize,  
and now there are rivulets of pink toxic body fluid  
streaming down my reflection face. I get déjà vu

and liquid drips down my neck, only  
my neck is dry it's the mirror that's wet and my arm hair is alert  
and there is liquid crawling across my skin like a nightmare full of ants, only  
there isn't.

I decide to cleanse myself  
and spray every remaining surface in the room  
with Windex. I accidentally drown  
the spider that moved in last week,

and then I feel bad that I didn't ask for its name,  
and then I feel bad that I killed my nameless roommate with Windex,  
and then I throw the Windex out the window.

But my overzealous cleanse has  
polluted the air with Windex infused oxygen, a smell like burrs  
trapped between sock and skin.  
I excavate a snorkeling mask from my closet and suction cup it to my face,  
swallowing the images of snorkel masks sucking eyeballs from eye sockets;  
my jaw clamps onto the mouth piece like an orange slice.

I remember that a snorkel's sole purpose is to drop existing air into an esophagus,  
and I am funneling Windex into my lungs.  
I decide to keep the mask on in the elevator.

When a boy embracing a saxophone asks "why," I say "don't ask *me* why,"  
and he says "okay," and starts playing Wrecking Ball in the elevator.  
Saxophone Miley Cyrus. How bizarre.

## XX

337 Huntington Avenue has two benches  
flanking its entrance. I cannot pass these benches  
without sitting on the one closest to the street corner,  
lighting a cigarette,  
and watching.

So when the saxophone and I part ways  
I lift a cigarette to the snorkel in my mouth, and then  
I remember that there is a snorkel in my mouth.

So I release the tube and hand it to a passing child  
who promptly starts thwacking his mother  
in the vagina with it.

This does not phase me.

## XXI

Rain releases itself onto the city; I do not hide under my hood.  
When the water bursts upon my dry skin  
it is like a thousand ice breezes whipping me back to life –  
I am soaking wet,  
and I am being licked by the sky,  
and I am  
awake,  
rain streaming across snorkel goggles.

With a soggy cigarette between my teeth  
I drink the water slipping down its white paper casing  
and then I take the wet filter  
and wet tobacco in wet paper  
into my mouth / chew it / swallow it;  
*suck down my fires.* I pull up my hood  
and light a new cigarette  
while water drops pause on the lip of my hood  
before rejoining the rain.

In damp air smoke smells like a nursing home,  
but a quitter never wins / a winner never quits  
so in my grandmother's honor I make a matchstick of this cigarette,  
letting fire burn its way into my lungs,  
and listen to the far off spinal crack  
of an elderly Ecuadorian woman's pride breaking.

## XXII

When all but the filter remains, I peel my body from the bench.  
The sidewalk is old Boston cobble stone,  
and I have difficulty navigating  
with rain drop snorkel goggles on.  
So I pry them out  
of the fleshy mold they have made of my face,  
and pass the mask to an elderly man  
who snaps it onto his wife.

He laughs  
then she laughs  
and they look at me to laugh,  
so I emit a sound that I hope passes as charming yet demure. Their laughs falter  
so I turn and move on.

## XXIII

In the Back Bay Fens (a slug shaped park)  
there is a couple making out  
on a bench facing the Museum of Fine Arts;  
they wear rubber masks – Hillary Clinton and Ryan Gosling.  
Ryan nuzzles Hillary's neck with his waterproof mouth and it's distressing  
because I'm kind of into it  
so I pivot towards a bench to my left  
and see my frenemy, Allen Ginsberg, screaming  
at someone clad like a dad, and it's hard to hear  
beneath the white noise of rain cascading through trees,  
but the word "cunt" stings my earlobes.

I remember that *Esquire* interview  
at Allen's last podcast premiere party,  
and how they asked if he is single / ready to mingle,  
to which he said *no, I am dating the Father of Semiotics*  
and they asked if he meant a priest  
and he said *no*,  
and they asked if he has daddy issues  
and he said *yes, I have some issues with Ferdinand*.

I sit between Allen and his daddy,  
light a cigarette under the awning of my hood,  
and ask Allen if he has a vagina;  
he says,  
*no?*  
and I say  
*I know*.  
and no one speaks for ten minutes.

Ferdinand de Saussure asks me for a cigarette,  
but recoils when I offer the Marlboro 27's. Fair enough.  
Then Allen asks if I have a cunt;  
I say,  
*no*.  
and he says,  
*you're lying*.  
and I tell him to *fuck off*.

Ferdinand touches my left cheek with two damp fingers  
and asks me for my sound image, so I tell him to stop touching me  
and also tell him my name. Allen says *get a room*.

## XXIV

I have an allergic reaction to the cliché and have to flee,  
smoking my way deeper into the Fens.  
It begins to snow.

The earth is still rain warm, too soft for snow to stick.  
I remove my scarf / coat / sweater  
and with outstretching limbs I open my body onto the ground,  
letting damp earth gravitate towards my skin;

## XXV

The wonderful thing about snow,  
is that the lifespan of a cigarette  
is 5x longer  
than in rain, and all of the air  
released from my lungs  
looks the same; smoking in the snow  
is like eating  
a sugar free cupcake.

It is 3pm  
and the sky is getting darker,  
and my nostrils are numb,  
and there is a woman in a Viking costume  
walking towards me  
but it is November  
and why is she in a Viking costume in November  
and it's hard to see through the heavy snow  
but why does she look so much like my mother?

“Babygirl what the hell is wrong with you?”  
It is my mother.  
There is laughter in her voice and I think I have frostbitten elbows,  
so I say *too many things to count* and she covers me  
with the furs she carries on her shoulders.  
“Are you on your period?” she asks.

I nod / She smiles / “Me too.”  
I light a cigarette.  
She shakes her head once so I flick it to the ground,  
and we watch white snow  
cover its still-burning white body.

## XXVI

I once asked my mother:  
*When did the hands on a clock  
become the hands holding our strings,  
as we marionette our way across time?*

She said:  
*It happened when we realized  
that the joints in our bodies  
are bound by string.*

## Afterword

For eighteen years I have watched my peers  
grab and spit and laugh,  
and smile while laughing,  
and laugh while spitting out the words  
*cunt suck      bitch suck      slut suck cock.*

I have caught their saliva on my tongue,  
and chewed through No. 2's  
and computer screens,  
and pulled my legs up to my chest,  
tobacco twitching,  
as the intellectual with a lemon rind voice  
interprets trauma they have not met; *and one day*

a professor will whisper rebellion  
into the minds of my generation, only to find  
that our minds were claimed / maimed / marinated  
when the teachers splintered our knuckles  
with their meat cleaving rulers;  
butchered our brains, "*they go down better when tender.*"

I once asked the teachers;  
*but how can we fight*  
*when you ground meat our muscles?*  
They said;  
*there's no need for violence, come eat*  
*sit down at the table, are the pills still working?*  
*Have your moods been stable?*  
*Here drink some vodka*  
*it'll cleanse your palate –*

so I asked America for a menu,  
and was handed a ballot.