DETOX

We can run the whole ritual backwards until

The process of feasting is that of creation, its

Opposite: Ortolan-body reassembled, brandy siphoned

Back into the meal, straining the seams of our cheeks.

Under each cloth stirs a rebirth: Father, each of us

Blinded by his napkin, a movie screen down which

The retrograde credits slither, then drop, name

By name, first names first, into our laps like grease.

On our screens, raw devolution: The suicides

Tucked in the old films’ backgrounds, feathered,

Ascend and embark, as these our vessels,

Laden for return voyages, steal back their ocean.

The buntings’ heads reunite, we can only assume,

With the correct bodies. Father, pay no attention

To the flapping behind the curtain, here, beneath

These shrouds where reanimation is gradual: Creatures,

Coffin-bound, sailing through soil. Shells, we are smashed

Against our plates, the swollen buntings wick’d wild

Into the air: A rescission that pilots them to the black kitchen,

Bloody out the back end of the wine bath that bore them.

This poem originally appeared in *Phoebe*.

TRANSFERENCE NEUROSIS

Even her coo, and this light through the wings,

 All riddled with chiggers:

*Into my arms,* and in the fantasy too the phrase

Shriveled to a pun, intravenous

 In every permutation:

*Into my arms:* Read aloud, a hollow entry point,

But even the safest dream where *I now pronounce you*

Stutters this needle

 Across the wedding march.

\*

Even iconography dismissed with a word

And stranded just beside the heart

In the aorta’s shadow: Angel-shaped,

 And inside that,

Ever condom, ever contraband.

\*

Simple the exam by which one peeks *beneath the hood*

To distinguish valkyrie from

 Angel from cockroach,

Even *entry point*: Non-platonic, misconstrued:

*Keep it cordial:*  Blusher

Veil, flyaway veil,

 Cathedral-style:

Bridal train that billows like a shout upon which she glides

Close:

 *I now pronounce you*

(Her name unpronounceable).

\*

And only then the hate: Even that stripped and dyed:

Witness here one’s heathen enemy

Borne out of his waste and to Valhalla

By one’s familiar valkyrie—

Windblown paper corsage, paper plates, placemats, invitations,

Paper light through stained glass,

Borne aloft on fumigant gusts—

\*

Endless this treatment and ensuing extraction:

The constant course correction

 Correcting one’s pronunciation

With the short white burn on the tongue and the word willed

 *Into my arms*,

Word surgical in its violence, in carving

The presence from the phantom

 Stump, and excising the lump

In one’s throat, her coo, then rinsing the contraband

Onto a pan, in order to prod it while the patient feigns sleep,

(Without dreams feigning sleep nonetheless), and to parse

With her nails

 All blessing from borax.

This poem originally appeared in *Bombay Gin.*

FORTEAN GODS

*Recidivist Myth*

From this same womb recycled for the third time in as many years.

Epidural of the gods so mother won’t complain or ever walk again.

Hers a love much like the undiscovered animal, the mangy soul

Outside of the protection Animal Welfare laws afford, hers a love

Upon which you’ll test your cosmetics. It’s not that relapsing

Is any worse than coming home, caked in amniotic glue, and nude:

His shirt rolled up and immediately you recognize the overdose,

The steps returning to the source, a sound of brushfire in the organs

Indistinct from the typhoon’s tattoo snuffing it gently. Nudity

Which starts one over in the harem of the entry-level market:

Cheek-high skirts patrol the corner, rolled-up pant leg, one more

Epidural. Please. Take me home, pleads the legendary hitchhiker

To whom you lent your jacket, who drops it off for you to find

Jutting from her grave. Mother locked in again with some corpse.

To the third interview this month you’re dragged from the same womb:

What you should never say to HR: Pick me up. Take me home.

For a good time, call. Heading wherever. If I could be any animal,

I’d be the cryptid, dyed and perfumed. Ass, gas or plowed under grass.

This poem originally appeared in *Sou’wester.*