

miniMAG

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fenrir



A Gun is a Gun

Alma Ariaz

An opened pill bottle
Is a sword, edge-first,
Waiting to be fallen upon.

A bathtub filled to the brim
Is an invitation
For fate to swoop in;
For fate to take away.

A noose is a threat.
A knife is a pencil,
It will draw in scarlet ink,
A picture of loss.

A gun is a gun.
It will take,
And take,
It will.

There is Death in objects
Where no sentience lives.
There are Death-rattles
In the chests of everyone I have loved,
There are symptoms in every sensation,
Angels circling my head;

Death has followed me
Since I held its gaze,
And did not look away first.
Ailment loomed
Since I held it in my arms,
Abandonment etched,
Scrawled upon every inch of my body.
A contagion.

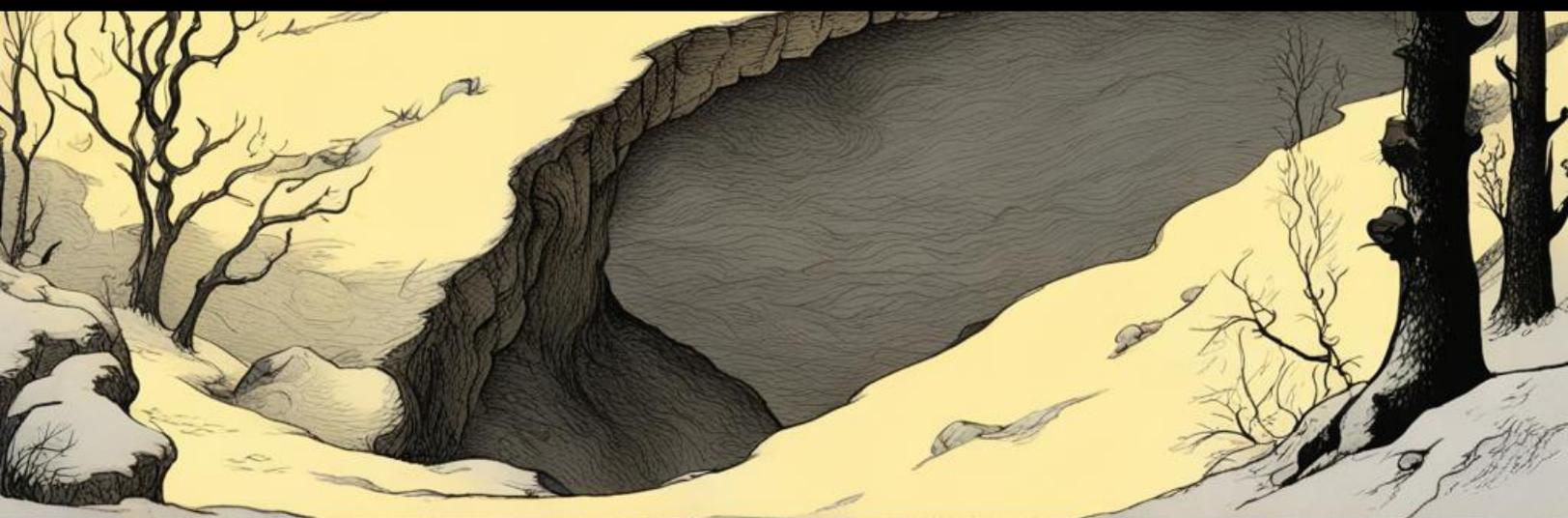
I pray to God every night,
So he won't descend upon me.
Let me weep another night,
My beloved mourn another day.



The Nocturnal's Sonnet

Shamik Banerjee

Lone Glowworm, come! perchance with you and me
Might Somnus will forever be displeased,
Unlike the rest He amplements tenderly;
Come from your withe, we'll have our lonesness eased.
Sit on my desk and watch the sophic moon
For years which has been bards' device of love,
Or scintillate your lantern to entune
With sparks sent by your kindred stars above.
With you I learned to not resent the ones
Who draw Sleep's breaths for I can watch the Dawn
Break from the clouds, and think- when closed has Sun's
Work and all from their duties have withdrawn,
Then you, the stars and moon illumine the sky,
So, who will write Night's beauty if not I?



Witches

Ogden Nesmer

We'd left town sprinting. Moll bounced up grassy slopes with antelope ease, springing on her arches making little muddy squishes and her white skirt flicking. She turned back to me from the top, the sun still low in the sky and shimmering through her locks.

We're getting closer!

Sweat freckled her pink cheeks as she waited impatiently for me to catch up. I wouldn't ever admit to her but I was afraid. The stories that made it over these hills and out from the fens were all grisly yarns of bloody mishap: goats sacrificed and children gobbled up. They explained why kids like us were supposed to stay in town, why we had to go to school and follow the rules, why at least two of my friends were no longer seen in my neighborhood.

What do witches look like? I asked Moll in a whisper while our teacher prattled on.

She's beautiful, nothing like the stories. She has silky blonde hair and straight teeth. She smells like cinnamon and apples and her clothes sparkle as they toss in the swamplight, Moll told me. No one else would believe her, but it was true. She'd seen the witch. She'd dared out

to the verboten regions and come back safely. She's amazing, Moll said. I want to be a witch too, when I grow up. She made me keep the secret and promised she would take me to see the witch, if I was lucky.

What do witches look like?

Ugly, my father replied, holding my hand tight as we ambled to the bus stop. Warts and scabs. Green skin, like a frog's, coated in greasy phlegm.

Are there more witches than just the one in the swamp?

I don't know.

Was she born a witch or can someone become a witch?

I don't know.

What do witches eat?

Children.

As the buildings of town slinked into nothing over the horizon behind us, Moll and me found ourselves completely alone. The roads had disappeared, taking with them those few adults roaming from town to town on donkeys who might find the sight of two children out on their own to be odd and intervene. Everyone knows that children are supposed to be in school. We were unsafe, hopping through brush and



stomping puddles. Moll laughed and I must have been beaming at her because she called me a dope and pushed me over playfully. I thought about how mad my father would be when he found out I wasn't in school. How my mother might even cry for worry. How I wanted to tuck the hair stuck to Moll's temple behind her ear. We skipped hand-in-hand until we reached an abandoned plaza of stone-block structures, all weathered and falling apart, some stacked up high above our head. Shaggy moss clotted their cracks and stained their surfaces with

wetness, and some of the shriveled shapes must have once been statues of elegant women and heroic warriors.

Who made these?

Witches! Moll giggled as she hopped onto a pillar as wide as her wingspan and started scooting up using all her limbs. I followed slowly and from the apex we could see the swamp ahead of us, closer than I would have thought. The fog rolling out from the tangle of wiry trees was purple, and I pursed my lips so I wouldn't ask any more stupid questions.

I heard she killed her own parents, my friend Cam had said. But the rest of us weren't convinced.

That's not true, Paul shot back, I've seen her parents walking her to school.

Both of them? I asked.

Well... no. Just her mom.

That's because her dad is dead, Cam confirmed. And together, with her mom, they boiled him up and left the stew in the cafeteria. And that's what we had for lunch yesterday. We all laughed.

Shhh! Paul pulled us closer and pointed behind Cam's back. There was Moll, shutting her locker and walking off with her head low.

Did she hear us? None of us could say.

It smelled like sulfur. The mud bubbles seeping up from the ground had an oily shine. Why did they look like that? Something heavy slithered off through the muck. What was that? Is it poisonous?

Moll, I said, should we go back?

We're so close now, she said but didn't turn to face me. We can't go back.

I pulled a rock from the mud and cast it off in front of us and explained I was trying to scare off the snakes and spiders.

Good idea, Moll said, and she lept up on a dead tree and puffed up her chest. She belted out a yell and I belted one too. Birds flapped away and something in the canopy darted from tree to tree to leave us behind. And then it was quiet.

I'm sorry, I had told her. I was trying to catch my breath, having sprinted up to her on her way home and I thought I'd have something better to say. But all I said was I'm sorry. I'm sorry for my friends. We didn't mean it.

Yes you did, she told me.

No, I—

And you were right. She smiled wickedly and pushed me over.

She ran and I chased her. I stopped spending time with Paul and Cam and they started to tell everyone at school I had always been crazy.

I saw Moll slip and sink her foot into the mud. Moll! I cried, loping over and pulling at her knee. I'm fine, she patted my shoulder and we tugged and soon she was free and resumed her skipping. Please Moll, I looked both ways hearing twigs break and mosquitoes buzz, Please let's go back. She didn't say no, she didn't stop skipping. Come on, she told me. We're getting closer. The fog was so thick it swallowed her up. Please, Moll.

Where's Ingrid? I asked my father once at dinner. The girl from down the street?

Witches, was all he said. My mother began to cry.

A crow landed at my feet and squawked. Sounded like it was dying or in pain, and it pecked at my toes. I jumped to the side and tripped and hit the mud. Trying to get it off my face only got more in my eyes. Something was on my chest and I swatted blindly and it was gone. Moll? I cried and heard my own echo, but no Moll. I backed into a tree and stood myself up and something else— not the bird, not a snake, not anything I could tell— screeched at me and I yelped and wiped the muck from my eyes but nothing was there. Moll? No answer. Moll? No answer. But the fog started glowing over my shoulder.

I turned to see something long and graceful that was giving off a blue light through the trees and the haze. It was taller than my father, but too skinny to be a man. It moved slowly closer but something was in the way. Something definitely person-shaped, small like me and wearing a muddied skirt.

Moll!

I ran forward bounding over high roots and brackish pools. I called her name again and again but she wouldn't turn to face me. The light, so human but not really, raised what was almost its face to see me. It was so close, and I put my hands on Moll's shoulders and whipped her around.

Isn't she beautiful, Moll asked sweetly. But something was wrong with her eyes. They were open wide and light poured forth. Isn't she?

Witches.

The End.



Betrayal Round Every Corner

Jenny Olson

The corridors of the castle were dark and deep
Betrayal round every corner
She hugged her cape tight against her body
Wishing she was back asleep

What lay ahead, she had no clue
Betrayal round every corner
But he called, what could he want?
Around the corners, she flew

She clutched the torch in her hand
Betrayal round every corner
Wait, who's there?
Nothing was going as planned

A shadow stepped out from the wall
Betrayal round every corner
She was fucked, wasn't she?
Oh Lord she felt so small

She didn't see it coming
Betrayal round every corner
It was the Queen after all
Shit her head was drumming

The shadow lowered her hood
Betrayal round every corner
You thought he was summoning you
Dumb bitch, she never understood

Fuck over a woman with her man
Betrayal round every corner
Doesn't matter if he's the King
She's stuck without a plan

Queen reached out, stroked her face
Betrayal round every corner
Death was here for her
Her life was gone, without a trace

Betrayal round every corner
Betrayal round every corner
All for a man
Well all for his cock
Her life was snuffed

Don't fuck with the Queen





UNTITLED

Moineau Shin Binon

Dead skin slips into barren
ground, as time peels off trunks
of ironed hansoms. The lips of leaves yellow
, and the sun guns to
tail bones
and tail hairs melt as horses ax
their jailing rope, a steady swing. Chalky mountains
bloom and erupt from drivers' palms, a
passenger pail piled with basil-shaped ferns; tacked
to naked limbs, children's glue
puddling on roots
and on a garden song sweat
stained. They make home planked
on sidewalk, above
a third-eye spills – Resting, with
an estranged relative of peace.



The Eating

Alma Ariaz

Mother's stomach has tripled in size.

She feels it around, claws at it with sharp, untrimmed fingernails. Her eyes dart from Him, who is yet to be a Him, but will be, to Her.

She decides that The Eating must commence.

The Eating, from Her to Him, daughter to mother, mother to son, son—

When asked why, She shrugs her shoulders weakly. Remarks, "He must grow strong. I take away from You to give to Him."

It is the natural order of things.

The Eating, because one day She'll realize, Her role was best as Consumed.

Father bows his head slightly. He approves. He is not the one who must go through with The Eating.

The Eating hurts. Pain is all She can think about. Unlike every hand raised, unlike bruised knees and knocked-out teeth, girlhood and idleness, feeling everything and pretending She feels nothing. There is hardly any comparison. Some things cannot be measured on any rational scale.

She prays to no God and begs for no soul. She sits in stillness and gazes at her protectors, and wonders what she did to deserve this.

He grows, as She is cannibalised. And when Her salvaging is complete, She can take comfort in Mother's swollen belly. Distended, full of Parasite; Mother is a host. Whittled down to His home — Her home first, which She let him have — where He lives to hear another night awaiting for Him, out there in what will soon also be His. And when years fold on top of each other and He is told about The Eating, She can take comfort in knowing that not a single tear may float from his eye, because before He is told about The Eating, He will be told about His role in the world. Her role. The role of Consumer and Consumed.

So He will, with quiet gratitude, tip his head slightly towards the Heavens.

She can take comfort in that gratitude. She will not be afforded much else.



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“The Nocturnal’s Sonnet” by Shamik Banerjee
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