DARK PURPLE INTERSECTIONS
(inside my Black Doll Head Irises)

JULIET COOK
“to that somewhere inbetween self and other, near and distant, paradoxical poles resolving moment-to-moment into contiguity. Meeting place.”

~Marthe Reed
Maybe you didn’t want to bloom where you were planted.

Maybe you wanted to escape from where you were planted, create your own individual space that doesn't leave you stuck in the same position, nailed into the same cross-shaped ground.

And so from the ground up and down, you elongate into different circle shapes. You expand and grow your own fairy tale pie filled with maggots that will choke to death or drown in between the red filling unless they learn to fly.

The red filling sometimes fills the whole room, sometimes drips from the ceiling.
My mouth was a crawl space,
tongue covered with bite marks and stings.

My mind couldn't tell the difference between
good or bad, but I wanted to figure it out for myself.

My bedroom was filled with narcoleptic insects.
My bedroom was filled with poison barbs.
My bedroom was filled with broken parts
of ripped out doll head art.

I couldn't remember whether I broke them on purpose
or accidentally knocked them down.

Broken heart after broken heart after broken heart,
sometimes shoved under the bed,
sometimes exploding in my head.

I couldn't decide
whether someone else broke me
or have I always been this way?

It seems like nothing lasts forever with me
except for my poetry.
Parts of me
have felt like I’ve been in this middle-aged semi-oblivion
for over 15 years.

I wrote about my own white hairs before I was 30.
I wrote about my bruised, battered, scratched legs
and the bulging blue veins
that kept on bulging farther
out of alignment

then shifting
too close for comfort
to boring normalcy.

I might be misaligned, but
even though I might not know
exactly who I am, I didn’t ask
for someone else’s advice on how to
replace my webs with something less sticky.
When I was a teenager, I was worried about falling heart-first into the blade.
In my early 20s I obsessed about cutting
into my own neck, dripping some of my own blood
inside a cool whip tub and storing it in the freezer.

My neck felt too full, too strangely drawn
towards a gothic man
who liked the way I looked,
but didn’t feel the same level
of intense mental lust that I felt towards him.

I thought I should drain some of my own heviness out
into a safely refrigerated blood bath.
In my early 30s the man who became my husband bought me the kinkiest bondage porn magazine I’d ever seen and told me that I wasn’t very attractive.

I thought he was telling the truth.

Sometimes he wouldn’t pay attention to me unless I took off my shirt, put a mask on my face and danced in front of him.
After my divorce, I turned anti-romantic again.

I was revved up with an unfocused sex drive.
I didn't believe in love so orgasm was as close as I could get.

All it took to get me randomly turned on last night was accidentally hitting my clit with a pen.
Now the Funeral Home pen has become my new temporary boyfriend.
When I was about to turn 30,
I wasn't ready
for my age to sound older than I felt.
Now I'm more than 15 years older than that
and I look older than I feel
and sometimes I think I keep breaking
into more unattractive pieces,
but at least I'm no longer someone's ugly wife.
He ripped off his wedding ring, flung it to the bottom, 
slammed the door shut and left me 
and his ring inside the car.

Inside an unknown parking garage late at night, 
I hid underneath the back seat, feeling trapped and panicked, 
but not about to follow him inside because he was wasted. 
Whatever happened, he wouldn't remember it the next day.

Soon he wouldn't even remember me. 
I'd be replaced with the next one. 
I wonder if she's been replaced yet.
These days, nobody else's wrinkle repair will work for me.

I sometimes feel tired
of wanting to know more about other people
then they want to know about me.

I sometimes feel tired of sharing.

I feel like hardly anybody cares
about my personal details anymore.
Maybe young people are more interesting
and in comparison, I am relatively meaningless.

After I get up and apply
my Dragon's Blood Wrinkle Repair Eye Creme,
I'm filled with hours spent crying.

I ruin my own repair.
Perhaps there are specters inside me.

I've gone from overly skinny
to average sized.
Fast. Bulging abdomen
looks like fake pregnancy

which backtracks me to the bunny
I owned as a teen. Chelsea Antoinette.
A name I wouldn’t apply to anything now,
but I had a more romantic brain back then.
That’s why I don’t relate to teenagers now.
We all change and change and change.

She died after her phantom pregnancy
turned into cancer. A baby shaped tumor.
I almost died after my misinterpretation of love
started to multiply into blind eyed lies.

Abdominal bleachers, my non double feature
breasts overtaken by distended stomach.
I eat Reduced Fat Cheese Crackers
after drinking multiple glasses of wine.
We haven't talked in years, but suddenly he wants me again
to be the one
to listen to him
slur out inconsistent words
while he sits in front of the railroad tracks
and drinks himself to death
and asks me what I'm wearing.

It's not fair to suddenly drain someone else
with your own lack of desire to stay alive,
but sometimes life is not fair.

I almost lied. I told him I didn't
like him as much as I used to,
and even though that part is true,
I left out the other part.
I miss parts of the past. I wish
parts of the past could be brought back to life.

I don't want his current drunk slurs
to ruin my positive memories, but they already have.

I might as well delete him from my life,
because he deletes me from his whenever he's sober.

I'm tired of being a last resort,
a suicide hot line inside a middle-aged woman's body,
stuck on repeat.

What are you wearing?
What are you wearing?
What are you wearing?
More mental insects
  crawling under ashes
  until they burn
  or drown
  or fade into nothing.

Nothing lasts forever,
but some things last longer than others.
Longer than I want them to,
like panic attacks.

My mood swings.
Almost constant bloating.
A cups turn into B movies but
don't bulge out as much as my stomach.
Every pair of pants is too tight
and drenched in blood until
it all dissolves.

Nobody loves me anymore
and it's all my fault because of
my increasing lack of sex drive,
my lack of anything profound.

The dull percolation inside my gut,
moves up to
the upper abdomen,
closer to destruction
of my heart.
A phone call Without Caller ID
woke me
from another dream
in which I was offering my ex-husband
a platter filled with
all sorts of food from inside me,
but it was all expired.

He did tell me
he thought it was easier if your wife died young
rather than if you got divorced
from someone still alive.

He did tell me
he was tired of hearing about my poetry.
He was tired of hearing about my stroke and my poetry.

From whiplash on the back of the bed stand
 to nipple piercings in a biohazard bag.

Dismembered brain
 waves
 like a broken doll hand.
I didn't realize how many people carelessly joked about other people looking like they'd had a stroke until after I had one.
I keep collecting my own lines.

I keep collecting my own fallen, plucked out lashes, storing them in a tiny vile until it is time
to feed them to an old woman forced to bake the same cookies for the rest of her life, watching them burn, burn, burn in someone else’s oven, even though she wanted to offer her own creations to pink eyed rabbits and ghosts.

Part of me wanted to escape from where I grew up, but part of me is still in the same state.
In my own space, I focus on individuality, 
and so I thought I had worked my way above clichés, 
but what makes me think I'm above anyone else?

Maybe I've focused so much on myself I don't know 
how it feels to be anyone else.

Maybe if I stopped 
letting myself stay 
stuck inside the same 
semi-repetitive blood bath 
the inside 
of my mind 
keeps attaching itself too...
My baby doll keeps saying the same 3 lines
again and again and again:
"Leave me alone"
"I hate myself"
"How come nobody loves me?"

Then my mouth vomits out more blood.
Some people jump faster than others.
Some people jump farther than others.
Some people never jump

and they just stay stuck in one steady dull place
forever and never explore
themselves.

Some people seem to just watch their kids.
They tell their kids what to do
and what not to do
and how to act
and who to marry.

This tiny white doll
with no eyes
or nose or mouth
would never have been able to speak for herself
until I turned her red,
exaggerated her face
until it was big enough that I could live inside it.

I lost the doll when I lost
a lot of things or left them
inside an old house,
that used to be mine,
but then

I bought another
tiny white doll
and my mind grew a new expansion kit.
I don't like to throw things away unless I made that choice for myself.

Sometimes my child sized pinky wants to break open a locked door and escape, but all I can do is rip the doll parts again and rebuild her little head.

I'm 46 and part of me still lives inside my doll head.
I'm 46 and my mom is still making doll clothing suggestions for me, as though my own style will never exist in her eyes, because she lives inside her own doll head.
Maybe our real heads will never be taken seriously
because they're partially stuck inside parts of someone else.

Our closets can only handle so many hangers and shoe horns
and boxes. When I die
my boxes of poems will be tossed
into a burn barrel.

I don’t iron my clothes into straight shapes.
Different parts of my brain are dangling down
from different clotheslines
where someone else hooked them
into their interpretation of my mind.
I'm 46 and my mom is still maneuvering
my shoes across the room
as though I'm not allowed
to handle my own space.

My own mix tapes rearranged.
My own counter tops reorganized
when I'm not home,
as if my own style is a horrible mess.

Will she ever understand
that my doll brain works differently
than her doll brain and I want to escape
being handled by somebody else?

I don't want to have a string attached to my back
connected to someone else's hand,
so that someone else can choose what I do or do not
say by pulling that string.

But sometimes it seems like it's easier for some moms to assist
those who can't speak for themselves.

Sometimes it seems like some moms want to keep their babies silent inside
organized dresser drawers, old photo albums, frozen sandwich bags
stuffed in the freezer until it's time
for them to die

and be mourned by dry funeral cake
that used to be sweet wedding cake
that got divorced years ago.

That never baked itself into something edible enough
for standard masses.
My list of flowers I wish to plant or use in my own dark mass:
Black Doll Head Irises,
Black Doll Head Calla Lilies,
Black Diamond Doll Head Orchids,
Black Doll Head Hellebores,
Black Doll Head Parrot Tulips,
Black Doll Head Bat with flying wings.
All of them would have one red eye.
I forgot to buy extra tampons again.
Hopefully, I don't start bleeding
during another panic attack in bed
while thinking about my past.
Hopefully I don't stink up the entire bed
with my blood. Sheet after sheet
of bloody rag dolls.

Sometimes I remember the times I stink
more than I remember the times I smell good.

Like that time way back in high school
when a girl in English class
said something smelled like a dirty diaper
and I knew it was my maxi pad.

I used to have recurring bad dreams about my bloody holes
after my teeth just randomly started falling out,
falling down into drains
before I could catch them.

Why was I trying to catch them?
Was I going to glue my broken teeth back inside
my vagina?
What if my most vibrant heart beats happened in the past
and then my emotions gradually got stoned
into grey?

Or maybe I'll never dry out all the way.

Today I took photos of my own menstrual blood,
because it won't be long before it stops.

Or maybe it will never stop.

Maybe when I die, the blood will still be gushing
out of my vaginal lines.

Bloodied screw hole.

Bloodied irises
in a flower pot.

Bloodied saint of torn apart poems,
dripping, thrown away, hidden inside
underwear drawers and
underground dreams.

In which my vagina was a tiny tomb
for broken dicks
whose heads have managed
to convince themselves that I don't exist anymore
and maybe I don't in some mind's eyes.

I mean I'm not the same as I was
when I was 20
when I was 30
when I was 40
but I do still exist
and I'm still the real me
no matter how much I change.

I want to be able to keep changing
for at least another 40 years, but
can I handle myself?
The way my body is changing
I try to pretend
I’m looking in a funhouse mirror
in a bad dream.

My stomach is churning
into a giant container
of gelatinous tapioca pudding.

The last time I remember liking pudding
was when I was a little girl.
Now it just makes me gag.

I see a mean nursing home attendant
force feeding pudding to the elders
she doesn't like, even if they told her not to
when they could still speak for themselves
and open their own mouths by choice.

When I could still speak for myself,
I told them I didn't like their fucking pudding.
Now that I can't tell them to stop,
they'll shove as much of it inside me as they can
until I choke on tiny clots.
I see two guys alternating between one vagina.

Then one of them suddenly pukes and leaves.

I don’t like how they process women’s body parts.
When I was a little girl,
my grandma made witch finger shapes
with pierogie dough. She knew
I would turn into a witch with entrails
stuck between dirty fingernails.

My nose keeps growing more and more witchy
and I can't tell if this is sorcery or another ugly sign
of aging. It is hard to believe that anyone really wants
to handle these spells. That anyone really wants all of me.

Brimming with broom legs,
with bruises and veins,
uneven blood flow, pulsating heart beats
underneath my skin. I cut myself
shaving again, because the veins
bulged into the razor blade.

The ever alternating landscapes
of quantifiable feminism.
Blood
then mental evaporation
then excavation from underneath the cuts.
I'm past my bedtime again,
more poem lines popping out
and being cut.

Maybe I'm going to die in bed alone,
before I can get all my own words out.

But even if I do get them out,
they might still end
up being thrown away
by those who don't care enough
about the parts of me that feel the most meaningful
to me.
Before I have a seizure, I can't see
any of the fine print on my phone.
I can't remember how to make it work.
My brain has disconnected again.

All of my numbers are gone.
Names and other words disappear.
All of my friends are gone.

Every room in the house is dark.
My brain zooms in on the darkness.

The kitchen light fixture dangles from the ceiling,
crashes down, shoots
glass all over the floor.

I can't see myself.
I can't tell if I'm talking out loud
or inside my own head.
I can't tell if I'm gibberish or slow burning rubble.
I can't tell if I'm walking on glass.

I crawl to the corner
where I used to have a floor.
The lamp fixture has been removed
and replaced with a broken black balloon dangling down.

I'm worried that someone has invaded my space,
even though it is so full of snow outside.
My fingers are freezing
like a snow drift all the way up to my brain.

I hear someone open the side door of my garage
or maybe my seizure is a brain invader
and is trying to break into me.

Or maybe it is me
opening my own garage door
in the midst of this hazardous snow storm,
right before having another seizure
and falling down onto the snow.

What if frozen hail is invading my brain
and I lose my self
consciousness in the snow
until I freeze to death?

White skin turning dark purple
like a fairy tale inside a bad dream.
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Juliet Cook is a grotesque glitter witch medusa hybrid brimming with black, grey, silver, purple, and dark red explosions. She is drawn to poetry, abstract visual art, and other forms of expression. Her poetry has appeared in a peculiar multitude of literary publications.

Cook was involved in past years of the dusie kollektiv (3, 4, and 5) and is delighted to be contributing to the dusie kollektiv 9.