

**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 heaviness 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.

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