



**Another
February**

Mackenzie Carignan

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by Mackenzie Carignan

Dusie #4
Spring 2010

* a dust/e-chap
www.dusie.org



DUSIE

1.

In the middle of the night
I thought about you floating
across the lake, blue limbs
slanted like a crooked star.

You were so close. You were barely
in my arms. The string connects,
false knot like a symbol,
your slippery hunger unfurled.

2.
The warmest February on record means
icicles. Some dangle slanted in wind. At dusk,
they sprout like kudzu,
sudden ornament and glimmer.

Some web like banyans, roots
anchored in splintered gutters.
Some droop loosely,
like Spanish moss, clumps blown free

in frantic gusts: the falling,
cold bodies zooming through
the bitter, a deep
cautionary tale. And then

piles, shattered
on the sidewalk.

3.

Gather your things, my pretty, she said through her veil of hair, her mouth a steaming crevice of red ash. You have been here too long in the gumdrop house, fighting the urge to devour the walls, dive into the smoldering piles of sugar on the hearth, dress in licorice lace and twirl. Goodbye. Breadcrumbs eaten by birds and squirrels. The black trees. The memory of her brother, eaten by fire.

4.

There is a gate in the unborn
field, snow stitched between the corn.
There is a woman bleeding the dawn,
the blood a curtain, drawn.

5.

I am brushing up
on my adjectives: how
to describe the way
something looks when it falls,
caught in wind: wandering,
asleep, devastated,
ashen, tangled,
gentle, lost.

6.
If this is spring, I will scatter you
in a bed of silver-flecked
soil, let you germinate
behind my back (*Momma had a baby*)
until you explode (*and his head popped off*)
into a patch of dandelions.

If this is February, I will collect you
in a shroud of brown taffeta
and hold you close. Small
bundle cinched closed at the bottom.
I will plant you after rain like a tulip
bulb. Sunlight where.

7.

The shimmering cold
fastens tight. You say
someone else's name
first as if you,
like the spring beauty,
are forced to bloom
in the freeze, ice crystals
still attached to opening petals.

Star-like pink of spring beauties
carpets moist, rich woodlands

and sunny stream banks. The earliest
of spring. The flower,

white to rose with red veins, in loose racemes
above a pair of narrow, fleshy leaves,

midway up the stem.
The flowers open only in sunlight.

The common name fairy-spuds
alludes to the tuber's resemblance

to a miniature potato
with many protruding eyes.

8.

Buttercups. White noise.

I see you clearly. Trying to sit,
you buckle over but not down;

I watch you imitate a hinge,
scraping through the movement,

belly tense and solid. I have a whisper
in my palm, tickling to get out. It could go
either way.

9.

You were so quiet all afternoon.

Notice the pile of leaves

decaying on the porch

and the strands of hair on your sheets. See the woman

on the neighboring deck, staring and pointing

at the approaching wall of black clouds,

her child held loosely on her lap.

Hold loosely your fistful of blanket, sweet magpie.

Listen to me say,

before you awaken,

that I miss your noise.

10.

I cannot locate myself,
 aside from my eyes
which are always on you.

 I do not dream about
you. One night you heard
 my voice trying to find
a way out, booming
 caterwaul, brown and taut,
finally drowned out
 by the squawking flock of geese
flying north, shaped like a flame.

11.

They say you have my eyes, blue coins
with a white star. To see them
clearly, I have to imagine you
floating away, your eyes darting
from me
to the night sky
until you are only a glittering iris
in a garden of sound.

12.

Sweetest love, you are covered
with snowflakes and the aroma of apricots.
You smell like your father,
deep oil and native musk that settles
on the sill of my throat every time
I devour you. I was sure it would be me to claim this right,
sink in and surround your pores
so completely that you would assimilate my smell:
ginger, vanilla, and wet ink.
No matter how completely I hold you,
I have lost.

13.

Blur and branch.

Whitewash.

Dark attic and sheets.

Train tracks under snow.

Smaller portions of touch, the steadfast chill.

Water come, water go.

In the white field, more white.

Out of ice, origami.

14.

Was it you

who nearly formed a fist

and pushed against me, sprouting

like a clover, your wrinkled

fingers, softest bone,

on the other side of the wall?

15.

Cleft the stream of my eyes
on a given thing. In you
there is a fragment of light

reaching. So long since the storm.
Where has it gone,
the blue gravity? Snow falls

through your gurgling voice, the limits
of accidental language. Where is
the precious hole? The logic

sewn to return. A light
dusting. You have learned
to touch my face, seize my lips

as they are telling you what
we are looking at through this window.
Your mouth a circle in speech.

16.

There is a photograph of you
being torn from me
but still connected
by a string. I keep it close.

You arrive with stipulations. In the event
of fire, you will exit first or assume

my lungs for oxygen. In the event of danger,
I am your shield, your wall, your sacrificial

offering to the bees. In the event of loneliness,
I will morph into a crowd, make balloon animals,

excuse your apathy and become invisible.
You must never be hungry enough

to go away, looking for food in the black forest,
tempted by the smell of breadcrumbs and molasses.

17.

Once upon a time there was a woman whose bones were winter. All along, she was looking for the hot mouth of a singing volcano. She would often end in the darkest caves where her breath could whistle and hang. She walked slowly through the valleys, snow up to her knees, her tear-soaked hair, frozen, breaking off in the wind.

18.

You remind me
of potatoes, the simple
way they play with dirt
and eyes, how we dig
them up and rub
them clean with
our fingertips.
But never clean. Always
covered with a dust, a grit
that's dry even
when it's wet, smelling always
of earth and weathered skin.

19.

Spectacle and skeptical, they
both come from a speck
a fleck
a flicker a sliver
of what we see
through the window through the snow
through the long pink light
of the coldest morning.

20.

Is it painful

when I rip a hole

in your noise,

purple polyester drawn

over window light?

Is it something

you could know? You fall

asleep surrounded by

the walls. The loudest sound.

21.

Hush, now, the tired cold
is fading and still the windows hold

us tightly in. Lying on your front-side,
you spread your body wide,

arch your spine as if you've known
all along that you've flown

too close to the sun, and now,
on your way down,

all you can do is fall,
confident that soon
you will become an island.

22.

She finds it difficult to awaken, sleep a startling alternative to looking in the mirror and discovering the hole in her fabric. Surrounded by oracles, she is surprised to find herself so exposed, her skeleton visible and looking back at her. She leaves herself in this dream, borrowing the hunter's heart, which he happily hands over.

23.

It is true: you were
 in me all along, even
after you were lifted
 out of me
like a stone. Even
 in my loss
for words,
 my constant lack
of your photograph,
 my inability
to name you.

24.

Small bud of tooth
blossoms, springs into
blood. Have I given you
my white city of teeth? Have I given up

my constant blue fingertips,
fixed like moons to the stem
of your grasp? Why do you fight sleep
like an enemy? Your soft, yellow

glow, so unfamiliar. Eyes flickering
and fixed.

25.

The curve of afterglass
is the shape of your spine, chiseled
planks to chain,
chain to draw and fling you. I know
someday I will see you
come down a dusty sidewalk
and I will be thankful
that I memorized
your dimensions.

26.

Out of exit, erasure.

Out of element, polymer.

Out of energy, woodgrain.

Out of conception, contraception.

Out of ears, oracles.

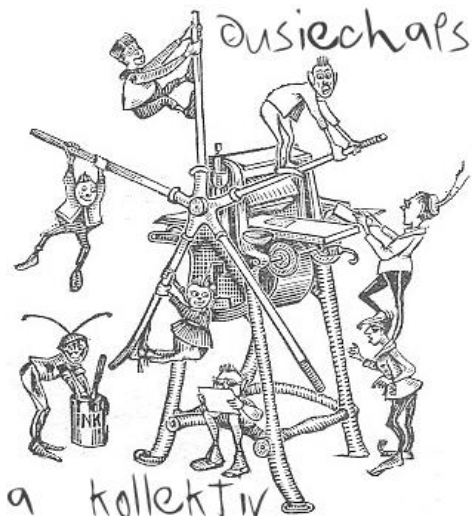
Out of winter, winter.

27.

I serve like a lioness, gathering
every stick and twig you need, every
morsel and sinew, every trench
dug and patted down. For you, I test
the water, slurp it down
till it rests, curled comfortably
in my empty gut waiting to feel
if it is poison.

28.

Listen to the turning wind. Stand
firmly in my grasp. Sleep now before night comes,
blue spirit, dusted
with pollen and sentiment. Carry the drift
of the falling as closely. Give
place to metaphor; give your city
a name.



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