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THREE POEMS

BY TACIA CAVIN

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No More Love Songs

You say "we're lovers,"
as if the force of love in our face
could take us back to our redoubtable selves,
the place where you'd write, "I'm looking for you,
I'm finding daisies in the waste."

It's that same clarity— your brown hand sifting,
sludge falling away, petals in the hand—

I never got,
or got how easy it was—
how on the beaches of your mind
I was to splay and lie. Get wet.
your sack of light.

In taxis with my sick mother,
dead dog, colitic friends,
I, a penny-pincher: malevolent, paunchy I,
felt the press of that thing,
your grin for me, the stars in that grin.
In me: cramps, bad winds.

The nights get colder.
Snow piles up loud on the roof. Hail.
Perfect you, a tidy memory.
Me? Eyes closed like a truck
with a thrown wheel on the freeway.

The Obnoxious Die Too

Jut-headed and heavy, he swivels toward me,
eyes watering on his own behalf;
arms to the wall beside me, he says
"Put yourself in my position,"
and, stifling my nostrils, puts himself too close to mine.

I have a hell of a time getting away;
his camo zippers bruised my fingers
I've got convex badges on my skin!
*Beautiful naked land, you've got a mangy
little flab of a defender, I am saying*
to the little protests of my wristbones with every turn of the steering wheel
as the sun comes up on the forest.
Still: I tune in every night
and I watch the figures.

He leaped on a grenade. I attend the funeral
with the wives of those he saved,
lying in state, his folds improminent,
badges embossed and bold.
Lips turned up to the pale sunlight.
They cover him with the flag. Taps.

The Child: Tophet

I.
Father sired us, Mum carried us like bags,
all up the hills and down to Tophet.
I stretched my limbs, blinked fluid from my eyes.
Through open lips I gave a liquid low.

II.
The pebbles:
horse-head, horse-head, marble, marble,
veiny, shiny, black and tender,
flat on the palm, rust-flecked.

We cupped bird eggs and licked the air,
your foot callused and specked on the pavement,
my chin up, whistling, the summer--gauze.
Our teeth jutted.
You had your wrist out, angled down.

It was always this way:
the clouds over your head, blue under,
the low float, old timbers,
our rasping thumbs, sun, mold
on the wood.

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