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Judge

Lisa Demsky
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Judge†

I am tired of being an unwilling martyr for everyone's cause but
my own. I am
tired of being irrelevant woman, the
footnote, the side bar, exhibit, third person
generic, but
never the issue,
tired of being
never the reason
for the passion

that will always be talked about
as I am talked around.

So before
your words can pierce my being and
your hands leave creases that
my flesh must always bear and
the terror of your presence
and your absence never leaves and
before your edge can slit my wrists,

I fight with the
only power that I know is
tattered thin from overuse,

but novel in my hands.

Was I deliberate, was I
deliberate you must decide
if I am
guilty by your standards or if
my standards scare you
beyond what reason justifies,
you can only justify that which
you comprehend and so you must

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deliberate that I
could not, must not make sense in
what was the most rational act of
the most rational course
I could take.

And I am tired of being the unwilling martyr of
another. Your causes are
(not more important than my life)
overwhelming and overwhelmed, and I am
too full of
tiredness to breathe the air

that must be saved
for another.

And that is why, yes that
is the reason why I must
why I did and
I could take
why I will be found
of course
will be found by you who are lost
of course
who has lost but ourselves
as you, your selves judge,
you, judge, will commit me, but only
as I have committed
before you
for you
erase the sounds, but I

act
as cowards never could
and hear
whose voice you never could
whose vocal cords were slit
too often and too soon
to scream for you
to hear, and

erase the cross you placed
the mark you placed
upon my chest
a cross my heart
too heavy to allow
too heavy to breathe freely
from the air,

for now I
am far too tired
not be a martyr
for my self.

*Lisa Demsky**

* Currently practice litigation at Munger, Tolles, & Olson in Los Angeles. Visiting Lecturer in Law, University of Chicago Law School, 1997–1998; Clerkship for Honorable Cynthia H. Hall, Ninth Cir., 1996–1997; J.D., 1996, Yale Law School.

