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Burnt Things and Cinderella Perpetua

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burnt things†



eyes widening into screens where animals-run-in-herds, someone shooting
the scene from a helicopter (one is always shot), the split-second
of a blink,

and darkness becomes the sort of sleep analogous to death,
all we can do with it,
is imagine . . .

and back at the hotel—her hair, smelling like burnt things—he leaves
his camera on a chair by the window, lens cracked, this room
asks him to be soft,

takes his clothes; the woman took hers all the way to where her intentions were
misunderstood and she's been paid for it ever since. Together they are
hunting

for the most comfortable—the most gratifying—position, (at one point
her toes curl around his ears and he imagines he sees her from the
air). Hair

covers his eyes widening into the darkness of her auctioned breast and it
becomes sleep. Tomorrow he will take more pictures of animals
being killed

and she will spend the day doing for her mother the things she did when
she was a girl, cleaning and preparing the dead
for burial—rituals, repetitious—

and the baby sucks, its father is on safari, but one of the ones with guns,
not a camera. They told her that fertility is greater
in killers

and she offers some kind of thanks for that and as the beast that runs
at the front of the pack crashes to the ground she blinks and wipes
her eyes

widening into those of all the men who come here to live cheaply
off her flesh—it burns,
for them

her [peculiar, fiscal, carrion] ritual [of survival]—doing things with

burnt things

cinderella perpetua†



"little one of the ashes"

we live in a world where there are so many
mannequins of women, undressed at midnight

(but he didn't take off *her* clothes, they were
somebody else's clothes)

and watching the streets for a slipper that matches
their vigilance—they are, my dear, doing forever

instead of being young. And yes, they all hold
their head on that one angle and their hands

like that, like that, like that, skin impervious to air-
conditioning

(if you invented a machine you could measure
the rate at which they absorb love);

eyes, that stranded colour of menaced animals
behind the glass . . .

"But sleep, little one"

and dream you have no idea what you are—the
smudge of ash on the end of your nose is cute and . . .

they will be dressed again
before morning

*MTC Cronin**

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