

Finding My Body After an Earthquake

Osabon Oka

Sometimes I wake up
to find my body
has rearranged itself
the way the earth restructures itself
after an earthquake.
I hear voices on my tongue
begging to be let out
the prison of my teeth.
How did I become a jailer of truth?
Of what beauty is this silence
I will not speak of?
I rise like a canopy of star struck bats,
blindly mapping my wounds
with the eyes on my hands;
a scar here,
a secret sin there.
I can fly I say
until I turn over like dressed venison
& find my limbs tied in rigor mortis.
What did I kill in my sleep?
There must have been a battle
dying inside me & I'm not winning.
I'm not gaining any trophies
for this race
I have been running against myself.
I search & find me

standing in the cracked mirror
counting the number of mouths
I have numbed with cigarette
smoke & liquor shots.
That was my last offensive
against the god I have chained
beneath my pelvis.
I fall back, trussed up & bloated
with tears that will not cry.
A caged bird whimpers in my throat. I
am the animal
of my own chisel & hammer.
I am a maker of brown crinkling flowers,
yellow tightrope vines twisting
their hunger into Christmas lights.
What beauty can come out of all
the fearful monsters staring
unblinking through my eyes?
What can I claw out of my body
to make me whole again?

Touching Myself Must be an Incantation

Osabon Oka

Some mornings,
after touching myself
in all kinds of pagan ways,

I wonder how much love remains
keeping me from myself.

I don't really love this container
of hunger & thirst carrying me
as much as I pretend

when I hold myself in the ecstasy
touching my body brings.

It is just sex & even the lice
in my bed know what that is.

The cold lasts longer always after

especially when there is no tissue paper
wiping off on. Sometimes,

I cry like a broken bird,
sometimes I hide in my poems,
lying about everything

but the wetness of my wings.

If I break again,

what will be left?

What animal will walk

the runway of this world?

Maybe I'm an asexual animal,

a protozoa of magnificent size.

Maybe I cannibalize myself

& each time I come

in my outstretched palm,

I'm offering body & blood

to any god that will save me.