

Brittany Booth

## Bitten

XI.XXX

Once Dearest,  
 I present to you the actual truth:  
 I resent the grape that seduced my tongue yet held my breath hostage. Everything, every tower,  
 every septic limb, hangs from a noose of barbed wire. I can only dream of hike to what is  
 lawless—an El Dorado in the woods, an escape from this box where I was bred. My titanium  
 wings have dissolved and what remains is only brittle and skeletal. The passion I have felt for an  
 instant defined me for a lifetime; the rape of an angel still suffocates me, that is what it is like to  
 remember you...

No

I can no longer abuse this page

This story must be spoken raw

I recall the first *Oyasumi*:

December, senior year  
 I was a violist in a winter show  
 Peers' string tuned to *E*  
 I only to reach what was low  
 The background chair  
 I was only an amplifier to the soloist

"Join me" she whispered  
 Ankles tottering  
     I with Siberian whisper: "I can't let the rail go"  
 She with a vow "Take my hand you will be okay."  
     "But I will bring us both down"  
 "I don't care." And into the rink we departed  
 Through the pipe through the undefined slope  
 Passed the gatekeeper's event horizon  
 into the prophesized advent dawn

It is on the trains of Tokyo I feel the most alive  
I close a door for a night

I stand naked reviewing  
The unborn stencil

I lay naked on the spotless linen  
She kisses my inner thigh  
A palm's brush  
Nestle with comforting breath on the neck  
A kiss on the forehead that penetrates the cranium  
"If I had angel's wings I'd never use them to fly, id wrap them around you."  
    "You have your hook in me—I love it."  
"I have a Halo reserved for you. Tilt your chin back"  
    A trusting smile, "Who are you?"  
The whirlpool's twist: "That is the cipher you need to solve"  
    "Alright, I will. Oyasumi"  
"Oyasuminasi"

The sheets a lake at the edge of the woods  
    Pondering on the rose lake

Inside the husk of a hollow tree there is a combination

Without a spade to dig,  
    Without an axe to carve  
With hesitation to dig  
    She remains unsolved  
On the cusp between this lake and sulfur is *True* beauty  
    I still need to dig  
My vows still unwritten

On this blushing cusp  
I will be splashed  
    I will swear off all anthems  
I will be submerged  
    My vows uttered in an implicit anthem  
I will submit to washing

I sip tea in the Tatami room  
 The circling spoon a machete to apostate's armor  
     A bronze bell alarming the dusk hour  
     In the Tower's attic, a light prism emits without input  
       My past hand imprints on the glassy surface  
       Dry stone on sandstone ruins  
         Sprites with palm fans the oasis breeze that hits my cheek

*It should be arid*

                                  I stand where apostles once stood  
 Income seven suits, balding Rolexes  
 Will I meet the true champion tonight?

The sugar is melted  
 Parallel to the futon  
 My romantic vision only a mobile

                          I need to understand her

My ungrateful hand to tip the restroom attendant  
 An unconscious wish:

    Park benches across the schoolyard  
 With celebrating candies and modified cigarillos  
 "I was accepted into the pre-med program"  
     "Congrats"  
 "What do you want to study next year? What do you want to become?"  
     "I'm not sure yet. Maybe I'll try medicine"

I return to the dinner table caviar served  
 Satin embedded between knuckles and palms  
 She sits across from me  
 She offers a glass of wine

I ignore the Pinot Noir

    A stalactite inching towards gravities past  
 Paused to the unglamorized eye  
 Stagnant frozen fossil

    A drip onto the cave's floor  
     Will it ever happen again?

## Another drip

"Another drink?" she asks  
 I pass the wine to the server  
 "You refuse the wine?" she presses further  
 "I don't want any right now" I answer  
 "But it is your destiny to drink the wine" she insists  
 "I might have some later" an unlikely promise  
 "How are your studies?" She asks nails tapping, a redirection with cross expression  
 "We discussed Skinner boxes in Psychology and read Poe's *El Dorado* in English." I answer.  
 "You're studying medicine, why do you keep bothering with classes that focus on poetry?"  
 "It's a passion" I  
 "You have but *one* passion"  
 A twisted fist  
 "You don't need useless classes—"  
 "They aren't useless! They help me interpret poetry."  
 "You don't need classes for that. Frankly, you never need to do that. The meaning is always clear."  
 "Then what is your take on Poe's *El Dorado*?" I demand reasoning  
 "Deahtless Dedication. Service. Unquestioning faith. Now, I must ask, will you be my knight in the search for *El Dorado*?" She demands an answer  
 "Why?"—Why anything? Discharged fingertips press against mine  
 A pause, and a ridged glare: "You're *murdering* me."  
 —Should I apologize?

The bed rolls in with dormant spots

"I need to talk to you."  
 The scalpel hovering

"You're lost"  
 Don't

"You must be punished"

"I'm only doing this because I love you"  
 The harvest begins

Lungs sawed from the windpipes

Heart disconnected from the arteries

A pick in the frontal lobe

A hook in the hippocampus  
 I no longer sense the reaping

Extra skeletal vines develop from behind my shoulder blades  
 I was glimpsed at by A Truth, and now I am an abomination

It is on the trams of Tokyo I feel the most useless

I can never return

The IV connected to my arm  
 Fed by a bloodless pouch replacing the interior

The rewriting embalmment  
 A transmutation into a cationic cadaver:

Addressing myself 'Myrmidon'  
 Addressing an answer to my Exalt

With only one tear a night  
 I exceeded my limit  
 From soiled pillow tops  
 I have unveiled the fate the John has warned:

Christian bells chiming 'shelter'  
 During the screams the unprinted obituary expands

On pewter platters, my objectives served

Served them well  
 I pour the mineral water and wine  
 I manufacture the drink  
 Stampede the grapes  
 Ignore the refugee  
 Tend the vineyard  
 I pounded the grapes for Patrons' lips

I ignored the refuge, because the refuge was always me

I put Judas and Brutus to shame

Served them well

I worship My Goddess well

The nesting bed unearthed from vengeful molten

Through the gyrating straw of tempests  
Is the plane where a pupil with the potential for *infinity*  
Becomes a hostage to the *nihilicity*

A reluctant call for Spring  
Picturing Autumn's Ivy  
    A border between green and red  
        Until green bleeds black

My own pores flooding scarlet  
Darkening the gravel canvas of my own skin  
Puddles the sand underfoot  
I sense the arid only when I am buried by the Judaeans  
Praying for a spade I cannot hold  
There is an unrepairable mechanism in my nerves  
And maybe my heart is crafted from tin  
My folded blood choking out my voice  
    "Comeback!"  
        But she never will  
Only a howl answers with a mouthful of silt

I have unveiled the fate that John has warned  
I have acknowledged it  
    I refuse to witness it

Now I can only hike to what is lawless:

I expect a walk opposite a wind tunnel  
Only to face a simple breeze

Eager whispers and pulsing unburied breath  
Where an innocent gale is corrupted  
A brisk unbreakable wind usurps  
An unguided wing

To decompose into venom and be  
 Spited into a torrent  
     When did the wind enter this tunnel?

Ignoring foreign cautionary signs  
 Inhaled by arching vegetation

The distorted topography are diary entries of a late devil  
     No, nothing parades these tainted roots  
         No sounds of taunting crows  
             No approaching paces to jerk my spine backward in panicked reassuring  
 Only a silent shuffling in uncharted territory  
 Newborn geysers hold their fury  
 Muting the roars of tormented final wishes

Only a muffled foam "Please enter"

Icy crystal caverns lay undiscovered from past diggings  
 Unsurfaced molten riddles the needles wayward direction  
     I must discover my own route

This is a place where a torch cannot clarify the evenings' orientation  
 And only arouses the nighttide

The rapturing song to shine again  
 But not here

Here no Awe is sound

Only a displaced familiar  
 Maidens voice in the heart of the wandering refugee  
 The form of a transparent hand reaching from the bracken  
 The arm either lost in the thicket cover or  
     Vanished by time's erasing  
 Promising palm pointing northward  
 Offering to steal heaven's stars

I reach for the hand  
     Skeletal branches flickering

Soft archaic skin  
 Refreshed satin

I am ready to revive the sound in the vacuum

Am I really ready for this duet?

Once I sat in the back chair as  
 A compliment to the soloist  
 I rose from the center and gave my performance  
 You were always my baseline behind  
 Despite the encore

I am ready to step back for the duet

*Oyasumi*

Oyasumi? How long has it been?

Begging for an *okaeri*

The setting silent as ever

On the inside winter eternally paused

On the outside the sakura exhale spring

I associate with the isolated Siberia

A reminder from my fiancé:

"Fasten your tie! It's a big day!"

The weathering band around my finger

The scalpel that shaped my brow

The lilac glove that lifted my face

Is the neglect only possibly from

A façade of Michelangelo

The brooch I wear

Punctured

Marble slate of my chest

From the brushing fingertips

I venture into the Den of Isis

With an unsanctioned torch

This is the light that must go out

No enrapturing crystal

No encaging steel frame

Only an entrance to turn exit

And a latent blessing

At the missing pew I kneel and beg for atonement:

Will my pardon be unwritten?

Should I vault from this rock?

Will it all return to cinder?

Will my boat sink to the nether on this rose lake of sulfur?

Can I retract my skin and answer to my revoked organs what I have done?

This is how I withstand the results  
 Tilting my chin back and upwards  
 My bony shins already imbedded in the moss of the extracted willow  
 My boots already untied

“Will you be my knight?” Again she demands an answer  
 I exhale my vows: “I do”

I am ready to begin this duet

I am splashed  
 I swear off all anthems  
 I am submerged

My vows spoken in an implicit anthem

I have unsurfaced the combination  
 Firm hand claps  
 Rings tethered  
 The untouched prism emits light once again  
 “Amen”

There is an honorary reinstatement in acceptance  
 There is another in tying this knot  
 And climbing The Bell Tower upward

The true disfellowship is in the Discarded Dream:  
 Encircling dining tables,  
 Upscale appetizers,  
 Highballs in hand,  
 Addressing each other as *Doctor*.