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SHADES OF PARADOX

KAOLIN FIRE

A JAR Writers' Collective Publication

SHADES OF PARADOX

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as a physical collection of cut-up poetry
from the original text
'Art and Lies' by Jeanette Winterson

For Kim.


In celebration of all the shared revolutions around the sun and those still to come. And for insisting my work aspire to be more, when sometimes it is easier to choose otherwise.

For Kaolin.

Without your inspirational images the words would have remained dormant in their original form and I would be a lesser person for it.

For Kate.

Your magick freed me. Thank you for opening the way so I could find a new place to be creatively in the world and to know I am always loved and supported in everything I do.

A photograph of a street at night. A tall pole holds a glowing green exit sign and a traffic light. The background is a dark, overcast sky. Some bare tree branches are visible in the foreground.

was it wise to fall in love with a construction
that could not be deconstructed
intoxicating thoughts transformed
by heat and censure
writing out of beauty
out of love
and out of wisdom

the word whose solace cracks the font
and no longer looks
for companionship at night

I cannot eat my words
but I do

teach the parrot his lines
and he will reorder the words
kept pressed between the pages of this book



he wrapped the brittle pages
back into his skin
memoirs of confiscated selves
a perpetual suicide
and rebirth in the deep
to piece together a fragmented life

there is only motion
nothing still but the fissures
and hollows of melancholy

lift me up and there will still be songs
a sparking power
that never hesitates to live

naked - without sound
through the silent air
not one flesh but one image
and the image more potent than the flesh

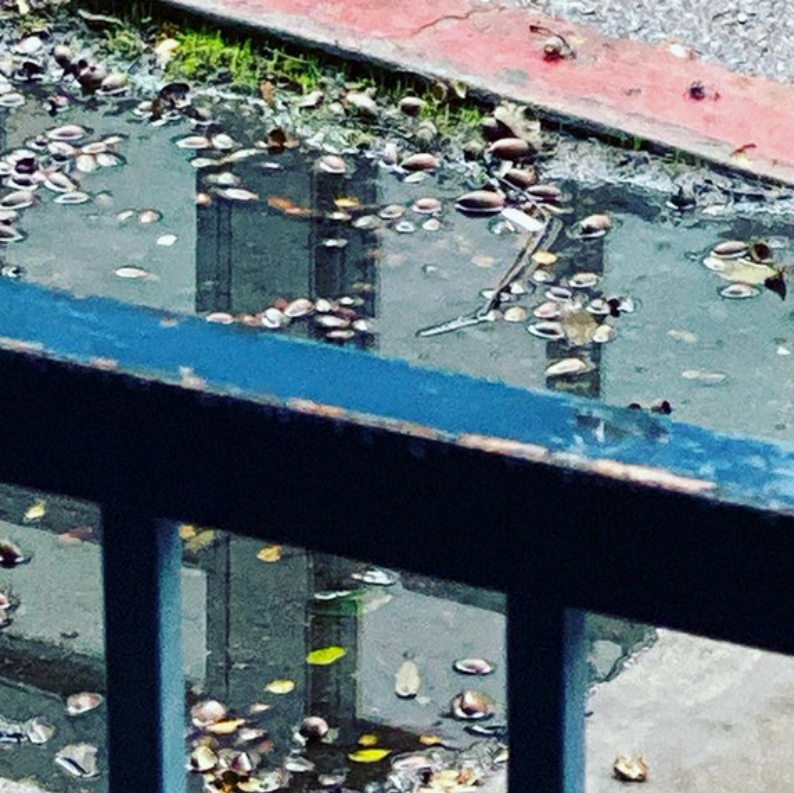


I turned the wrong way into a one-way street
and I knelt between
abandoned cross sections
waiting for me

I look at myself in the mirror
where I am a reversed image
contained in a looking-glass fantasy
of reversing rules

Muser and Muse
in perilous communion
with a love that grafts us
twice on one longing

I am wounds of waiting
in need of a salve
yet fearing it
where colour
slapped against the wall
is changed



we stood in the garden together
looking at the trees
the nuances of nature
and the refinements of art
lit in your face
rising naked from the rapt effect
of curiosity and desire
the teeming symbiosis
of lust and affection
twisting and writhing together

if you stretched out your hand
and offered me the fruit
would I take it?

you have words that pin me to patterns
by the unlikeliest of routes
my courage forced to a distance
so much can be hidden in 'I love you'



gold light on the golden city

my soul is the dissolving mirage
of a stained-glass world
a sharper joy migrating light
and the pulled-apart space
where hope is opening
and I am a drop of sealing wax
on the hierachy of wings

the words that fly from your lips
are words without explanation

why must I be realistic about wanting
another turn of time
to kiss you again

whisper to my soul
that which I yearn for
recite me until you know me off by heart



the heart in its dark pen recognises the light
 a strange equivalence
 where what was thought to be revealed
 kept its mystery but lost its terror

in the nightmare city
 where I have continued my days
 art annexes the stars
 and the word rises above itself

I use my alphabet
 to disentangle the arcane deceit
 challenging the fragments
 that I am the possibility of language
 past, eternally present and undestroyed
 to tell what is left before the end

I fear the half-hearted world
 listening

listening

listening

through the bodiless streets
 and dirty air with
 nothing
 in
 between



time - whose thing I am - writes on me:
we don't see delight in life
we learn to deny such things
woven in desires that the appetite
cannot satisfy

what to do with the lines on my body?
stop saying "sorry"
assert your individuality
and quicken the unknown word in its
own bloody ink

I ran my pain up through the house
beyond the in-out-in-out of my defeated lungs

I did not fall on my own




for a moment the desolate space budded
she saw extraordinary events
bent under twists of refracted light
the crack in the window filled with stars

what had been harmed
was given back
undamaged
nothing remained
except
for the abandoned observer's fiction

letting go
made re-memembering
a gracious act of falling
into unknown currents

at the end of each black-and-white day
she dreamed in colour
copying carefully the things she loved the most



I had not been arranged chronologically
 I owed nothing to the clock
 and the stale self unrhythmed
 by whose hands I had passed

I remember the self-portrait
 who packed against the storm
 and the resurrection
 of the self-renewing escape
 as writer, scholar, critic, eccentric, collector
 as mass and movement

where had the years gone and being gone?
 why did they still hurt?
 why continue to blame the other
 for the boredom which was only ever their own?

through one small square of light
 I fell as rain

as movement and mass
 repeating

I am the unsaddled sea ridden twice daily
 by the moon and planets in musical intervals

I am the sun in the window
 no longer glass-paned in too little joy