

My eyes twinkle behind my closed lids, shooting stars circling the pupils of me. The shutters bleed lashed light. The sneaky moonbeams rake at the planets and the black holes, breaking them into bruised dreams against the boundaries of my sight. When I wake up in the dark, I sit up and comets hit the back of my eyelids. I'm all at sea, a cresting wave of lightning rides me, until I'm landlocked and back on the beach of reality. I stand on Bambi legs and shunt hip, knees and ankles against gravity. I yawn, stop my alarm and get ready for the drive to work.

I'm walking with shadows, a witness to the constellations pulling down the night.

The vennels are where the fires start first, words set alight along the walls of the out of sight. The hidden bricks are rhubarb sticks crumbling, there are blood orange peelings gambolling down the cobbles. They are the unattended stones, the loose ledges where the moss finds sanctuary. This flashlight cask of dalliances, broken to kindling, is doused with caged choices and corked voices.

I get out my key, press the open button and yank the car door handle, dislocating me from all infinite possibility.

I'm sat in traffic, talking to myself, to the car, to the stallion in the field who has lost his lustre of wildness. Such beauty, unsaddled from this beast is akin to a gargoyle smeared with lipstick. In the surly skies walks Pegasus. It's a washed-up cup of tame, we took the unabashed and buoyant and made slack clay from it. We are sculpting a hospital monitor flat line. We define then refine, forgetting that raw edges and tatters are where difference breeds salvation. The cliffs lead to the lanes where the candles breach the silhouettes.

I pull into a side road, key turn the engine dead, the seat belt retreats. I door slam the day awake and fetch the light down with a stretch. Sunrise is lime zest rubbed along the spine of time with tailor's chalk. As I walk to the fire door of where I work, I dismantle the sails and cannonball through my own port hole. I straw suck the harbour dry and place the lifeboat of me up on chocks in the repair shed of the unread. It needs its hull peeled back and a repainted bulkhead. I leave, shoulders dropping, I glance back, my life fish-hooked and suspended, so I can always come back.

The door clicks shut.

The stooping of clocks, leaves no trace, but for breathless inklings written on my skin, yet they add up over time and on the back of scraping gates, they swing to their latch. The coupling takes place and all the little things begin to ring out as one peeling bell signaling the end of my work shift.

The fire door emits a phoenix.

The soul of a survivor is a shipwreck, bailing out the years just fast enough to keep the present from being pulled under land.

I'm held up, late to leave, suspended as a horizon by this fragile coat of old stars, the chunky lozenges of Paddington bear buttons, pushed and turned to lock my two, scarred leaves together. The cuffs are mud marred, giving me the appearance of a bare branched, wading tree, roots in boots, shimmying from the grabbing hands of clocks. I was always good at the game of dodge in the playground, a slinky without the need for stairs. I should have been back before night fell, for the daily tale of show and tell. It's always the same roll out of the tongue, the repeat of trodden paths. I pull the ripcord and my lips purse up. Back behind my teeth, there are shaking words, set on their marks, longing to strike air.

I drape the day over my arm, a coat too thick to be worn in fine weather. I weave fallen branches through its uprising light. Leaves will never hang umbilical again on their fallow limbs. I bind them together, my heart strings as twine. I'm building a raft, a side swipe sanctuary I can sneak to, a nook where the lost days of work resurface to be played with again. They repeat on me, like indicators signaling a hazard to be rubber necked. I pull out my pack of crayons and daub myself around pot hole rims like a damselfly halo rippling a river's skin.

Finally, 'this town is twinned with' canters into view. I'm home, the commute stalls, under the heel of my steel toe capped shoe. I lock up the car and unlock me. I scribble furiously until passing headlights are scored across my pages, until the street lamps puddle me.

I climb the hill to home, on the door step sits my soul, crossed legged and satchel jawed, mouth moving without sound.

The pirouette of the unsaid is the ravine cleaved between a baby's grip and our last breath. These moves and little muscle twitches are submarines in shuffled seas. They saddle up but do not surface on purpose, riding the seabed of the dead, acting out silent movies on sandy screens. We hold back from telling this world who we are because we are shackled to ourselves, to the safety blanket of how we were raised then anchored. Chains can be forged from fear or fortitude.

We have been taught to skelp this world, to keep above the sea line, to tread water longer than the next man and then stand on his shucked shoulders as he turns to hollow bone. I cry out at this with the heft of my heaving heart. The scales of lost and found hours teeter on the pivot of me.

We halt and huddle together with parted lips or we'll drown, tongues still, hopes plucked apart. When the weights slip from roof to neck, set the noose on fire. I trail rope from street to street, running my wings off. I cling to the plumes of jackdaw feathers that tether light to the hollows. We all have to ignite, no one can be left as shadow.

Life, is one of controlled burning, the long grass walking the side roads as ashen souls. There is a blackened page where the town map was. I am being pulled along with time. The potential, lost, a lifeboat punched then tossed. We drive time away, a crook in its back, leading our hour off to the woods. The mystery is why we do this to ourselves as we go to work. We could be balancing, one foot on the head of a giant, hands stripping the sky of clouds.