

Hunger as Letter

Amy Ash and Callista Buchen

appetite, emptiness, craving, ravenous
dispatch, message, missive, note

Dear Red, Don't walk into that house, all tooth and disguise, a kind of hunger you would not expect, could never understand.

Dear Decadence, We eat the shell, the husk, the rind. It is never enough.

Dear Door, Why track in, why not wolf, show us your teeth.

Dear Child, You will know hunger before you know love. Your open mouth sings need. I give and give. Still, you want more.

Dear Ache, Dear Pain, Dear Absence, Dear Need.

Dear Heart, Blood muscle tissue pulse, piece of meat, lump of dough.

Dear Gold, Go on, go on, eat, eat, eat.

Dear Moon, You are wasting away to nothing. Your face is so pale.

Dear Fox, Step ball change, the dance, the snow, ears flattened, what you sense.

Dear Music, Somehow you emerge from the empty belly of the guitar.

Dear Butcher, Your hands slick with blood. You hold the animal in your arms, almost tenderly.

Dear Lamb, How do we wash our feet, what follows the bleat.

Dear Stepmother, Dear heart, dear diamond eyes, where have our hands gone, what fingers, electricity.

Dear Dinner Plate, Reflecting her face within your frame.

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Dear Tumor, How much will you eat away? How much will you consume?

Dear Grandmother, By the sea the fish have stopped swimming, they hover, and stare with round, round eyes.

Dear Delta, Gravel-mouthed and thick with silt. We wait for your answer.

Nightmare as Reverse

Amy Ash & Callista Buchen

terrify, lurid, dread, dream
opposite, inverse, underneath, back

A gun ingests the bullet, a silver pill. The flash
first, the sound sometime later, retching and black.
Reassembling itself on the carpet, the body rises and stands
hinged, a puppet, what it means to blink, to nod. We go

backwards, spinning out of the undertow, the water
pulling like so many fingers. Liquid and dark, what
it means to breathe. We are lifted, suspended,
the river full of faces, the shore full of arms, reaching.

What it means to grasp. The wolf drags the infant back to bed
and the silence shouts: terrible bleating of now what, now what,
as the curved tooth, glinting like a shard of bone, of moon, snags
and all the windows crack, slicing the scene to fractures and screams.

And here we stand in cut-glass, gasping, swallowing the lullaby
caught
against gashes, what skips and whispers, even as we cover our ears,
our open mouths. We teeter toward the hole and what waits
at the edge of our throats, threatening to sound.