

Alien Skin

Rhubarb unfurls.

Fantastical, frilled like giant rose petals. Shoves clods of earth and worms aside, strives toward sun.

Skin thins, chlorophyll streams.

In the fisted wrinkly head

stuck between magenta stalks

Life insists.

Graupel chips bounce off. Rhubarb shivers, unable to turtle inward. Hangs its hair while frigid scalpels puncture, its poison heartsblood useless.

I touch one leaf.

Clammy, my mother's skin,

an hour after her death,

cells spread and stilled.

A handful of warmth

fisted over her heart.

Out-of-focus facsimile, Mom, in violent pastel hue, smeared yellow-purple, alien skin,

a shredded rhubarb leaf

refusing to relinquish blood.

Winter steals it.

Dawn after Killing Frost

Mist curls purl off water

fingering pale sunlight.

Obscured, a single goose calls

from the surface, voice ghosting

for a mate. She flies in, silent slide,
touches beaks with him, flapping,
splashing.

Wind has packed its bags of leaves
and moved on, tree bodies plundered.
Still takes my breath, such starkness,
bone and branch.

In the night, hoar frosted every grass blade, petal,
each empty bird's nest and the tail feathers of squirrels
wrapped 'round their faces. They squat,
back-to-bark,
paws folded
facing dawn,
waiting
for the warm.

sun wars

It is the time of year
When dusk coalesces almost before the sun
has shone, rising around us like water.
Or smoke. When dew turns to frost
and naked branches having shaken themselves
free of clothing beseech Sky.

Cats jostle each other for the strip
of sunlight that paints a 6 inch swath of floor by the front door around 1:00
p.m.
I drag a two tier tower for them. Who gets top bunk?

Warmth inebriates them.

Gabby, highest, Cato on his back, feet in the air
offers his belly to Sun.

Even a jumble of racketing dogs can't dislodge
such heated torpor

We struggle between need for light and heat this waning year.

Close the door

too soon as sun scatters over

the woods and drifts

down the horizon into a pile of

blazing empty leaves.



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