

SPORE
OR
SEED

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FREMANTLE PRESS

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spore or seed

you do not hum
or desire, you do
not thirst, hunger
or long, you linger
indivisible from dust
the smallest shadow
of the same sun
the days don't end
but begin and re-begin
this is not a reboot
of your father's favourite
TV show, but a season
a migration, nesting
spawning is this
what you need and this
who makes it through
the net? what pollen and manna
such timid ecstasy, the tongue
then the colour, the ending
then a blending

One: Weeks

A Measured Risk

Our home is safe,
our yard without any large trees
for you to jump from.
Your father has kind hands
and a low voice
he only raises to tell the dog
'don't'. I have only once
threatened murder – your aunt
barely older than you
in the kitchen. We shall not
have a second child.
There are corners though
and dark places.
Where you are now
has no edge
and is lit like amber.
The world is no jewel.
Lichen grows
on the roof tiles
and I pay a man
to kill the bugs
in the carpet. One day
my father left me.
I cannot say
yours will not
do the same.

The Garden

Your father discusses where to put the plants
whether to pull up bricks
to get to irrigation.

We are new to dirt
to digging, my hands
the type to need, not to knead.

The garden grows ugly
at winter, hedges yellowing
the ends of things in pots shrivelling.

I'm slowly reintroducing activity
to my day like coming off a diet
and the movement of fronds in wind

is suspicious. On Wednesday
I watch you appear dirty and grainy
moving outside of colour.

Your arms and legs without a breeze
show me how easy it is
to grow or let go.

In Bed

I tell my husband
foetuses open their eyes
from about eight weeks
but can only see from twenty

A friend of mine
also expecting
has paid for extra scans
to prove the baby
does indeed
lurk within her

We all have
different standards
of proof I cannot
put it plainer
than that

I am not colour-blind
but often forget
the right word
for what colour

Inside the womb
I imagine
is only red and black

Except it's never
not just that
but all the other
multisyllabic
pesky shades

Although, maybe
for the baby
the rods and cones
still in their hundreds
keep even
the ambiguity of clouds
and greys
at bay

You are currently transformed

with velum into your own
velvet box, pushing
like a seal against the red
weed of womb, I clasp
at any indication
of our sameness, ever the colour
of threads binding us
together. At night
in the twilight of your waking
and my own non-sleeping hours
your father lies against my side
and speaks so both of us hum
with his words, though only I
can feel you turning
resolutely solid
with your own gravity.

Succour

The fish fail.
The shellfish normally flown north
still reef-embedded.

I lie on my left side
like a mountain range
so the oxygen passes

unimpeded along the aorta.
In the garden
bees buzz

and sparrows squeak.
What happened
to all the less noble

characters of myth?
Did they persist
in shapeshifting?

Still move
across the boundaries
like prayers?

I grew
in a rickety home
with parched lawn

and trees to fall from
but am hidden now
by brown walls

and paved yard.
I shall never
touch skin

or peel
carapace from flesh
but I insist

on living
is that
the same?

Navel Gazing

My belly button pops out
like the tie at an end of a balloon.
I have dug into its recesses for years
thinking there might be a way to unspool it
peek inside or blow in another mouthful of air.
As I age, I like the idea of this gnarled thing
living at my centre like the nub
of a nut or the husked coconut.
Something secret even from me, and my prying
loose of all that's unfixed.
I have you to thank for this small notion
of something long kept hidden, a link
to being longed for while I press my hand
against the smooth unpliant skin of my stomach
and feel you press back.

Little Oracle

Each morning wakes me startled
your hiccups like satellites
blinking softly against the sky.

I have loved so little
and never for so faint a moment.
Every morning wakes me startled

the light reappearing behind the curtains
your father's footsteps, then shadow,
blinking softly against the sky.

He holds me, then puts his face to you.
Together we imagine you blinking
opening your eyes to the morning, startled

by colour, the feathering of eyelashes
against your cheeks, your own
blinking softly against the sky.

I am an orb and turn on an axis
that shifts as you sway,
each morning shakes me, startled
and blinking. Soft against the sky.

Online Guided Meditation

Where you rustle around
I picture a pig rifling
with snout for mushrooms. I do not
know when I will think of you
as anything other than animal.
I would not eat a pet, but would
the pig that is not mine, this sits
less easy with your trotters under my ribs.
'It's all a particular type of chaos then,' I say
to the bird in the bottlebrush. I leash
yours and call it mine.