

Atropos Comes to Planned Parenthood

By Kain Kim

Balled string sleeps in her lap—
alone in the women's clinic,
oblivious to the approaching danger,
the beat in her belly.
The girl knits to darn the yawning hours,
mittens or a muffler
to warm the throat
of someone small.
It's the funny way
a mother's love leaps logic,
how possession can materialize
its lack,
as heightened density on chest film
freezes air into a crushing blow.
This is not a personal diagnosis
yet she will hear it alone.
There is always a gap between
bifurcations like the one she will
endure today.
I speak into it.

(It was you
who taught me that,
to septate sense, to bleach
clichés from language,
fleece meaning and pluck
the burrs from intention.
We scrimped for syllables in
a mnemonic without memory,
mother and daughter
grappling on hands and knees
in this shared echo chamber
where we push old blood
back and forth.

I offer mere slivers
of sense flossed out slow through
the teeth,
scared to snag

on some impurity.

I am no chorus: that
aped vocabulary
you can follow
like a thread, inherited
instructions to hang
in the air
like clean laundry,
rinsed of yesterday's spoils,
ballooned by breaths
into plausible shape).
Even so,

I thought I should be
the one to tell you.

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