

A Family Quiet

Shane Carreon

storytelling

The stories we keep
stored in tin cans
clear glass bottles
other airtight containers

are in the cupboards
neatly labeled
something else.
They pass as

some things familiar
and easy to hide
seen in plain sight
among dried herbs

wooden utensils
cauldron and soot.
Not even sunlight could spy
through plexiglass.

Sometimes
when we are brave
we take a bone
serve it in soup

handing guests tasting spoons.
They all love the meat
the dog gets the bone
we pat the dog

who keeps the bone
seeding in the backyard.

The Daughter

She has
what her father had
on his leg
slithering
raising
its head
Smooth anger
easing its way in
His tattoos
all scales
red-eyed green
How they found
their way
throbbing
into her skin
when memory
turns from grave
into face
And her body
remembers
the dark
the hollow

Meeting Her

You know the moment you see her

she does not mention her name

and your lover introduces you

looking straight at your eyes to

merely brush her name

on the pearl on your ear.

Your lover does not repeat it

but you see. It is

the name kept away, tucked, buried

decidedly not even dreamt on nights

that speak or cry in sleep. Surfacing

only in the way your lover holds

your hand. Tightly.

Interim

We thought of marriage
A necessity for survival

He has the hands and fingers
Meant for the piano

I try to look for voice

He is not ashamed
To have found a singer

Whose face is not mine
She knows him in the dark

Where there are no lines
No twenty years between

In the meantime I repeat the word
For faith and constancy

This too shall pass
Her singing at the back of our stage

Funeral at the Blessed Sacrament

At last all his sons whom he had abandoned
now all grown, have come to gather in silence.
Their wives and many children seeing
the face, finally, of the name seldom spoken

except with bitterness. Their households
all these years illuminated by his shadow.
His body lies, a final gesture
inert and encased
in glass no son has ever breached. How

they come together now, white shirts, flowers
dry eyes and candles. Surviving
family in spite of and until the very end
making certain the man finally leaves them all.