

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Sally Rosen Kindred · Thursday, July 22nd, 2021

Two hours after my father left for good
with his wet hair lamp-gleam black and his zippered bag,
my mother pulsed through the house, turning off
all the lights. I followed her. Then sat
on the rug in the dark watching smoke twist
up from her cigarette and drop
small stars to burn into her blouse, black with blue roses.
I did not yet believe
in the kitchen to come, in bottles that lit
and littered the air, tilting here from the future—
that God could lay her down, years, on that couch.
I looked up at her. I touched the rug's braid.
Behind her head: four cold windows.
Beyond them, outside, in grass moon-wet with night,
a ghost-Wolf guarded the yard.
In memory She moves now out from the alders
and skirts the silver swings.
Her tufts bristle in the grass.
We had called Her name: snap of the switch
on the glass-white globe, turn
of the lamp's brass key. With our breath and fingers. Without that da
rk
Wolf could never have found us.
She could not have come for me. Would not
have felt safe. My mother
was sagging already, losing stars, buckling

under her story. Pain found me a wolf's
ghost body: gave me Never and fur I dreamed, I hid, I held, I
would not tell.

*

Coda: The Night Glass

When I was ten she set a glass of wine on the table.

My mother knew to praise, and the paints for night:

currant, rookwood, garnet.

Stirred in the drift. Shade of a hood.

Her thirst unsleeved in parts: a stem first, a mouth.

My mother's lips, though, were a blue envelope.

A glued wing, a flap, could keep her sleep's secrets.

Late at night the glass would crack.

Its whistle split shingles, let the sky inside.

She made it. Her fear named the parts.

Night sky: a stem. Night sky: a mouth.

She could drown a hyacinth.

She could thread a wolf through the moon.

When I was ten, a glass of wine.

Now I howl when it spills over.

I stain when it slips through.

She'll say *crimson*. No, *invention*. Call the red dress my dream.

I wake hard, a daughter. I break back into my skin.

*

Morning

The angel of the black bowl sets it on the table.
The girl sits down. She will not eat.

She wears a dress the color of her mother's hunger.
She does not believe in breakfast, dreams
the eggs' songs dead in their shells.

The room won't be her balloon, regretting the sky.
The clock turns its face away.
The chandelier above her kicks light into the past,
that time when she knew how to be born.
The bowl won't be her cradle.

She looks into the black bowl and sees a vicious wing.
She looks into the black bowl and sparrows are folding their wet brown papers.

She looks in and forgets there are
ways to eat and be a breath, a daughter.

The girl bows her head for a blessing.
Inside the black bowl it begins to snow.

[Link to buy Sally Rosen Kindred's book WHERE THE WOLF](#)

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