

# WINTER WISDOM



## Elixir

What's in it?  
Is that what you ask the wizard?

{LB}



{HM}

The beggar

subtle people  
walk to the pond  
while the windows of the car  
are cleaned, defrosted I mean  
the pond has become a forest  
swim a little closer

{LB}

He will hide  
from his family and friends.  
And he will make small clay creatures--  
no eyes  
no feet  
no heads  
just unresolved  
problems.  
he will sit in the shower and stand in the bath.  
He is bored.  
But, he is writing his autobiography  
in his mind  
for the sixth time,  
he will smoke,  
a habit he began when carving time to think;  
but now he will stop,  
as time no longer needs carving.  
he has thought of everything already.  
he will cover the windows in saran wrap and the walls in carpet;  
he will lay alone in his bed covered by his few possessions.  
these things console him at night.  
they both comfort and restrain;  
it is warm there.  
In time, he will no longer hide.  
he visits his old spots, but they will too small.  
Soon he will find the eyes and feet under his bed, and will use them to walk away.  
In the bath he will write his autobiography--  
make one copy,  
throw his copy out,  
and mail the other to an ex-girlfriend with no return address.  
Soon he will forget the pain of carving time for old thoughts.  
Soon he will be warm,  
and everyone he has loved  
will be left behind  
as he will no longer need them.

{HM}

Bathing  
submerged in the murk where your cells still reside  
pores soaked  
with an appetite for the dead  
dejected hunger for some kind of solace.

A dog once said to a knight:  
This is love,  
when death's involved.

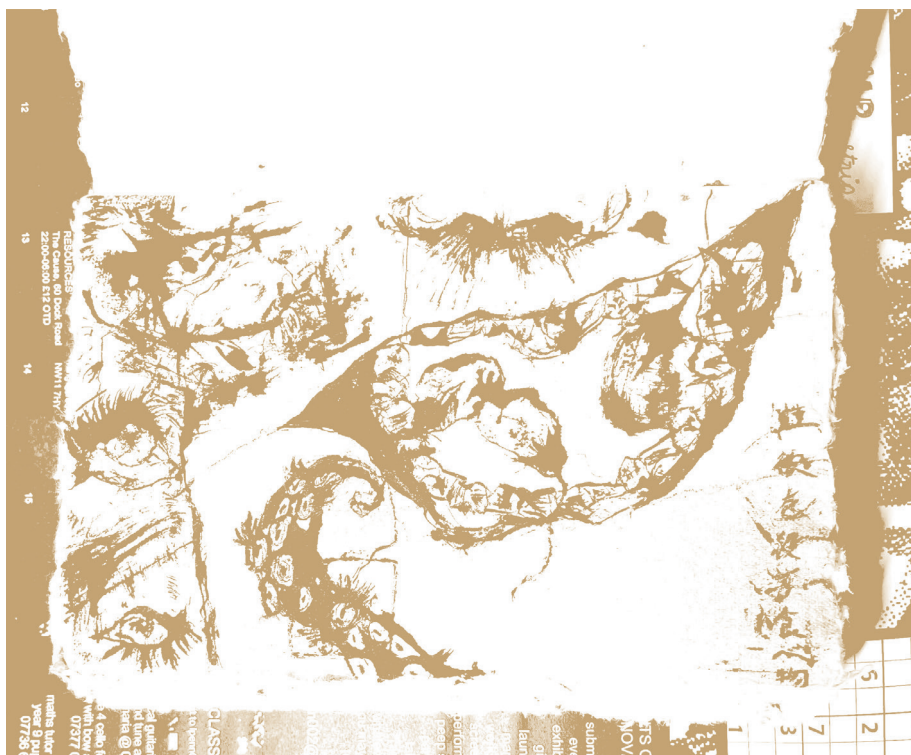
Turbid water  
I can't bear to drain it  
so I drink  
devour skin, hair, nails, this cocktail  
your remains, my sustenance  
drink it up with desperate animalism  
until I swell  
hold you in me  
push you down  
deep  
buried in my stomach  
food for worms  
regurgitate  
refill the tub  
repeat.

{HH}

Between Was  
and Am

I have been lost here before.  
Somewhere between home and  
nowhere. Between was and am. I  
am tethered by the part of me that  
is dirt, that is hard rock softened  
in the puddle of my veins. By the  
bit of grit that smuggled its way  
beneath my mottled tartan skin  
at the still-so-soft age of pigtales  
and skinned knees. The age of  
flower petal perfume and carefully  
preparing a stock of dock leaf paste  
before a days adventures. A grubby  
smudge hued with a permanent  
purple paleness, disrupted only  
by the constellations of freckles  
planted on me by the sun. The  
same then as now, really, although  
with a few more disruptions.

{MC}



{AW}

Protein

An outstretched hand pinches a curve into a cusp. On the opposite wall, several men pluck a chicken. I have married one of them. At the wedding there were meatballs. They said : why do her meatballs differ so much in size? To my right, I count tiles and am bothered by a point where the glue creates a shift in one of the rows. The door is propped open by an orange traffic cone. The room, they say, reads from left to right: pinch, chicken, glue, cone. When I met him, my husband showed me the sheep behind the cafeteria, running up, then down, the staircase. We took pictures. There is one in the toilet, and one at the front door. Did I close the door? Yes. My mouth itches. Maybe it's too much salt and maybe the door hasn't been shut properly. Maybe something has been allowed through. If Protein does it, so should I! Protein does it blindly – motions me quiet, moves me to breakfast, past tables draped in strange cloth. Protein walks with confidence. I walk also – quickly on gravel, slowly on grass. Sometimes, I shower daily.

There are only two other people in the room. Protein is late. Mentioned something about muscle pain on the phone, probably pulled something stretching. Stretching should not be so vigorous, so violent. I have watched other people stretch, I know how it should be done. The other two people in the room walk regularly – two steps forwards, one to the right, shifting weight to either leg as they contemplate. One of them smells like sausages, and I saw grill marks on their leg when they rolled up their trousers to wade through the moat. Protein asks me all the time: 'why don't I get grill marks?', 'How to get good grill marks?'. On and on about the grill marks. On our wedding day, Protein gave me a grill mark aluminium oil sprayer and a barbecue tool set. Protein didn't like the meatballs either. Protein has eaten the mosquitoes that have eaten me.

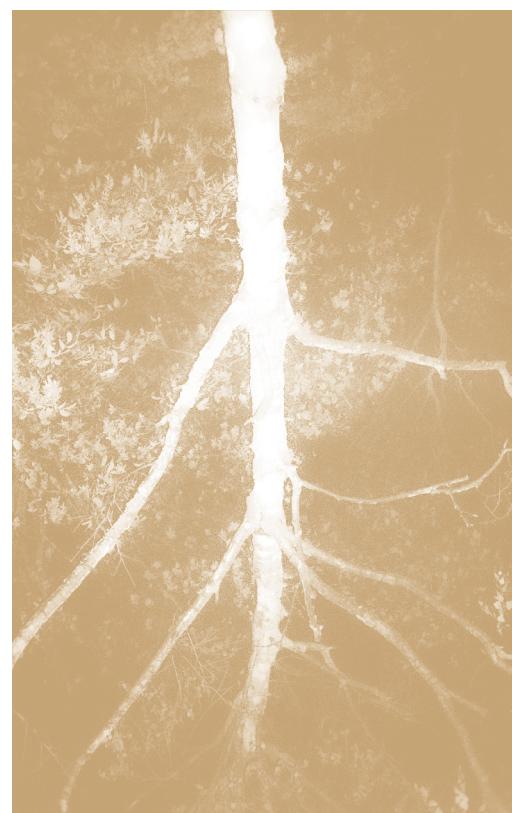
One of the people in the room coughs, then looks directly at me. Maybe I've been staring at the grill marks instead of the pictures. I have seen the pictures. The pinching has evolved. Now it has grown new fingers for new pinching. Cusps fill the room. The others file out and drown in the moat. I wait for Protein.

{ZM}

In the park

men  
 dogs  
 passing  
 women with dogs  
 less  
 sometimes women  
 without dogs  
 sometimes  
 spilling  
 jeans  
 shorts  
 into eyes  
 onto the ground  
 dogs

{LB}

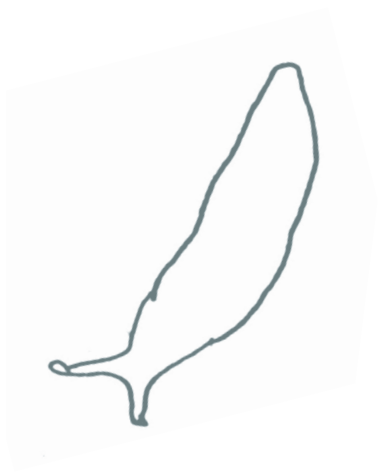


{AW}

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PLEASE TAKE THIS CARD HOME



{DME}



{MW}