

Covid dreaming (by McEniry)

I thought I was done being pregnant
kids in their 30s no period
for the past two years but these
Covid dreams are so real
they repeat themselves so real
that my uterus is still contracting
come daylight still trying to
forget that this time nature chose
to end it early and why I don't even
know and how I got
dream pregnant in the first place
I can't quite recall in the dream pain
I'm thinking how it's supposed to be
that once the babies are delivered
bodies eventually forget the pain
and even in the dream I recall
a time I found that to be true

yet, it's Covid time now and even
after I am fully awake even after
morning coffee and check-in texts
with the kids my hand still rests
on my abdomen still feels
Covid-induced contracting
and it takes three days to realize
that the ending
of this dream baby's life
is my intensifying fear for my
grown children living socially distant
connected only by technology now
no comforting hug to calm
their fears no way for me to keep

them safe from a silent killer
that could sneak in without
their consent suck the life
from their lungs and three days
after the dream I'm still expecting
blood in toilet

Reclamation (by Kremins)

I.

So many ways to kill a people, over centuries.
Now this virus attacking elders and native speakers
of languages almost extinct, barely alive and breathing

with each death a loss: a word, a sentence, an idea
a memory, for so long saved in secret, defiance of
oppression to crush a culture and spirit, eliminate

Tsalagi, replace with English, control the narrative.
Years of whispered stories, recording truths, so when

time comes making a list is easy: vaccinate elders first,
honor their place, preserve their promise through learning
language as I remember the story of my great-grandma

II.

Answering the door of her thatched cottage home in the West
of Ireland, bog country, while my great-grandpa taught Irish
illegally in the back bedroom, Great-grandma faced

two British Black and Tans, knowing they would make her
husband disappear if discovered. Annie, as the story goes,
spoke kindly and gently in Irish, "Fe'adfaiah Dia," raised her

knitting needles, stabbed the two officers; flesh wounds, but enough
pain and distraction for Martin and his students to escape
through the wet fields to fight with guns and poetry another day

**A sonnet in which I am in the bathtub on a Friday night
examining my legs and thinking I should've taken them out on
the town (by Zbrizher)**

instead of soaking post eating three Cadbury eggs
even if they were on sale post-Easter and have melted
into a sticky puddle inside the cabinet after I hid them
from my kid but forgot and lo they were resurrected
when I opened the drawer to steal some of his bubbles.
I swear, this is not a parable of the shitty mother
I'm saving him from cavities and bought the bubbles
so they're mine by rules of commerce. Still, what would Jesus say?
What would my Jewish mother? I'm tempted to make a joke
how she'd forgive the betrayal as long as they were on sale or
*If you'd work as hard on finding a husband
as separating the wrapper from the chocolate...*
Ma, from your mouth to god's ears, but if you could only taste the
sanctity of
this solitude, this sweetness. I swear, Ma, parabolic.

Chameleon or I Am Afraid (by Gonzalez)

after Dorianne Laux

I am afraid of the changes,
my shed skin lying in piles throughout the house
after we exchange vows and make a pact upon an earth
that is grief swept, that I will turn
into a woman that cleans and cooks and never
checks in with herself or
—God help me—
forgets how to write.

I am afraid that we'll realize that we are two
remote souls who happen to love each other.
And maybe it's okay to be lonely and want love,
but shouldn't I carry fear especially then?
House it carefully in the corner of my brain so that if it breaks,
I can tell myself, *I told you so*
because isn't that penance for being wrecked myself?

I'm afraid of not being enough
for you, dear husband, for your family. For myself.
Disappointing us all in a cycle of self-doubt,
so consumed by it that I drop everything in this role of wife.
You would tell me, there is no role, no servitude, no pleasing—
just interdependence and compromise and love.
This gives me hope. I am still afraid.

I'm afraid to get lost in love, a marsh of buzzing and still water,
the music and quiet winding me around
its natural metronome, unable to find my way out.
I'm afraid death will take you too early, me morose
and swimming in depressive quicksand or worse,
I go too early leaving you on a lonely island of liquor.

What do I get to control?

Maybe not the giving or taking, but holding your
heart in my palm, all beating and raw, saying to it

I can be honest. I can be tender.

I promise you, *I'll be brave.*

I chant over and over, *I trust the universe. I trust the universe.*

I trust the universe.

Because I do.

Tapestry, or Now I Love Green (by Carreira)

After Ysabel Y. Gonzalez

I lay on my grass like the Vitruvian Man,
squint hard as sun films me with UV,
breathe deep enough to stir wisp off
the dandelions, stretch like a ready dancer
before debut. The Brick City in me rolls its eyes,
knows well this exercise in grounding
will last as long as my dedication to gardening.
Truth is now I love green, but I'm no good
at helping it grow. Truth is, I need nature
more than ever, to hold my body close
to earth like butter on bread, to glaze my eyes
with groves and fields so that I remember
I come from grandfolks who made so much
magic with land, who took seeds and sewed
a tapestry of orange, crimson, chameleon green.