



lucy cunningham
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we more than me

breath
as reluctant refuge
I have wrecked
every tool I have
in a kitchen
full
of dirt
and dishes
tin can
full
of ash
in
cement drying
slow
motion.
trust the
composition
of balance
composing confidence
by weaving positives
in negatives
as we decompose
lust
in mirage
things rust
and
you use time
like the
beads
on the string
of a necklace.

I
I am

We are sacks of blood
Spills of air

Flaccid gross mass

Tangled
In repetition
Routine animals

Flung by disorientation
Glass with
No reflection

Flaccid gross mass

There are no longer
Any fingerprints
There is glass
That traps us
Trace
Tracing us
And blood that runs
As thick as bleach

Hang on,
There is no blood
What are we?
In the history of things?
– A mere projection

Flaccid gross mass

There is seaweed and skin
Scales
And eyes
Bleaching
Seaweed is looming

We have no reflection

Again

And
Again

Routine animals

I

I am

I am practising

I am practicing for
The long black line.
Self-obliteration, the mela that
Would be gone, a richness
Of self-mastication
I am practicing, myself for
The lushness, the oral physiology, the
Cheek
The dry grave
Giving over
From what I've seen to
Deluge
Dionysian
The bones slackened
the formalist abed, perfusing
a profuse of hail of handclapping
Centuries.
This begins with a begetting
not in the water but in the page
The long black line
practiced for church, for gorge
Lorca's thrashed field building
steady on Cayrol's sand banks
The spaces in this will forever be
Deluge, rolling
The clay rolling the air time a-wind a
Wed Oh black Maria
Hunch slept easy
Oh black Poll
Asphalt hand to palm to pass
Practicing herself for
Snit over nation a fine thing
A fettle
Clochamail she was
A wash in the lairy-ness of lyricism
The joy in revelation the ridicule running
Thick and fast
Myself, practicing the
Abonnement of sensibilities
Shameless and sainted the aisling
Caught in the nets
The acquisition of the murmur
Hag stone seizing shag carpets and the
Milk froth.
I want like a foxing like a laurelling like a lure
Like a practicing of myself.

I
I am
I am practising
I am practising myself

Basin cloud.

Ribbon clouds lace deep pink over cranes outside
floating in the upper part of the window,
small enough to hold in my palm.

Ribbon clouds lace deep pink in the basin,
bleeding sighs whispering across the tiles.

Mary, I tried calling. So I wrote instead.

overcoming in the bell foundry,

what can be done but
lament, soprano and alto
search each other longingly

in the iron room
as flames dripped,
hot coming,
cast in iron
cast in the need to carry,
white gold faces in the dusk
white gold voices bells hands ringing
walls giving way,

as apparitions sung to Johanna,
seeking the yearning wandering pain
wandering loving
wandering, reclining, into the metal shroud,
giving way to heat to letting go of
the cold mantel once held up,

breathing in rusting metal
scent of lusting
for the curves of bells
of waist
of treble clefs in a score for vibrato;

flame dripping falling back to
thinking about the church, again
to the fired mantel to the mother
to the sin that first took her to the bell ringer
who called, held her notes
holding time holding gaze towards

her iteration f f f
soprano
alto mf mf p to
 a quiet bass,
holding giving way to
 [end note, lament, exhale]

*Marie, in your house I've grown peachy vowels;
 thick, pitted,
 raw.*

She's shaking your verses,

cutting syllables strung
around fingers legs hips
holding sounds
humming,
you speak sing silk

is unravelling,

now she speaks sings
the living hum of silence,
because silence isn't absolute absence
because silence is the barm the rise the giving way to
the living skin of air.

She's shaking your verses,
because silence isn't giving in,
it's the tongue taking back what belongs
it's the blade of a knife

 sharp, it's the moment when he sees
her silence are the words he hasn't said
 the hands he hasn't held
the hurt he hasn't breathed through
 shaking verses.

So I wrote.

Yesterday I walked again in the red space, in thought of you.
Yesterday you rang in the new month and I remembered,
why I chose not to cut the body from the pyre,
left the camphor on my tongue; I burn so to write.

*Maria Goretti in her loss told Me, Marie, Mother-
for to give,
forgive.*

*burnished bowls and cups
of simmered leaves and wicks,
candles drunk with butter
wax waning as she waits,*

*watching, outside's indigo night
breathing into a quiet concerto,
humming, notes moving over notes,*

*the music becoming,
the song blushing,
admitting, after you called.*

a butterspoon encased at Whitechapel Gallery.

*This rounded tool
cradles,
clay that lay sleeping 'til woken.*

*She told you finally of the weight, the water, the weeks of
wandering,
and in tears you held her.*

*Her voice, grown, exhaled forgiveness;
the intensity of Vincent's screaming nights
holding her up, the weight water wandering, away.*

*bowls cups and wax fingers,
the bodies of saints burning heavenward.*

*And when I light them,
tears prick at these small souls
wavering,
myself poured out, silk in darkness
melting,*

*for the second time,
everything is white gold,
bed frame my frame;
tonight I am white gold with saints,
in waxen wilderness.*

Stars, the silence of astounded souls;
vigil in the half-light, where sleeplessness holds.

5am watercolour

hears blue singing,
tones distilled from green and lilac,

hears the song of morning,
soft muslin thrown over blue strips Monet gifted;

gold aquarelle,
the murmur of branches touching air.

My ampersand; never ending.

unfurling

Linden trees,
smell of folds in skin folds in nights
struck with light, soft
bedding, Linden trees smell of
closed rooms, salted exhalations
struck with light, soft
kisses to the neck before
sleep-
hushed, Linden trees stir in London.

Light walks
catfooted through curtains,
like ribbon clouds, only softer.

*Mary Marie Maria;
Ave.*



Postscript

Teaching is strange.

It happens in lots of different ways.

The five authors in this little collection have experimented for nearly 3 years with the idea that 'the workshop' might be a context in which students and teachers take one another's creative work seriously.

This 'what if...?' over-turning of the normal classroom dynamic is premised on reading together and listening. In our case, it's about paying attention, together, to language acts, and not worrying too much about who wrote what, as if the workshop were a productive echo chamber.

That echo chamber can become a space of the 'we'. It's full of imperfections and awkwardness, but through its commitment to serious sharing the writerly 'me' (the 'I') has a chance to emerge as a dynamic, inadequate, yet necessary and social voice.

Here, those voices have been woven, in call-and-response to the four broken lines of the very short poem, 'How to Speak Myself Out of Myself', which was first published in *Try to Be Better*, edited by Sam Buchan-Watts and Lavinia Singer and published by Prototype (London, 2019).

Lucy Cunningham
For Mary Marie Maria: After the pain, pyre and Linden tree
p. 11
cargocollective.com/lurose

Ruby Lewis
I am Practising For
p. 9
rubylewisartist.blog

Graeme Miller
You and I and All
p. 5
graememiller.bandcamp.com

Olivia Russell
The Crises of Repetition
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Nick Thurston
How to Speak Myself Out of Myself
pp. 4, 6, 8, 10
nickthurston.info

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