



angels

katie longono

Angeltits

Katie Longofono

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The Outline

- I. The strike
 - a. the swell
 - i. purple, then
 - ii. green
- II. receding to a mark
with indistinguishable origins, but
 - a. it is there
 - i. angry
 - ii. I am angry
 - iii. you did an angry thing to my body
green and swelling before you
I was open yet refer back to
- I. The strike
 - a. it seems necessary to strike
something soft to see
 - i. if it will give
 - b. I gave for what
else is there to do when a map
blueprints skin
 - c. that is a rhetorical question—
- II. You are struck and learn
 - a. what it is
to be marked
angry
 - b. the swelling is not
giving, it's a bloody
yawp against the othermost edge
of my body this is the hard
cusp of my blood
 - c. this is hard
 - d. I am on edge if only
 - i. a bridge to walk
but I hear
- III. the architects striking
- IV. an invisible net before
- V. I am stricken
on a rocky outpost

- VI. the golden hammer
 - a. on the edge
 - b. the striking sea

A Dog Softly Whines in its Crate

Her fingers brush a rising chest,
a whistler who twitches and clasps
her hands as he sleeps,
pushes against the whole length
of her body, opens his mouth
into the curl of her hair as if to eat
the dying. He expects bitters, oils,
knows fibers won't hold up to his searching
mouth—and he is searching—
collects nails calluses rough edges
when she isn't looking, later lies
about the cut on his lip—
a clean gash, a sweet red decanted
on their tongues a hole
where she tore into him—

Dollface

I'd like to be porcelain
but it breaks too clean.

A face is not meant to be glued
in straight lines,

a girl cannot be painted,
a shelf is not for sitting.

I will not cramp or mold
with moths, I've dusted off this cage,

and you say I am too much
about wings and swinging lamps.

Perhaps I am.

Perhaps I am bored

with the pendulum and only want
one steep arc to lean against.

Who can fault me for loving
the fault, for tonguing the crack

we crumble within? What ache
would you deny? I celebrate

the wax and its sun, the wingless
skeleton, my silt my swoon.

One Morning, Every Morning

You break but can't explain
where. You'd call yourself a shell
except it evokes the cage
of something pink and tough which is true
but you also mean how often
you are a single line.
People hold you to an ear
hoping for ocean
but you don't echo desire—
emptied into a littered parking lot,
gulls pick you for paper plates.
There is a body of water
somewhere in there but nobody listens
for the reservoir, the lake they are not looking
for something manmade.

No Release

You find yourself dangling hookless
propped at the mouth, gulping
after a cool swell that will not come.
Won't somebody put you down? Instead,
slow drain and clot the backing
away shying at a bridle. You have so many
you don't know which is wrapped
around your neck anymore,
just that you are bound
and like the choke. Other times
you wish for the wild animal
he pressed into bricks, clawing
the only way you knew how—
dead weight elbow spasms—
but he liked the cut
of your diamond and came
for thirty seconds before asking
if you did, too. You didn't,
but said *sure* now everyone thinks
you wanted it—the bridle, too—

[We are mostly merciful]

We are mostly merciful we give in
we say uncle relatively speaking
it's easy not like sifting flour
or kneading there is nothing sore
deep in the arms we are willing
to let live unlock lips
say *no more* we are forgiving
it would be easy to stay but we believe
in gentle killings the kitten
and a bag of rocks it's quicker
than we expect a thud
whimpering women walking between
familiar rooms

Open Hand Slap

it's all you can do to keep
from drilling a knuckle
home the way they do
in torture movies (you're really
into torture these days)
the wince follows you
down the street why not turn
and take it eat it like a loaf
of grainy bread ferment
your gut into a room
for broken bottles
and handguns hard angles
your fist never completely closes
around those who say theirs do
are lying sweetheart

Quiet Down

It's hard to say *angelitis*
when I won't lie still
on the bed—he wants me mostly
rough in the leaves scratching
dry curls latticed down my arms
an X marked: *this was gentle*
once I was a soft thing, then
I'm petrified now—

Inverse of a Mole

When the border becomes irregular
you do, too. You shift and everyone

assumes you're lying. Maybe you are.
What is true depends on who's talking.

You hold a lot of hats.
Sometimes you identify with as many as ten

young women in an afternoon.
Sometimes you are such an impostor

you disappear into a painting,
nobody the wiser. When you start writing

in code, everyone thinks that's just
your handwriting—nobody wants to know

your secrets, anyway—convinced
they're all about water bottles and yoga.

Maybe they're right, or maybe
you are a hole you can't bend

yourself out of, and steam makes you
invisible, and you rise with the sun

but go down like a dog
at every siren you pass

which is all of them

which is the cross

which is a way of saying
you're whiting out.

How Many Licks?

Every text is a masculine
mouth wrapped around a word

around a body. You tie me up
so later you can undo the bow.

You are waiting
for the cream, a box

to fill you when nobody is looking.
You want it enough to cheat the diet

—a gift
it'd be rude to refuse—

pick me up
looking for honey.

Instead I'm a comb,
a necklace of teeth—

animal bones rattling
a wooden drawer.

[He says]

you're nothing but candy
a sucker I want to put you
in my mouth. You belong in my hand
this hip is mine this stitch
is mine let me hold you
in one piece I can see
you're faltering what's the matter
too many men wearing you down?
I won't wear you but I'll eat
you I'm hungry you belong
to this mouth let me suck you
why do you keep saying
no why do I even
have to ask? I want you
that should be enough

*well I want to disappear
but nobody asked me*

Break Something

Men see books in her thighs
the bulge where breast spills
from camisole they don't want flesh
if there's paper—when she tells her story
their eyes shine unsympathetic sirens
they ask for more parts
with sex—*tell the one about the tits again*—
she extinguishes a cigarette on her chest
gets called a misogynist
stones herself shuddering
in bed nobody needs to know
the difference between pleasure
and a sob that's really her job—

Skeleton of Tiny Bones

You knew not to walk a certain way,
that whiskey tastes better
from a bellybutton, and some men
like how it looks when you're pinned
at the neck. You stopped squirming
early on grew a face like a fish,
took quiet, shallow breaths
because gasping killed the mood.

Mouths to Feed

You made a steak of me
marinating overnight. We turned
together above a flame for hours.

You took me in your mouth
on your cow tongue lolling
before the swallow

there are so many ways
into your gut you didn't gag
took me whole. It wasn't easy
but you struggled on

we all want to eat
something beating—

We Grind Ourselves Out

We are not going home.
You are not my tent for the night.

I will not let you build me
with poles, light the paper bag

or gasoline. There is a clear patch
of moonlight if you are desperate.

Most men don't care for my suggestions.
Most men will go back to camp

and rustle up the leaves a little.
They are angry I want lips

not cocks, that I remove
hands from my breasts.

Humans should be light switches
and I am selfish in the dark. Well,

I am tired of the fluorescent glare.
Some men will thrust you

beneath the chandelier and demand
you admire the glow. Some men

will put their whole fist in you
and wait for you to light up.

I am not a bird or a symbol.
I am a woman burning.

The other wives open their curtains, glance away.
I see a fire in the hearth of every home.

[It's not easier, but]

the ocean is no longer a place of dread
men go to salt their bodies
& shred against scaly women.
I kiss the arrowhead
on the mouth, go to war, dare sea glass
to be anything but binary,
and I long for a creature
to eat me with necessity,
not love, who won't rest
me in a hammock
motioning *eat, mama*
you are weak. Can't you see
I swallow the hardest
in this town, I gut the meat.
You'd all be throats
scraping bones without me.

Deadwood

I wrote a suicide note
during a rainstorm left it
to dry—he found it, browning.
Where's the body? he asked,
thought it was sexy
I was still alive. I don't feel
like a breathing creature.
I feel like lying
in a garden mouth open
beneath a hurricane,
the groan of trees
about to unravel into firewood,
waiting to gurgle away
while footsteps pass
on their way to the birdbath.

I Have Arrived

I stop coming and simply
am. What is this place?
A floating, dull plateau
where I am drunk
and boys are deaf
to my slur. I can roll
a condom blind.
You can't say no
if nobody is looking—
that's what he said
or was thinking
when he slid himself
over the hump of my spine.
I woke with a thumb
pointing inside me, some dark
stamp of approval.
Nobody asked me.
He wanted to see
how far he could push
without meeting a wall.
Aren't we all looking
to see who will put their fists
up first? That night he cocked
and swung, a garish boy
testing his gloves. I was asleep
in the ring. I was a red card—
groggy forfeit—the audience crowing
in bloodied ears.

[When a man says no]

women put their hooves on the ground
and listen. They grow peachy
faces for nestling, are tamed
in a coarse set of paws
we call human for no reason
besides language
which adores the masculine.
I say no. They try harder,
push to see how long
they can keep me under.
I am forever a kept thing.
I don't see the inside
of my box. Perhaps I am—

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