

I do not have a name. I have a calling, a summons. It is an utterance, a syllable, light as the whine of a Dunnock as he folds together the flock. And like the Dunnock, doing as his neighbour does and being as his neighbour is, the call means little to us other than expending. It cannot mean more.

I am a string of flesh.

Rotten. Being. Eating. Eaten.

I am a string of flesh.

Bubbling. Coagulating. Sick. Sickening.

I am a string of flesh.

My being demands a response.

And yet, I am still suspended, floating in pellets, like olive oil in hot tea. I live and pump, I join and bellow. A murmuration of starlings and I am at the tail of it all, or was it the face or the body or the hand or the mass?

Soaring.

I discover where I have already been. I am then and now. I am gone and here and my mother is also here as is my father and his father and we are all here in this hut crumbed between skyrisers.

We learn movement, we wipe chunky custard from the lips of electrical impulses, we are them. We talk of our days and we iron our abayas and we roll our chia-seeded bread into cloth and wear it on our mouths.

I am Dad, Dad is Mum, Mum is me, they are we.

Names are forgotten and singular, calls are not. They are instincts and contractions of the brain stem.

They are the built-in fear and roll and cry of our ancestors, suturing our nerves and split brains.

I am a call, cyclical in breath, a back and forth, a merry-go-round that no longer sings to clapping children.

I was born chewing my knees, hooking my back. I sleep like that too. I crave to reverse the unravelling, to tangle back up into my cocoon and turn into a hunchback once more. Mum says- we say we have bad posture, like a cracked egg. It's us as we fold and pack into ourselves. We yearn for unbecoming, for the womb and its nutrients and its pink and warmth, and so we return to the ground, its fleshy bed and curl and decompose back into our mothers' walls.

I leak, spill, blister, bloat. My saps take root in the soil. Blood, plasma, and water hydrate our resting place, our shrine. Sodium ions and nitrates and magnesium clump together to be sucked by worms and then plucked by a bird and then by a fox and then a lion.

A monsoon will come. I will dissolve.

A heat wave will come. I will evaporate.

A gas, I will jostle and knock on neighbours as I rise to the upper atmosphere. The postman on my right, Henry the Eighth and his six wives below (I wonder if they all did reconcile, if their atoms shared electrons within each other's crevices, sticking in some timely knot until a burst of UV struck and they fell away again). Buzzing around me: my year six History teacher with the coffee addiction, the tarantulas on TV I flinched at, the Catholics and the Puritans, the Irish and the English, the French and the English, the Egyptians and the English, the English and the English, the pretty attendant who smiled at my doughnut-print socks as she slipped the ice skates onto my feet, the Romanian boy and the earthworm he pureed into my hair when I tried to kiss his cheek, a child slave, a billionaire, a miscarriage.

We will all ebb and mix and be.

I will fall back down, dissolve into the Atlantic, calcify into a shell, dissolve again, and rise to the middle ground. I will be sucked into my daughter's nose, dive down her trachea and strike thin alveoli. I will be her skin and the clotting tissue on the fringes of her pierced tongue. Then my daughter (or is it my son, or will I not have a child or have I had children and their bodies ascended into heaven? I do not know.) and I will dive into the ribs and livers of our slavers and oppressors and the killers of babies and the lady who curled hair in her mildewed flat that demanded I pay forty pounds more than we agreed and then we will divide and multiply and spasm and not stop. WE WILL NEVER STOP.

We will grow into black masses and ghastly lumps and we will make them sick or maybe well again. Maybe we'll be silicone implants in their hollowed-out breasts. I don't know. We don't control. That's the beauty and frustration. THE FRUSTRATION.

When we are tired or when we are spry or when we are neither (CO₂ and H₂O do not feel as we do, although they are we and we is I, they are alien in that way), we will slither into the exoskeletons of cockroaches that slide in the bathrooms of two-star-hygiene takeouts in Harlesden. We will burrow into the microscopic cell walls and membranes of bacteria, digesting and fizzing against the last shard of my femur, this relic of my old seeing self (ten thousand cycles earlier or was it one?), as we churn into the brown lumps all around, all that I have been and am and will be. Only then will I finally know (or have I always known?) how to eat myself.

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