

Miracle Child

if absence has weight,
yours sits gently on
my shoulders as though
i am still the same
sick child
down the hall
with pink curtains, Barbies
scattered across the floor.
they laughed at the
missing shoes,
at her ink-stained skin,
at my socks
sliding down
sleek hallways,
but together
in quiet corners,
we found beauty
in her twisted, cheap grimace,
in the way we laughed
at everything
that should have scared us.
i can't recall her face
nor the color of her dress anymore
but the faint imprint
of her smile
still haunts me.
i had her then.
i have you now,
but i still wonder
if you were ever sorry
for never inviting me to playdates.
once they declared me hopeless,
you were too scared of Death,
and i reeked of Him.
were you grateful you had me,
or just for the days
i made survivable?

you loved to tease my
dead
hair
eyes
skin
to make me feel
more alive.
you said laughter keeps us
from dying twice,
you said i lacked
all i was meant to be,
and what are we if not doomed?
you said everyone else takes
the scenic route
and i was just diligent,
so it's okay
to be ahead in life,
to be ahead of god himself.
all you have to do is be faster
than Death.
you,
the closest thing
i ever had to living,
slipped through
the cracks
of my feverish world.
i remember pleading
after your last checkup
to run away with me,
but you looked at me
like you already knew.
i'd rather be hunted and have sinned
than perish, pitied in a plastic bed.
how many kids like us
never made it out?
can't we be selfish
for once,
choose one thing
just for ourselves?
and please,

anything but love.
i'd rather run free
and in pain
than endure
confinement
in comfort
because comfort
always felt too
close to
surrender.
unlike you,
i had little fear
of anything at all
except wasting the time
i had left.
i was no longer scared
of Death,
only what He would say if
i didn't give Him
the best fight of my life.
but you wanted to face Him
with courage and integrity,
as if your grace
would have
softened the blow,
as if it
could have
saved
you.
i can still feel your
hands cupping my small face
as you took one last look
at all we made from nothing
before deciding you'd had enough.
i tried to leave too,
but they proclaimed me
a miracle child,
with too-white smiles
and plastic cakes,
clapping as if

they'd resurrected me themselves,
as if i hadn't just lost my life
in more ways than one.

so i had to learn how to
hold a heart that wasn't mine
and teach every pulse
how to remember yours.
now i run every morning
with your life in my chest
pretending you're still here,
and somehow
we are
together
because
we were
both
fast
enough.