

Wilderness House Literary Review 3/2

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Corporeal

I am opening
a badly healed scar.

On the floor of my bathroom
again I delicately lay
down a white
sheet, torn and stained. Use my hands
to push it against each and every corner.

I search for sharp objects.
A razor blade, dull, covered in dry
soap. *This has already been used* and place
it back where it was.

The kitchen—
A small knife, thin and sharp.
Peel, to cut away or pull off the skin
And in the middle, a core—
of *what?*

A bread knife, wide and jagged.
Slice. To cut *something*,
or to *be* cut by it, cleanly. Effortlessly.

This is not clean or effortless.
Even peeling onions requires patience, tears—
I imagine my mother, “Keep a close
eye on your hands, darling. Do not hurt yourself.”

I open the bathroom cabinet. Tweezers and a small pair
of scissors—
Pluck, to take away swiftly,
often by means of skill or strength. Pull
out by the roots some or all of *something*. Courage
and determination.

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I shatter the long mirror with my fists. "Do not hurt yourself,"
whispers my mother.

I choose a small piece of the broken glass,
tiptoe around the rest for a broom.

Dig. Break up, overturn, or remove.

To obtain, uncover and free.

Understand fully or with sympathy.

Do not pity me, I think.

As if posing for a portrait I sit peering at my reflection.

The mirror is broken—
small lines run diagonally, edge
to edge.

I watch my tears fall, a small
stream of water moving quietly
down the scar of my arms.

Heal, to be repaired and restored. Rectify
something that causes discord and animosity. Rid—
of a wrong and painful affliction.

"Do not hurt yourself."

Carefully I peel away edges.
With patience I slice deeper than before.
Delicately I cut around and between
the purple tints in my skin—
less blue, more red.

Dig. I am still here—
I am still digging.
Breaking and plowing.

To be repaired and restored. Rectify
Something

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that causes discord and animosity—

Something...

To be uncovered and set

Free.

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Dust

There is too much strength
in masochism.

Hide underneath a heavy
blanket of snow. Commence myself to ice.

The frost coats my hair. The cold burns
My skin.

My own feat.
I've become invisible.

What I cannot grasp,
beneath the snow there is always dust.

I knew I was going
to wake up
on the side of myself
or underneath a man whose hands
scarred me.

They were just like mine.

I will crush a pill and create straight lines.
Lay my head to the table. Breathe in

the dream of a heart beating—
construct beauty.

The glass shatters. Needles
of glass
are caught inside my cheekbones.

In the mirror,
my face

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has become
a work of art.