

Poem

Local regeneration

She cannot say she suspected
her thoughts were on double-glazing and clothes-lines
the only pang
of something not being quite right

was her forgetting to defrost the mince.
She admitted these things
they had been a choice, of sorts.
Casting back she recalls

placing a marble under her mattress
swearing she could feel its smooth hardness
proving she was a Princess
and destined for Other Things.

Slicing her thumb
cutting the crusts off jam sandwiches
she imagines whorls of flesh
dairy-whipped into bloody peaks.

Hands rooted in the sink
looking out her window at the familiar yellow field
clusters of words blister and rearrange
the brutality of her new vocabulary shocks her.

She is squashed between boards
her body re-experiencing the tingle
of development, the soreness of a future
emerging, inevitable and unstoppable.

She once wished for detachable breasts
that flew above her, attached to her chest by a silver cord.
Now one hovers just beyond her line of vision, a fluttery phantom

and she doesn't know if the other one
its slightly bigger twin having been licked by it
weeps in pain or sympathy or relief.

She keeps these thoughts contained
and remembers Autumn and the smell of burning barley
all that wicked heat provoking
germination, tough and tender.

She knows her body holds memories
rocks them to sleep and stores them away.
She pictures her skeleton beneath her flesh
bright and hard and perfect.

Lisa D'Onofrio

Castlemaine, VIC.

writeasrain@zoho.com

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