POETRY

Three Modes of Death & Serenity

by Oana Nicola



"Moment of Clarity" by Saam (Ahmed Osama)

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1.

Each waking, a gamble
with my patience “You used
to be so smart.” Now the brick wall’s
done the cleanup job, not growing up
but hollowing out.

A worm’s eye view of myself spitting
the ins and outs of books I haven’t read
to wrangle degrees from long wilted
love affairs!

They sit, catching dust.

A prayer of gratitude
for the 925 job — keeps me buying
bikinis for feeling like God. Meetings
where we ask ourselves what good
do you think is worth dying for??
Meetings for the prettiest business card.
Meetings for making it right in the world
conducted through kaleidoscopic monocles.

2.

Self-medication, a privilege swaying
in ravenous moonlight, the names of all hopes
and panting miseries escape me. Know
we cannot control the knife we work for
or the one our friends fall between / only our bodies /

and even then,
dubitably...

So I trip on tabs and learn secrets
from all the other bottle delinquents.
We say the same serenity prayer
in the park and outside the bar.

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Grant me collars that flow freer,
a coffin I've carved out for myself.

The promise:

Roller skating through the race war
modern men with modern affinities
an infinite capacity for giving up.

3.

I used to have dreams, vivid ones too
of fucking my favorite fictional character
or writing scathing reviews of every president's
met gala suit. But now, I dream of simple things
like stumbling into some life's deeper meaning
or eating breakfast that doesn't taste like evading
the question.

I can't find a pill to placate the restlessness.
I can't find a cause to put on my resume.
I can't find a corner worth backing into.

So I wait for vacations and birthdays, move through
spring and autumn watching whatever season
reruns, shout whichever names move well
through my mouth momentarily.

Some nights I still search for someone
to hold my chin up and stroke
the burning out from my cheeks.

But all I seem
to feel anymore
are my own

trembling hands.

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