

Mama's Boy

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They say I'm a Mama's Boy

like it's a bad thing, when all along

I thought that's what a man was.

They say my skin was made from goat's milk

& dandelions

and that my eyes were plucked

from cherry blossom in the month of February

A Mama's Boy they say,

with hands too soft for picking

legs thin as sprigs of mesquite

They say my voice lacks

the asphalt grit of courage, that I

should work on it

and that my name is too short

to call me by name,

and they're right

When they say

I was born with a hole in my heart

the size of a tiny fish eye. They're right

when they shout Mama's Boy

and poke at the tenderness that is my back

claiming that my hair was quilted from a beggar's scarf

and that my smile was strewn from tender husks of sugar cane

it's true—

Since I've fondled and groped at the inside

of my mama's womb,

just a squirming confirmation of father's lust,

I've scheming ways to retreat to that

warm familiar sack of membrane

and love manifold

This is why

I lead with the docile nose of a house cat

speaking my intentions

in raw doggerel utterances

from the stiff core of a loose core of a taciturn tongue

Why I tweeze the nose hair clean

behind locked doors

using the reflection off surgical steel buck-knives

& limp toilet handles

lather my jaw with baking powder and lava rock

skin tax

for the morning peel
Because I am soft,
zephyr soft
and teeming with secrets

I am the watermark of houses submerged
My whimpering howl a rivulet of what remains
from the hidden
tidal tears of men
Which is why they do not lie when they say
my feeble knees are the silken steel edges
of grandfather's worn plow discs
tease that my stomach is a sofa cushion
stuffed with the down of a thousand geese
and that my nipples are the fragile embroidery
of Victorian gowns

My words
they say, these boyish longings
do not pounce from the gut like

alloy drum fire
candy wine lingo

do not come on like

razor neck nicks
splashed in allspice fire

will not crowbar the ribcage
will not shoehorn the chunk boot
or adorn the rearview in

deer hoof rabbit
knuckle luck charms

Instead, they are made from
sugar water & pomegranate lust
jelly for the dawn song
warm rhythms for the doubtful eye &
the accusing heart

It is because of this,
they jab their crooked fingers in my face
and shout, *Mama's Boy!*
like it's a bad thing
when all along, you see,
I thought
that's what a Man was.