

A Hole in the Earth

Kaylen Forsyth

Sometimes you have to go deep into a wound to close it.
Sometimes you have to pull the seams apart just to close it.
You must treat it like a hole in the earth that has dried
and hands cake with this dryness as you burrow yourself down into it.
Feel the soiled physicality of centuries as you descend
further and further towards the centre, only to find
a small quiet girl there, at a table with her hands around the throat
of a cat. This is all. And you wish you were somewhere else immediately,
somewhere different like a health store in Los Angeles, drinking Kombucha,
a situation affording you the chance to swallow a symbiotic culture
of bacteria and yeast, which is of course, exactly what you want.
Something that is not flesh but can be called as such, as it bores
down your body just as your fingers now bore this poor earth.
But you are not there, a content thing in LA – you are here,
and there is no flesh-like thing for miles despite this girl
with a cat, this girl who sits unspeaking. The cat is staring
as though it would like someone to help it and she turns its head
back towards her, as if to express how thoroughly it is owned.
But this is my wound, you tell her, this is my cat.

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Snails

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The snails were calm to begin with, they only wanted to play
and talk sometimes. I would take them in my palm, or lay them out
on my chest and stroke. We connected. I revealed parts of myself
I had kept hidden from even the kindest of lovers, from even my mother.
But then the biting started. Red punctures between my thighs and slick
dark trails leading down there. I gave warning. Do not turn that way,
I said. But they did. They turned that way. Began asking for my breast.
We have never tried milk before, they cried. I told them I did not have
any milk but they found a way. They latched and sucked and broke me –
until finally they got what they wanted, and I was left lonely, as nothing
but creases and cracks.

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BIO:

Kaylen Forsyth is a writer currently based in Liverpool, originally from Maryport in West Cumbria. She is studying for an MA in Creative Writing at the University of Manchester's Centre for New Writing and previously studied at Liverpool John Moore's University. Her poetry focuses on the psychology of place, and subtle yet intimate connections to the paranormal.

Favourite poem: Donal Og by Lady Augusta Gregory