

1975

Believe You Me

Christine Zawadiwsky

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The Body Remembers / Christine Zawadiwsky

Nothing nothing everything. The one I never had
and the one who's never seen. The rotting husks of
never again. A hundred babies sleeping in the burning
snow, the tip of each tongue white gas, a flame,

their flesh like folded corduroy. And then there was
the one who put her hands between your thighs:
a white grub feeding on snow, on snow. You cried
in your shoes, on the steering wheel, at home. The heat

with its hundred choking hands, its yellow eyes, its
purple skin, spits out the plagues of that night, that day,
leaves traces of blood on its dirt-white lips, smears love

with death across your chin. Wet snails in a broken paper
cup. A string. The one who caught men between her teeth
where they stuck like crumbs of bread, like seed. Her
swollen cheeks, her old blue nightgown, the useless rainbows

of her breasts where the body remembers for the mind,
when seconds before an empty mirror are suddenly worse
than wasted time. Always always everything. Her head like
a bag of garbage on a chair. There's broken glass and black

bread on the floor. Your cotton bowels laid out on a tinfoil tray.
The two of us walking to death with the cows. She washed her eyes
and immediately went blind. The body remembers for the mind.

Believe You Me / Christine Zawadiwsky

Trust me, it always happens this way: I found a torn
nightingale's wing, I tore with sharp nails at your
side, at your ear, I beat you till you fell on the floor,
I tried on my new blue dress, white gloves, I noticed that
your ear was filled with blood. I brought you ice.
My lips were trapped inside the ice cubes, my teeth
were dangling from the key chain. And since both my blue eyes
were now one mute mouth, I ran away. I ran away.

There was a rose pinned to your shirt. You wore a red hat, a black suit, a black tie. Believe me, it usually happens this way: between the man on the terrace with his pipe, smoking poetry, and the lady in the front room describing her daughter's vagina, there's usually someone who's come at will, weeping yellow tears the size of gallstones and with a fishhook permanently fixed in the crook of his elbow. White sugar, white paper, the aging white heads of dandelions and children's teeth. Believe me, it sometimes never happens at all.

Because I'll return with a broken bell, a limping cow, a battered calendar that's been left out in the rain for months and years. I'll patch up your ear with sandpaper, putty, I'll wrap the pinholes in a leak-proof bag, feed honey to the hummingbirds and the bees, cover all the windows with a patchwork quilt. I'll come back one night with my swollen lantern that's now the size of an infinitesimal pea. Yes I'll return. I'll come back. Trust me.

FICTION / RONALD SUKENICK

The Monster

From 98.6, a Novel

This is their first money crisis. Ron feels they ought to have a meeting about it but one of their rules is that they don't have any meetings. It's not a rule exactly it's just not the way they do things. So what they do is they get George and drive over to the River Queen. The River Queen people are allied with The Planet Krypton in their mutual difficulties with the Earthmen. The difference is that while The Planet Krypton is always getting victimized The River Queen mostly comes out on top because they have a lot of money and the reason why they have money is that they're big dealers which is why they have difficulties with the Earthmen to begin with. The River Queen people live on a big old ferry hulk docked in a lagoon on the river near a colony of houseboats. George knows their boss lady through Altair and Betelgeuse who deal with her. This is important because to the River Queen folks there are only two kinds of people. Friends and fuzz. The boss lady is a local character named Fatima who is supposed to have