

mettle

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today, i am the little crow
that gloom has nothing
against. lightning bugs find a home
under my nails. i choose life, untethered

from the clasp of time
& existence. the art of living
is not so hard to learn. there is
beauty in the ephemeral.

re-see these familiar
elements. embrace the inalienable
order of existence. remake failure
into a bulwark. scab. permit broken

flesh the touch of a miracle. beat a drum
to the chorus of death & watch it wiggle
its waist as it traces the path to hell. when
the world shakes you to your

core, remember the noose
is neither a pendant nor a latchet

holding the key to your
reprieve. faith's loud growl shrinks

into a whimper. you wave
a fist at God's face. & you are
graced with the sound of
emptiness. mettle. this is the art

of living. tuck iris
into the apron of time & watch
it bloom. let this poem be
a testament to our flinty souls.

cut me open

my desires drag me to the altar again
– an offering. & as i knee, i only blaze
till my marrow became ash. a sacrifice
unacceptable. & the ash got mixed with tears
of angels mourning this fall. a drink offering.
i am a deer lost on a plain with no river
in sight. raptured in a race, longing to flee
myself. to place an axe on this temple &
begin the ritual of destruction. i have been
a specimen on time's dissecting table.
again & again, you cut me open but the lump
is deeper than a man could reach. i plummeted.
singed. in this garden, i watch roots of trees
shrink from the fountain. lead me to the
threshing floor–beat the shaft from the grain.
tuck me into the waiting hands of grace. God,
save me from wrecking this temple.

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