Three Poems

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Falling through the Cracks


Ibid, 91.

Ibid, 119.


A complete reading of the ways in which queer notions of family or kinship function would consider the queer reading of state legitimated marriage and the delegitimation of kinship in Judith Butler, "Is Kinship Always Already Heterosexual?" *Differences* 13:1 (2002):

In the case of gay marriage or of affiliative legal alliances, we see how various sexual practices and relationships that fall outside the purview of the sanctifying law become illegible or, worse, untenable, and how new hierarchies emerge within public discourse. These hierarchies not only enforce the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate queer lives, but they produce tacit distinctions among forms of illegitimacy. The stable pair who would marry if only they could are cast as currently illegitimate, but eligible for a future legitimacy, whereas the sexual agents who function outside the purview of the marriage bond and its recognized, if illegitimate, alternative form now constitute sexual possibilities that will never be eligible for a translation into legitimacy. These are possibilities that become increasingly disregarded within the sphere of politics as a consequence of the priority that the marriage debate has assumed. This is an illegitimacy whose temporal condition is to be foreclosed from any possible future transformation. It is not only not yet legitimate, but it is, we might say, the irrecoverable and irreversible past of legitimacy: the never will be, the never was. (18)

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EASTERN VILLAGE WITH FACTORY

Dogs bark in untended fields. Outside, artificial light Pools the road nobody’s died on with men sauntering The graveyard shift, unafraid to sing alone. I stretch out And find I married a woman who doesn’t care that they Have picked up the ambrosial bouquet of sex—neatly Wrapped in tissue paper—at the foot of our bed. She Welcomes the rabid charge. Anything that reminds her She belongs to the faint hinterland. She keeps the doors Unlocked. I say nothing. Men or dogs. There will be no Other end.
I swore never to wear my father's mask.
Yet I meticulously peel and cut tomatoes.
Crush garlic. Pluck basil bent
Low in observance. One
By one. Push them off the plank.

Into the fervid blonde of olive oil.
Then I sit down at the table.
Yell at my children for being children.
Ignore my wife—her voice:

The steam of boiling water.
And wait for the perfect consistency.
Al dente. The callous core that weeps
When overcooked.

Having accused—executed—bled—skinned—scattered them
For the beasts of Schoren Forest—we shot down the hillside
On a black sled. Scared shitless—my brother—clutching
My boyish waist—knees bent—nose against ribs—not
Because of what we’d done—speed—or father’s finger-splitting
Belt—but because he’d forgotten his smile as the creatures’ bodies
Went as cold and flat as Grandpa’s blades used to slaughter Schweine.
December never ended without it—them—hung like pink whales
In a heavy sky—blood-soaked hay—fires readied—ground littered
With hooves. And whenever mother lugged another fatback inside—
Großvater—gutting—would say: Remember—don’t be taking unless you’re giving—
Smile when you kill—He’ll remember when it’s your turn. Later—led
By mother’s suicide note—I hit upon those meats—tucked away—
An overcured history of infidelities—marriages—abortions—a box
Of Walker’s Pure Butter Shortbread Petticoat Tails filled with Wehrpaß—
Battle Map—Iron Cross—Photos: Grandpa smiling—(striking, in uniform)—
(Strained, in Leningrad)—(deadly, between my freshly slit fingers).