

Susanne Gannon

## BETWIXT

Betwixt  
between  
youth and age  
Rapunzel in her tower  
she is a new woman  
she has cut her own (greying) braid  
and keeps it to tie back  
bloodred velvet drapes  
so the night sky can glow for her

she keeps the heavy brass key  
on the inside now —  
occasionally  
she opens the door  
to eager lovers  
two by two  
her gorgeous milkskinned belly  
quivers  
transformed  
by desire  
by hunger  
eats rampion  
by the bushel  
her teeth sharpened by experience  
eats her lovers  
all up  
licks her chops  
crunches bone  
tosses leftovers  
— teeth, nails —  
over the battlements  
on to the rocks  
and water below

Liminal  
luminescent  
in process  
becoming  
witch woman  
crone  
and  
laughing  
as she transforms  
calcium  
into her own strong bones

I remember  
one afternoon  
I leapt out of a bus  
and into your arms  
o glad to see you  
that I forgot we had not touched before

What surprised me then  
was flesh,  
the feel of your body,  
no longer an idea  
but a hard soft thing  
of sinew and muscle and warm blood  
that felt so good  
I drew away

Months later  
one evening late  
you leaned towards me  
surprised me  
with the inevitable

With watches and glasses and earrings and underwear  
removed,  
skin on skin,  
there was no end to us  
no telling us apart

Listening to the ocean  
swathed in seaweed scents  
your hands wash along my body  
like waves  
I am surprised  
at how your head —  
your slick smooth hair  
beneath my hands —  
feels like the head of a seal  
surfacing

For now,  
our conversations  
have become wordless —  
we swim mute  
together  
in deep seas of exquisite pleasure

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