

**Zoe Guttenplan**

I forget to ignore the little dark insidious ones, the ones who crawl between your eyelashes and sink into cracks and crevices and creaks between your toes; the ones you can never quite shake loose from your towel on the beach, who turn into ink splotches just too late as you sweep the page; the ones who weasel and worm and worry their way through your hairs on your arms, legs, even where you dare not look to see for fear there are too many to count.

Dragging one fingerprint across my collarbone and from the roots of the mountains; coursing through shepherd trodden paths worn thin by goats, their bells tolling a steady bass to the wind whistling in fig trees; seeping into and across the sharp lines man once cut into the hillside; jumping over dry stone walls and bursting through every crack; rushing between mountain gorse bushes and even finer, through every spike, brushing past each thistle point.

I am the jockey of the waves crashing the shore, bursting into splatters and softly stroking the next one along, picking up shells and sea glass and salted sand, teasing the toes of barefoot bathers who scream when they hear me roar and laugh to see me swept up again, back arched and breath held with afternoon sun scattered across my surface pausing still for split seconds that seem to stretch slightly while I suck you up.

## Icarus

The boy began to delight in his daring flight, and abandoning his guide, drawn by desire for the heavens, soared higher. "Icarus," called the father, even as his proud son flew above all birds. And fearing his student might gain more glory than he, Daedalus made great his wings and, as children plucking the highest apple from the bough, snatched his son. Claiming that he had fallen, he laid the body to rest, in a tomb, and the island was named Icaria after his buried child.

well, here I am silent on  
the sound again  
licking the salt  
from your eyelashes

so we emerge  
blinking into the sunlight  
catching the last of it  
on my tongue

savoring the taste  
you put it in your pocket  
save it for later

What is blood but water but red  
In the morning sun and brick  
And mortar shadows when  
You have finished your tea.

Tell me, mother, what is blood  
Staining fingers like blackberry juice  
Sweet to the touch if you ask politely  
But don't look sideways at that one, honey.

And what is blood when it rains  
Underneath my umbrella  
On the sidewalk and inside taxi cabs  
So there are rivers in the streets.

Not always did her hands  
half-heartedly calloused  
Smoothing breast milk on  
your brow  
hold each other  
molding putty into nervous cubes  
drum beats written  
scratched out  
revised  
repeated ad ad ad  
nauseam until  
not always

Flying west again, and ice cracks  
drifting under, she straddles  
broken china. One heaped tablespoon  
of willow pattern or the other kind  
and mix until smooth.  
Two feet firmly dug into a  
ceramic herb garden  
plumbed to the nines  
She layers filo over butter  
To bake the pie her sons won't eat.  
Peel back tin foil and lean forward over  
the tray table.  
Harpoon a meatball and sigh.  
It is still lukewarm.

Fingers pressing into fingers  
Her heartbeat lingers  
Farewell again, once more a stranger  
Pushing daughter into danger.

No tears.  
But as we hug she  
squeezes fears out the corners of her eyes.  
There is no five-fingered discount on time.  
She holds the train door anyway  
Until the tunnel eats her whole  
hurtling backwards and  
knocked off balance by the lingering  
taste of burnt filo, and salt.

September brings branches of apple trees, bare.  
Kitchen countertops are piled high with  
fruits of the labor of sunburnt sicklemen  
and girls in hand-me-down denim dungarees. Bleeding, freshly  
sliced straight down the middle, spilling

seeds from each wounded core.  
Cut with a knife too blunt to keep the hearts from rotting more.

Boots waxed but unlaced leaned against doorframes,  
Still sand-saturated all the same.  
This gold is stolen  
we'll take it anyway – convention be damned.

The tide rises with fishing boats dressed in  
torn shot silk as it drowns the rope hanging  
by the side of the path.  
Too windy to strike a match  
to feel us wishing within our boundaries.