

A Caged Ink Heart

Instead of blood I have ink—when I am hurt I stain
black-and-blue like blotted marks on the map of my skin.
Thrumming towards the staccato pump of my heart
is the restless tide, a rushing impatient river
winding among the sharded, piercing ribs
that enclose my precious heart like a bird's lean cage.
These chipped and scarred bars catch all the dreams,
keeping them close and corporeal, nested and tangled
all among a bone jungle, where echoes of wild birds
and deadnettle unfurl. Common violets spring beside
a dark ink river glugged with anomiidae; it crests through
visible veins, stretching up blank arms, crackles of papery skin
folding into dry desert landscapes. Hidden under muscle and bone
is an enclosed world that breathes and aches, dreams and lives,
thunders and sorrows, a world where magnificent ships
(their sails of pages, carrying wind) ride in on
a wild river always overflowing its banks.
With a still-beating heart and blue-blossomed fingers
I can etch upon the surface of the world my shining blood,
scratching forgotten words into the thick air with the dye
that wells up under a lead-lined tongue.