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Three Poems

Devon Balwit
devonbalwit@gmail.com

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Devon Balwit

Post-Operative

The *days after* kick the *day of* in the teeth,
protective endorphins gone, swelling
a technicolor bloom on the surgical field,
anesthesia pissed away, narcotics stingy.

The hours are long, your comforters returned
home leaving you to creep, alone, towards
the next increment. The doctor makes a call,
pro forma, protocol says you mustn't keep him,

mustn't cry, saying instead, like Oates, toes
and fingers gone, *I am just going out.*
I may be some time, and disappear into
the snow. *After*, you dust off the deities

of childhood, invoking their return, rusty
in practice and belief, hoping your current
self pitiful enough for condescension.
Sibylline, you'll take anything for a sign.

Hangover

Extraction

Your mouth spills blood in clots, gauze, saliva.
We are both of us bleeding, your gums, my bank
account, both of us numb, giddy with the unreality
of loss. When someone comes to put you under
the knife, I look at them with love, expressing
with my whole being my certainty that they are
the best, the brightest. Even as they quote me
fantastical sums, a per-minute wage to make Midas
grin, I nod, already writing the check. Only after
does the pain bloom, every part of us swollen and
tender, our insides bruised as if worked over with
an unkind fist. Was it even necessary? We were
assured so. To doubt whacks the world like a gong,
mistrust ringing outward, a pessimistic tinnitus. We
curl up together on the bed, buttressed by pillows,
fortified with Percocet and booze, drooling comfort
food. In a week, the swelling will shrink, in a year,
it will become but an empty pocket, in ten, only the
x-ray trace will remain.

A God with Big Titties

“What do I need with Jesus? I got Leora Watts.”
(Hazel Motes from Wise Blood)

Anybody tell you about a reward that ain't here and now, you get shed of 'em real quick. You need a God with big titties you can squeeze, a body broad as a beach to break against. No angel choirs but ice cubes clinking, the cold glass sluicing drips between your fingers, hooch hammering your head like the apocalypse. We ain't got nothing on our tail we didn't sit in. Don't look 'round back—ain't no devil there. Even your shadow would rather snuggle into Leora's dark places, a hallelujah of funk. The only eternity's between here and the last second of what you pay for. Leora don't care what kind of hat you wear, how trouble's creased your face. She'll look away until each red-slashed help-wanted crushes to trash then lay her weight right on you, smoothing you almost as good as new. Open her door come morning, and the wind will lift you right up. That's right. Heavenward.