

HATCH

A singularity unzipped one night
and there, imposed: an egg. It was bald black,
and blackballed by the dark – sat recondite
'til morning in among your bric-a-brac.
It struck the room as sun thumbed at the crack
between the curtains; it was delicate
but geode-heavy, lithopaedic – back
and forth beneath its sleek wimple of slate –
and silent as the birth cries of the celibate.

Your simple life continued: wheeling out
the bins, sating the cat. To what you'd seen,
your partner said, "What are you on about?"

"That egg! It booms, it shrinks, like bitumen...
it's on the desk upstairs!"

"What can you mean?"

You quietened, and sank to breakfasting.
Alone again once all the plates were clean,
you went to look at it, your newest thing –
it seemed to smile, to say it would change everything.

That day at work, you tried to blink it gone.
On coming home, you found it there – unstuck
in place, ruffed in its shrapnel pangs... a none,
a quandary. You tapped your phone to look
it up on Google – some attempt to shuck
it from its shell – and found the thousand-year-old
eggs of China, the Cayuga Duck
(whose eggs fade white with time), the bruisish, bold,
false eggs of Honeycreepers. Nothing fit the mold.

You shelved it in the airing cupboard, hoped
that it might hatch; all mollycoddling week
you shifted it from slats to linens, moped
when nothing changed. You clean forgot to speak
to/text your partner. Something with a beak
might have more luck, you thought; so in you ranged
to nearby woods, cuckooed a nest... A creak
and two hours later, it was back, unchanged.

You slept on it that night, like worry. Nothing changed.

*Inside your shuttered dreams, it magnetized
your selves. It drew up Will and Novelty
and had them drub it out; it bowdlerized
your mental cavities; it sucked the bee
out of your bonnet – called it ‘Need’ – and key
out of your lock, – calling it ‘Want’ – betrayed
them into knots and sunk them in the sea.
Then Love laughed like a gun when Hope was flayed,
and Health knelt down, noosed in a stethoscope, and prayed.*

You wrung your brain of visions when you woke.
Still, flinched into existence, it was there –
ovoid and unavoidable, its yolk
or chick a rattling eclipse (Astaire
dancing the shell in tap shoes), on your chair.
You didn't go to work, ignored the phone;
you let your dreck collect; you didn't care
when dishes colonized the sink. Alone,
you clocked it: twitching, humming like a dial tone.

The cat came mewling weakly at your knees
and, once, your partner stopped to sharply knock,
but you were underwater to their pleas
and waterboarded still by morning's shock:
the thing had moved, and now and then would rock
this way and that. You took to getting drunk,
repletely blotto, with the silver block
of loneliness distending as it sunk
into your throat. The egg loomed larger, so you shrunk.

You woke to find it snoozing by your head,
sussuring dormant into the bouquet
of rubied tissues where your nose had bled.
You threw it at the wall – it

boinged away.

You tried to stamp on it – to your dismay
it squipped a side like soap. You tried to boil
the thing – unquiet but unharmed it lay
beneath
the water, so you caved to spoil
your garden, dug a hole with fists into the soil

and there you buried it... but that same day
it sprouted, belled like fruit from its own tree,
a dicey gourd, elliptical x-ray.

You screamed at it – you wanted to be free,
it had you everywhere – it was your knee,
your knuckle, elbow, and your filmy eye.

You called Samaritans, who couldn't see
it was a metaphor, or tell you why
it came to break your windows. You could only cry.

You cut the phone. You tried to shower, but
those supple, glassy needles hammered shame,
and always rabbitholing in your gut

was that black drop: the emperor of game
in his unstable clothes. You had a dream

you slept well; then you circled, sang your lack

as a wine glass does, and glassy you became.

You lent your teeth to entropy. Your stack
of post grew larger in the hall. Your nerves grew slack.

You unclaimed everything: each song the wind

strummed in your partner's hair, or waking to
somebody's skin beneath your nails; the skinned-
wet feeling of the world of pain (of you).

You kicked over your teacups, now you knew,

lopped tops off trees and found the name of heat
was written in the trunks; you blew

and bled and chanted, stomped your baby feet.

The stars sprung up like watercress. You couldn't eat.

They found you, gone, cold as a butcher's glove,
a small week later. You'd collapsed (it fled
you like a splinter); and, viewed from above,
you were as nowhere as your sense of dread,
as, once, your tingle in the crib. As dead.
They took the cat away and called the law.
They passed by, with their slow, respectful tread,
a shattered mundane eggshell and its gore,
forgotten, slowly going off beside the door.