

SYLVIA LEGRIS

hungergraphs

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i heard once of a woman so thin she could balance
an *O.E.D.*
on the points of her pelvic bones and still leave
room enough
between the dictionary and her sunken abdomen to fit
a substantial paperback: *the alexandria quartet* or
the joy of cooking.

*
where is it i can begin to remember? thinness so
conspicuous
you can circle two fingers around each pencil of
rib, around
the thickest part of arm, the space below the
knee. all those
mornings standing bone-naked before the full-length
mirror,
strumming my fingers up and down my cold
body. each bone
sounding a different note. every inch of flesh taut
as a drum.

*
most nights i can't sleep for the racket. it's like living
in a sweatshop, walls so transparent they vibrate
with machinery, the tireless scrape of bone against
socket,
every organ pumping routinely, every hinge creaking
out of habit. i lie in bed buzzing with the hum
of the refrigerator, the whirring tangle of wiring
behind walls, the circuitry of veins crackling
beneath skin.
i count out beats of time by strips of headlight
disappearing across the ceiling, the discordant
movement
of stomach and intestines.

*
(funny...
sometimes i dream i'm a whittler. a girl lost
in a forest. branches, sticks, twigs, everywhere.
piled like bones.
i dream of carving:
watermelon into perfect pink balls. kitchen tiles
into geometric patterns—X X X X X. my arms,
skinny birch limbs, into blunt potato cuts: happy faces
with fat grins, full bellies. hey, can't you just see it,
the pictures i can make? can't you imagine
the crimson print on the linen curtains, the drizzles and

dribbles of cadmium red on white carpet?
action painting.

hmm.

action.

look around. just

look around.

i'm standing in the middle of my apartment,
blinds down,
every light but one burnt out. i have a big fluorescent
calendar on the wall above the tv, numbers three
inches high,
but still i can't remember the day half the time.
my father says i do this for attention.
like i enjoy throwing up after every fucking meal like i
enjoy feeling like some sort of freak like i enjoy feeling

nothing.

i can't describe the numbness. everything tingles with
insects, live wires. my gums are peeling from my teeth.
my esophagus is raw. but most of the time i feel

nothing.

and then
i have these dreams
of sharp objects, narrow edges, near misses.
the colors so vivid. everything red and white red
against
white. red against white.
the contrast
so stark.
it's not that i intend to hurt myself. i just never
feel real enough to bleed. and i want to feel
so much i want to feel

anything.

but this skin,
it's so thin it doesn't take long
to hit bone.
how deep do i have to dig?

...how little a dead person bleeds.) funny

*Sylvia Legris is a writer living in Saskatoon. She has been
published in Contemporary Verse 2 and Prairie Fire.*