

## dinner for two

*by saoirse sowell*

we sit before the fire facing each other,  
our clothes in piles behind us,  
flesh bared for things to come.

in our hands, our knives,  
blades flickering in the fire light.  
shadows dance across the floor.  
i watch mine intently. he knows the dance of flame well and he is well practiced.

but he is clumsy,  
slow.  
and inside he wants me to catch him.

he slips.

in a flash i pin my shadow to the floor. the woman across from me pushes her knife into my throat.

slowly.  
gently.  
lovingly.  
like a hand brushed across a cheek  
to move a wayward strand of hair.

warmth fills my lungs.

i would give anything to touch her now, run my fingers through her smoke touched hair, caress each and every scarred curve.

my eyes meet hers and i know she wants the same: to taste the sweet copper on my lips,  
to push her fingers inside me any way,  
anywhere she can.

any other night we could pull back: give in to tingling sensation,  
stitch wounds, clean hands, wash the floor in the morning  
but we have already gone too far.

i see her eyes smile softly and she twists the knife.  
like a squeeze of the hand to tell me  
"everything will be ok"

the metal in my neck begins to grow cold.

finally, her shadow enters mine, tearing out eyes to make a door  
i release the writhing lightless shapes, lifting the knife  
they writhe with joy as she pulls me on top of her, finally able to touch, to feel, to taste

i begin the work.

i open veins,  
drinking from each.

slowly but surely i begin to unstitch her  
she keeps one hand on the knife, letting the other do what it pleases with my body

finally i am full.  
she is on top of me now, removing the knife from my throat.  
in one motion she slashes,  
long and vertical,  
revealing the feast inside.

and we are consumed.

when i wake  
sun peeks through the curtains.  
my voice is bone dry and the stink of copper still hangs heavy in the air  
the remnants of fire smolder in the ash like stars

our shadows still dance on the ceiling,  
and from the blanket she covered me with,

i watch her make breakfast.