Cardiac (for Mia)

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Her baby fingers are colding glass. I am the heartbreaker. Tomorrow we will have medals, and candles, and other ways to keep away angels. She would fit me like my own child, blood-slick in the nest. She has secrets hidden for me to find. Candy on the lawn. Tomorrow we will cardiac.

Scars. See what you’ve done to me; you measure them in kisses. Did I hurt you? Good. I trace bruises in garlands, like children chasing Christmas. Tomorrow she will river and pool in my hands, but we stream together in our bed tonight. I want to sleep like Passover. A bloody print says mine. And I say faster. And I say cardiac.

We spend our blood like bootleggers, in streaks and wisps and watercolor fringes, trailing kites and Mardi Gras beads. Sheets in brown water, every night some kind of murder. Her scar will be raw and royal and its song will be mine, mine, mine.

The softest moonslices fall on the steeples of night churches. I take your kisses like flowers from other gardens, then we climb together. Until you unwant me. Until I ungive. We must go faster. Faster is cardiac.

You offer yourself like some kind of scar — how many kisses long? I am full up with you, red handprint on a soft shoulder. Faster now, needles in knocking veins, faster, incision, faster, pounding, faster. Faster. Mine.

Smoke from a grate, and flowers.

Tomorrow, her heart will fall to candy slices in my hands.

— Jennie VerSteeg