

No Good Deed Goes Unpunished

Angela Johnson

Cradle the warmth of desire to you
for it dissipates like smoky whispers.
Grapple with singularity and strength.
Turn away from it or be consumed slowly.

There has been a tickle in my throat
for what seems like a century.
And I cannot swallow it away,
much like I cannot destroy the torment
of the way melancholy rests in my bosom.

If I were to dig it out I would lose pieces
of a hardened soul nervous with permanence
Deflecting the way skin reacts to breath.
But never really knowing the difference
between sickness and the plagues of regret.

Murmur to me how sad a girl I am.
And I will eat it up like the flesh of vanity.
I will ache with the fullness of vocabulary,
licking the resonance of disturbed hilarity.

Heavy with the stones of boundaries.
I ache to lay my cheek upon them.
If only they were not so strong I would not bleed
with the beatings from a disrupted psyche

I do not ask the questions that burn on my tongue.
Yet they reveal themselves in eyes carefully watching.
Grace my teeth with the reflections of a fractured mirror,

Crunchy textured like so many broken promises.

I wait for the consumption of a riddle,
lost in a maze of wonderment and malevolence.