

PALOMA PROUDFOOT

The Memory Theatre



London
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BOSSE
& BAUM

*I thought to myself about permanence. I was afraid of it and yet unafraid,
for I didn't want to be forgotten, for I wanted life beyond life, a calcification beyond bone.*

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Harvesting

You might think to pull an artery between your palms would feel like rope, would feel like rubber.
You might think that when you gently press the twine of it with your thumb and forefinger it would give way.
We are stronger than we give ourselves credit for, less easy to erase, though how I may have dreamed sometimes
of leaving no trace.

But a body is more than a mouthprint of breath left on glass, more than a halo.
But my body feels the earth burying my feet, the wind hard against skin, the roots of me inside the earth.
Feels it. A thousand neurons firing, a constellation.
The theatre of my memory holds me firm.
It roots me to the ground.

Let the rain come for me
Let the weather come for me
Let me be weather
Let my palms meet where the artery runs, twisting and strong.
Let me be of the flesh and more than the flesh. Let me be ageless, hewn from something bigger than myself.

Binding

In the memory theatre, things could be displaced.
The stage could be re-set – I told things differently each time I told them.
There was an echo
There was a tuning fork, ringing
There was a wrong note, the right notes, a whispered voice
There was a whispered story and a shouted one and both were true.

In the memory theatre I curated and re-curated
I believed and unbelieved
In re-remembering I found another kind of story
I no longer knew the true story.

But then there was no one true story, I knew. Not one definitive thing written or read.
Only the one that lived inside of me,
lived inside a thousand changing versions of me.
A story traced against the velvet of my lungs and heart and throat.

There was no knowing which stories would land,
which would sink into the earth,
which I could write upon myself for all to see.

Stitching

Needle - thread - blood pinpricks: a constellation.

I watched the movement of the metal swim under skin, tensile silver fish, slip of a thing.
A surfacing.
There is pain in re-mending,
there is pain in remembering,
there is pain in the piecing together.

I felt the nerves of my fingers alive, and I felt myself again of the flesh and more than the flesh.

I have been a new kind of thing, and I do not wish to lose pain, which is not to say embrace it.
In the memory theatre there are a thousand different ways to patchwork,
embroider, weave.
I choose them all.
I leave myself behind like a garment,
remade, re-mended, made do.

I will remember
I will be remembered in turn
And so it goes on,

a constellation: blood pinpricks / thread / needle.

*Nobody wants to be forgotten, but we are soft and we are spinning, woven and flesh and stone and breath,
and we remake ourselves only imperfectly, we remember imperfectly, but there is a wonder in the trying,
there is a wonder in permanent impermanence, in the things left behind.*