

Amelie Randall

Age: 17, Grade: 12

School Name: Interlochen Arts Academy, Interlochen, MI

Educator: Brittany Cavallaro

Category: Poetry

You Brand Me Undesirable

YOU BRAND ME UNDESIRABLE

[after Anne Carson's "Glass Essay"]

and in the moment, I see red. I pretend to have a third
eye, nestled between my brows. Each time you cross
my mind I have a vision of my body melting into no-man's land.

#1

At the peak of a dune stands a bent woman, spine curling
into a half-moon, braced against a deluge. There are red
hot chains twisted around her slender neck, hissing

in the rain, refusing to cool. She bleeds
from two round wounds that pierce through
her palms. Rain hurdles down to the tune

of her wails and streams down her aching skin, learning
the shape of her body. She cups her hands
to drink but water drains through the punctures. Muck

rivers race down the slope, radiating from the spot
where she remains, fighting to keep her footing, slick
with blood. She whips her head back, mouth open to heavens

that aren't there. Lightning flashes in the black sky, illuminating her
marble eyes. In the same moment the sand gives
way, maw gaping open, and she becomes one with the mire.

#2

A woman, just beyond the realm of sleep, is sliced down
her front and peeled like a grape, skin spread to the sides, pinned
to a large white card like an exotic bug. Her split

torso has the appearance of wings that bloom from
her chest and stretch at all the wrong angles. She is flightless,
and desolate. Her insides are neatly curled and pink in the hollow

of her body. All the moving parts are visible, the lungs
ballooning in the chest. A single steel pin, the same
as the ones holding her open, is fixed

through her heart. Above her a magnifying glass
is suspended, refracting the fluorescent lights in the room

to fall in a small, hot circle at her solar plexus. The walls
and floor are white, like the card. She is the only color.
Her veins glow blue under her paper-thin skin, pouring red
from the lesion in her heart.

#3

Red falls like a veil across the evening sky, casting a mold
around the figure of a lone woman, black with tar
and standing rigid, craning her neck to a tearing point,

scanning uncharted land for a sign of anything
living. The ground beneath her feet has been charred
by ten suns, each blacker than the last.

Red is the color of living. She knows this because
rivers of blood flow through the broken landscape and scream
stories of life now vanished. Her right foot rests

on the bent neck of a dead crane, white feathers
sullied by tar and charcoal and reflecting,
from the pure parts, the red

gleam of the sky. A single tear races from a dent
where an eye once was. She raises her arms from her sides
and speaks red nothing into the wasteland.

There are only three, all born
of the same twinge, deep
in my belly. Not a hunger for
you, but a sickness of you, I try
in a frenzy to expel.