



SERENA CHOPRA

selections from *When What Is Feral and That is Night*

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Love, is there enough that the body can't do
that it won't do
for herself—

the way a pomegranate gives seed by seed
so little a great pleasure.

Excess is a shadow suffered—

the cat finds me indulgent
in her empty hours with windows
my opaque patterns of coffee, dishes, dressing
hunger detached as the day swelling
from its ligament of pointed hours

healing is
without you, I can't
but do
anyway I need
but need
wantless.

What the body can't, won't—
this fantasy of knife or rind.





34 Foglifter

In these hours of rigid organ
a chill fractures
a totem breaks in my jaw
some effort of life
rests over the cat—her meals, her beds,
her redundant demands
to mine.

Isn't there enough pain, Love,
in the world for you
not to be paining too?

Isn't there enough that the body can do—

Won't stop
healing.

even torn flesh muted even
I don't scar torn
quotidian swell flushing with battery
blushing each bruise
like condensation, lifted
fresh.

What tears me is father
land man
hood citizen





ship war
like tender
foot mother
tongues scar
tissues in the weather
of two inaccurate suicides, wrists
steady as a painting—

to breathe these oxygens
to mend in cells

like history, Love
like forests, Love
like children, Love
like wantless love—





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That I am anger you Are you hunger That broken flower pot still begging for water A season in
smoke in ice in the sunlight Of suffering some sort of comfort The medicine that clearing me
That beast of great sequins Where I call myself out to the night And morning already pruning herself
into waking Escapist nature Suffering some sort of ordinary constellations Originate shapes
Fingers kneeling against teeth Flora heaving strange inspiration In a vase Possesses humans All
which flaws Folding hands, lips Suffering teeth I may be the golden decay in you, the water In
which leans Rootless, our favorite bouquet





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...in a swoon of depression. The cat is there to handle me. Whichever side I'm on, she lays quietly near. Whichever room I enter, she occupies. I think about making things better—and I try because I want to; and I don't try because I don't want to. I wallow where the heat gathers, keeping the chill of winter like a thin, heart-biding animal in the backroom with the white door. To go there is shocking—the way heat leaves, from the bone—needs it from me. I gather on my knees, lick the tips of my fingers, run water.

Semblance is a keen tendon, I clean the glass but refuse the reflection. When I make offer, I am not willing to give or take—and it breaks me to imagine the cat letting near the death of me, scratching at the door of that backroom animal so thin, her hunger so patient and clever.





What body of mine have you returned
 A rearview of the prairie, eloping nostalgias
That the earth is strange
 And the heart an even stranger
A swift low animal for whom you linger, posture to posture
 Out of fear of making quick signal threatening
Out of empathy for its instinctual trapping

It's true, what you do
 Is what you mean to each other

It's true, that what haunts you
Are those fears given your child (forgive you)
What haunts you, forgive what hunts you
What hunts you to make you
Hunt

