

from One

by Marianne Morris

Crow opened his mouth to beak and this is what he always said of sex, that it was at the full root a brandished cloy of outwardly fixating and power rejuvenating, and he could not but breathe it as seals have hair along the nose, the push of interest skimming and rushing the surface in after crack mathematics ticking off her empty walking awkward, to achieve sex he continues all the time and ceases not to babbling begin, my mouthy beak chop chopping he dreamed or believed in vanity as an omission of those born in the feminine, maybe you were not born in the feminine he went on, continuously, all the time with the feminine, birds and dogs at high pitch are themselves, and he grips my finger with his cadence, where it is blooming may also be where it is bleeding, get cosy with that and with the skin you have no choice you have, the core remaining eluded as homes are eluded, a pressed shut part of like apples, needing opening for them then understood them, but not me said and says always the crow, blackened beak chipping away at the sturdy breasted torso filling in the gaps and damp with hair and flesh, moaning and the voice squeezes up high as the head clamps shut on the mouth, where I cannot touch is that release, even when it comes you will find it dissatisfied, so I open up his head, I have always opened it up that way, and where there is breath there are seeds, and the dark starts kicking up, infallible dark, where the eyes have joinings and speak too of everything else and it is my long nose breathing, my damp white seeds in hard cases admitting all of these awful things and so we both incline to smash our faces in with inward seeking fingertips, slick and upwards into our long beaky nose, where the crust is fine as bleached bone and we know it together.

Then when Crow went it turned out I hadn't moved but I still itched and that was a hard thing. Has it always been thus! she insisted without really knowing, or is there somewhere a colder alternative – she is a pair of scissors and she speaks it all the time, all the time, whether dark or light, dark or light. I am not interested in picking you up she says but it isn't true and the morning is happening, and as it happens we are all of us filled with dread at the prospect of another day's bleaching at everyone's mercy. Crows fumble his beaks into someone's nearby cunt who is dead and all of him disappears into another world where it starts when he on purpose has to forget that he felt that he once owed a debt. Such a lot of pain in the world, he used to muse over coffee and morning biscuits, but now, in the cunt, things are really opening up for him, all that worry and unease about the feminine and off he is wicked like the length of his black black face.

Scissors cuts me in the meantime and I am not too pleased by the situation and the love between us is not in fact between at all it is a mystery and curse on only one of us, both of whom feel its dirge and scorn by way of its injection, once outwards, once

in. There is no blame, except on my part, for it is I who am truly in love, if only for a moment every morning. But she is in la grande pursuit of me, and so says now and then that time is short as my little breasts, and snip snip with the love in her faces, she has many and some of them dull. I understand. My soothing ways are hateful to her, so let me go I murmured, loudly, by the wall at which she hung like an ominous metal snake who went hard long ago, and I will shoot off like broken arrows at half the speed in half the time. She called up in the dark and asked me questions, and I stayed well away from them all, knowing that crows speak because they have to, cannot be silent, can only pretend in earnest, with his twisted vile beak full of love he drove us apart and I was if not grateful at first at least sick with disgust. By the time he was through, or in other words at the mouth, the rest of it all was not what it had been, by no means.

He wrapped in me a creature of no small proportion, it was a snail I was from my nose outwards, the track glistens, but the creature was much bigger than the snail I, and wrapped fully in all my bones it was wormed and snailed but neither such a creature. With his beak he snakes up me muscles rounds and wrenches like jelly rolls and inters careful so as not to ease my pain a creature, sews me up with someone I barely recognise before the insertion, and all this, he insists, is to better qualify me for days. For days I hardly believe my ears, which are not shells or anything for that matter to do with the sea. The creature grows things outwards that are my inwards, then, after the growing, and I fail to see the magnificence of this but the beak keeps, and slaps into figures words, maybe like magnificence I never said – you qualify. I am pleased to note how much I do not want to make love. My bones are old and red, like veins. My veins are hard and white, like teeth. My teeth are soft and pink, like breasts. No the crow says wonder, you're all fucked up, and gets up in my mouth via the nasal cavity where I guess he steals back the seeds, and do you know I'm well with it because I am tired of holding them.

I dropped him on his head, the crow, until he threatened to come loose from vigour, and I kept searching for him on the floor to drop him again. Wingless and without clothes we couldn't go very far. I continued to bust him, till they came and when they came they were many. The ground comes up short, he cackles, and convinces them otherwise. It was no greater irk to drop your own skull, I suggested, but clearly I was back-peddling. In all sense it would have been absurd to pretend that we both of us did not have a skull, or that such a skull enjoyed the smack of itself on wood. We played jacks together for the rest of the morning, his beak skittling at my feet and my cold skin slapping on his cold beak, until when it got dark and I would have to escape.

But the many had trouble with relenting, as is always the way in a skull, and we beat them with little thrown stones they stood hard. Fuckers increased the crow, getting electric and furious and I know he loved to do it, and meanwhile, he went on, we're trying to COMPLETE up here. Scissors was at the table, doing needlepoint. Pick stitch fourth rock hold, stitch up fifth rock complete, up now, slow now – intense concentration on her part, and she held me away from her all day doing that. I was not shocked. Dawn in all its cleanliness she said will never warn you of its cleanliness, and there was something true in that, particularly given the fact that dawn has no voice, its concept shattering character as concepts do and I am stunned, and his

majestic crow bleat doesn't care either way. The ground halts beneath us. We were going to walk but I cannot walk alone, the fear of getting lost gets me lost, and if I were a snake it would all be different because I am not waiting for anything. It becomes necessary to move, so necessary the option disappears.

Snake creep up to me in vile sun, exhales, come creeps up to me and snakes into my ear with torture as what is most blue and natural to snakes. My teeth fizz, it becomes apparent as our voice together wants it to, this violence, all a mere shadow, a passing laughter in his indifference which I long for. Wraps up my wrists in his face and turns she, with hips and wet gloss for my nicely unwashed. Tell the crow, he and I reap, that he needs to get laid. Crow pretends not to hear and then effectively turns into a moment an owl, with desires for the washed up city debris to hold in a fast hand. There are stirrups holding us all together and we have had enough of input, my feet in owl stirrups, crow beak in my stirrups, and we head off for a walk by the nastiest thoughts of cities, all of us, my sandwiched heart becoming a hold all the while and we survey the bright waste and thumbs in mouths.

Marianne Morris was born in Toronto, raised in London, studied in Cambridge and now spends her time between Brighton and London. She has been a poet often, but not finally, as this New Writing should demonstrate: the work appearing here is the first chapter of a longer prose-piece, currently in process, already criticised on grounds of its relentless intensity. Meanwhile, Marianne's faux-press Bad Press is undertaking the illicit printing of a number of new projects, including collaborations with the wretched Jow Lindsay/lugubrious Jonathan Stevenson. With said faux-press, she recently published two new collections of poetry, *Cocteau Turquoise Turning* and *Fetish Poems*, and is currently working on evoking a new poetics that doesn't mince its words in full abstraction/inward negation of political turbulence. Recent history instructs otherwise.