

Clandestine

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Graduate First Place Poetry Prize Winner

Can I get clean? You don't want clean,
said the roses, you want control. Those damn
roses, practicing philosophy in the garden &
slumbering with the tilting of the earth.
Should I wake them? Don't wake them,
said the bee. He dives in, exploring that inner
world. He's looking for something to quiet his
yearning, but instead finds words of rebellion,
a manifesto... I understand quiet rage. There is
a war here, and it will belong to the makers.
Can I get clean? Nothing. So I moved the queen
to F5 and waited on the pale slope. Stillness –
and then a tapping on the glass. *Can I help you?*
I reveal pocket aces and head home, making
my way through crowds who have gathered
to breathe air together. *In. Out. Good.* There are
are patterns on the inside of a walnut shell. *Made
you look.* Give me a reason to love people again
and I will awaken the timberland to that secret,
that one you whispered to me at the wedding
and that I will not forget. Oh, but I remember
cherry, your tongue on my cheek, and rosewater.
I remember a pounding in my tin-man chest
that spoke. *In. Out. Good.*