

Two Poems

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Cotyledon

I split to reveal a white tongue.
It screws into the earth to root
like a spike driven through wax
and by an invisible hammer.
In the dark nests of clover, I shiver
a limb with two upturned leaves.
These leaves are my palms asking.
This opening is the sound of my voice.

The Order of a House

Not in the moment where bees suck clean
the vibrant throats—curry yellow, suffragette violet,
a violent pink with which one could strike down

a soft-winged bird—not in these terse
and conspicuous bells. Or even in the dull black
opium of a beekeeper's smoking thumb. No—

the spring unfurling its placards of green has little
to do with their intrepid search, their bodies winking
all harm and tail. A hive thinks. A hive

twists in the oak above our house all summer
like a fat child's arm or a pale ham glazed
with dark honey. All a bee has is one good stitch

of poison, ripping its poor weapon from its body
like a soldier already impaled and dying,
it is heroic: the torso weeping sebum

but the tail still moving with purpose, purpose:
they are all business. But a bee, for all its humming,
has no voice. The workers search and search

for the stiffest perfume: perhaps they will borrow
the yellow tongues of jasmine releasing
shocking perfume in noon light; perhaps they will

be stricken in rain and drown in that music,
the silver-bright water collecting and restless.
The queen delights in twisted wax and mud

and thrown-up paper and in winter clips
the drones' useless wings. There is nothing
they will not do for this woman. They make

their curious lives trying to make a voice with their wings,
and to stumblingly dance, and to dance ornately,
and to do as they are told all the way home

like you, the child who lived in this house,
or like the stuffed bear you wouldn't leave home without:
you buckled him in the back seat next to you,

its urgent gold plush worn to buds,
its misshapen head turned towards the window
as your mother drove you all over town.