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THREE ANAGRAMME POEMS: [A MEAN GRAM]; [O, BRIEF DE{R}ANGEL]; [ONE MIND. TEA]

Moira Egan

[a mean gram]

it's like, you already knew all these,
the list of complaints, black ink, white sheet,

your day completely gone to shit
and then it further hits

the proverbial fan, splatters,
stinks like rats' pelts

left out in brutal weather.
how to withstand the wear

and tear
of this low-rent, low-rate

existence, as if you haven't lived
till you've cut your deal with the devil?

I did it, gave myself o'er to the fire,
temptation, the life rife

with addictive proclivities,
epic vitriols,

incalescent lust.
the judgment was pronounced: slut.

Gift means poison in German.

sweet little babe in a manger,

replaced on his day by a jolly fat Santa.
funny how they all wear red. Satan,

minacious, plunging from the skies,
give me your best embrace. kiss

the Daddy's girl: parental,
all and only is paternal.

[anagramme]

[o, brief de{r}angel]

today the wind blew in, boreal
and truculent. no comfort, not in fine labor

nor in love. someone very dear
has died: poet, friend, wildely read

—he of silver beard
prodigious, he who bared

psyche, soul, confessional;
spilled the stygian noises, flacon

of the anima, a prised
precision of despair—

cigar smoke wafts on air
bereft. he's left us here.

in his death I relive
all those my dearests; revile

the damned, dark dearth.
who is it snips the thread

anyway? the one I'm named after?
myrrh, dark berry, bitter fate.

[an elegie for dr b]

[one mind. tea]

i'm losing my mind,

she says, her voice grown dim

and slow on the messenger

call. her, me, geneses:

she taught me to read,

how to adore

her careful letters on the chalkboard.

this is how you keep your mind broad.

now she's living with my sister: set

the scene (bonjour tristesse)

for greek drama

born of wildchild karma.

what's that word again, it starts with a D?

her memory a shard, it twists

and turns, turns traitor.

rain. rust. tort,

this brain-change is fuel

for nightmares out of fuseli.

at 3 a.m. she's afraid:

up surge the old dire sheafs,

hope and nostalgia,

the bleating of a slain goat.

she wakes, makes a cup of tea.

the drip, drip, drip of faucet

left on is not our fear: synapses
brittle as shaky aspens:

not just cranial fog,
we fear the conflagration.

[on dementia]

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Moira Egan

Moira Egan is an American poet, translator, and teacher who lives in Rome. She has published eight collections of poetry (five in the US, three in Italy) and her poems and essays have appeared in journals and anthologies on four continents. During the first full lockdown in Italy, she entertained herself by playing solitaire Scrabble with a German Scrabble set that she remembers, maybe, having won as a German Club Prize in high school. Those self-same Scrabble bouts were the birth of the anagramme series, of which these poems are a part—now minus the Umlauts.

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