

POETRY

Beginnings

I start it, and it's big
so I stop.

Chew at my collar for a while.

I start it, and it's big
so I stop.

Dissecting a pen.
Clicking my nails on a keyboard.

I start it

And the shaking starts in my jaw, and my
teeth won't separate but to chatter, and the
glare off my rings is falshing SOSOSOS
dangerous and drunk and blind so

I stop.

Little at a time, girl.
Little at a time.

You don't have to tell them why
there are scars on your tongue, just
open your mouth.

You don't have to tell them why
the chair is 3 feet from the
full-lenght mirror,

at the foot of your bed,
or the scarf of Chinese silk
crimson and stiff with blood,
little at a time.

They will piece it together.

Just as you are stitched
with the thinnest thread
in the most absurd patterns

or the chain that goes
from one pierced ear to the other,
and has hung you

on that concrete wall
like a picture
in the living room of the rich.

Or is it the silk
wrapped round your wrists and
hooked through your thighs

your knees in the dust, and your
un-blindfolded eyes full on the firing squad,
and the glare off their rifles

keeps you from seeing
if you carry their names
in your silver-strung head.

Little at a time.

That chair's wood is petrified, you should
console it like a girl to her doll

in a plane that's going down.

Stroke it like you would
stroke the red and drooled-on yard
of doll-head.

The silk should be washed, so
find a sink that isn't white
in a room that has no cameras.

Your ankles can be washed
in that same sink, the burns
the same weave as the belt.

The bow should be untied,
it has other uses now, and the belt
can stay where it lies.

I start it, and it's big
so I trust it. I can fit in it.

The firing squad, well
the glare off their rifles
has made them blind.

My rings are flashing
SOSOSOS
into their butchered eyes.

Cat Bohannon