

IRIS COLOMB

After Amelia Barratt

Later that night
digging for worms
as her consultant
inside the wound
my intricate room
earth scraps all mine
where a book should be
leaving the pale
skinless scissors
and her chin
my finest sheet
as it stands
intricate script
waved at the page
custard pioneer
ready to show me
my things —
her voice was long
into my room
restrictive gums
I should like to take
my diary
getting in the way
the tabletop complaining:
'EXCUSE ME,
YOU'RE SHOWING OFF
WITH YOUR TWEEZERS!'

this lit moment
long strand breezing
carved the crusts
I suggested we
reject any scraps
a crack in the shelf
the size of lemon pips
cloudy and vague
behind the glass —
I coughed through the gap
room red droplets
stuck to my foot
the white shard wept:
'your turn.'

five to five
inside the wound

my foot under
the bed page
the cloudy carved
vague skinless glass
breezing the gap —
I trusted her enough
my crusts stuck
moment inside wept
leaving kiss dry
along the white
script droplets
already stretched
in the same sitting
tossed the problem
at the foot of her bed
my finest sheet
or the hot salt wash —
inside the wound
the pleasure was all mine

at once I was holding
hot and panicked
and she began
already helping herself
quite well
in the time it took
the soft pile
newspaper stretched
in my best pyjamas
my hands a foam cup
resourceful permission —
uncontrollable heat
hanging her head
in my bag

later that night
digging for worms
as her consultant
people in town
fell from her mouth
gallery coughing
as she read aloud
helping herself
to a neighbouring scholar

the big crass handwriting
squirmed around
on the floor
lifting paper like old citrus
for my amusement
I kicked it
and then we were friends

the cloudy carved
vague skinless scraps
breezing the gap
I crouched and began
from under the bed
while she slept
a cautious professional
on a large plate
inside the wound
and quite honestly
showing off —
my hands a foam cup
very restrictive
tossed the pencil
to unstick the page
script so small that
I crouched to explain
and with permission
gluey page aside
I suggested we play
dogs in the park
to take home
after surgery
in the spring
a silent moment
the size of trouble
so small I wouldn't snatch
peeped out from
under the bed
a little time
she had somehow found
a moth died
on a large pillow
difficult to throw
I knew her
I plugged the gap

later that night
gluey page aside
I suggested we play
a neighbouring scholar:
'it just so happens'
she interrupted —
vocal glands
somehow found
and buttoned
fell from her mouth
she asked if I could cut
it pleased me
and I averted my eyes —
tin and bone
work very well
complaining
was getting in the way
a fine job of snipping
invited her to sleep
her tired gums
began to pace
inside the wound:
'DO YOU MIND!'
I yelled to myself
coughing almonds
up and over the tabletop:
I had tried

later that night
I suggested we play
resourceful permission
vague skinless glass
invited her to sleep
the cloudy carved
a fine job of snipping
and gluey page aside
my hands a foam cup
breezing the gap
inside the wound —
she fell somehow vocal
the breakfast table
dry and cracked
nerves interrupted
as easy as that —
and then we were friends
on a large pillow
the soft pile of the earth
or the hot salt
she hadn't touched
she was off
the bathroom shelf

Marry-Kill-Kiss
her enough to say
her ideas
fell from the scissors
a thin and bloody sliver
also felt good —
nerves in the morning
she hadn't arranged
hanging her head
from under the bed
Paper-Lemon-Egg
flipping pages I kicked —
morning dodging limes
inside the wound
dragging in cat-milk
behind the glass
she asked if I could cut
a weak-wristed woman
digging for glands at parties
I baked one before bed
it pleased me

after a while
a silent moment
the size of trouble
I squirmed around
an intricate script
leaving the pale skinless
scissors and her chin
room red droplets
for my amusement
the breakfast table
breezing
a hundred books
like old citrus
on the floor —
her tired gums
in one hand
and quite honestly
helping herself
inside the wound
I YELLED BETWEEN HER EYES:
the next day it was true.