

The Smell of Blood

—Suzanne S. Rancourt

there is old plum blood clumped like grapes becoming raisins
dry and cracked on the edges with crystallization occurring like
nano birdshot.

there is fresh blood vibrant as lips wearing lipstick for the first
time red with life and air
and knowing nothing but that moment in the gasping for more.

there is the in between blood that grows sticky with flies like fruit
juice spilt
on clean linoleum that no one wants to talk about as it has already
been spilt
and cleaning up the mess implies our guilt

so we sip quietly with downcast eyes onto table tops in outdoor
cafes
or our mother's favorite butcher block and we pray that dogs enter
soon
to lick up taboos now sticky with truth.

there is the pink frothy blood that effervesces into mist alive with
the last kiai
last words, last breath, last action, beyond form and recognition.

there is the blood we suck from a paper cut, bright as words we
sliced with time. never

is blood alone but mingled with bitter gall, and bile, or the rank of gut and brains.

there is the blood of unborn fetuses in glass vacuums and plastic measuring cups
in deep sinks power washing the rot of vaginal infections

and there is the blood of life tainted with umbilical matter –
amniotic fluids, saline, and protein enhanced with sweat canaling through
mergences, cavernous, cold, Sally Port pelvises.

there is the blood of death spattered with the last shit you'll ever take
and no one cares what your last meal was but you and whoever made it.

Tabasco pizza, chocolate chip cookies melted into blobs from heat while being shipped from runway to runway,
or sitting in back postal rooms in mail bags.

there is the blood of transfusions, transformations, transportation into Warferin, Heparin, and morphine drips.

there is the blood of lies,
the blood of truth
the blood of consequences, conflicts, confusion that titrate into the soil and dust of everyday living – the absence felt when mowing the lawn
getting the mail
feeding the dog.

there is the blood of abstraction, nightmares, invaders
of songs, stories, horror metered by heart palpitations
tightening of chest and the constant neurotic obsessive locking
re-locking of doors, windows – load, re-load, fire.

there is the blood of love
that dries too quickly into a cacophony of smells that embrace
something someone somewhere describes as life.

Blood, I smell you on flesh, in bathroom stalls, laundry baskets,
garbage cans, drain traps,
Band-Aids in locker rooms, knee patches stiff with iron.

I smell you on the streets in the lives outside of reasoning.