

This is the house where I grew up. My Aunt Carlin moved in there with us when she was 35. She had diabetes and she just wanted to die.

She was my mother's sister, so my mother took her in. "She's good to me, like scotchgard, she keeps me clean," she said.

I'd like to think her head was burning, there was a furnace in there, she was struggling to adjust and couldn't pull the weight. She was all out of coal. But I remember it slow, no burn and cold.

When I was a kid I read all these beginner science books- "There's a Skeleton Inside You," "Floating and Sinking." That kind of thing.

I learned about buoyancy. I learned matter can never be created nor destroyed. I learned energy is rolling or waiting to be rolled. Degrees in a triangle, in a book, the bulge at the world's belly. Fulcrums supporting the weight. Bridges twisting in a hurricane before they break, sound vibrating. Push and push back, centrifugal force, conductivity, pulling science off the cross, twisting it in your hands until the room glows and tradition breaks.

Carlin was slowly going bad around us- she would go to the hospital and come back missing a couple of toes, or part of her leg, a finger, she was getting amputated away. It was like watching a person with an apple for a head, rotting, a speedy inevitable decay. The space around her eyes turned brown, they were going bad, then she was blind. She wouldn't take any medicines. her mind was filled with poisons already- apple seeds around the core, her brain floating on a sea of mercury looking for the shore. Your body finds its own feet, and your eyes will find the door, but the knob won't turn itself. She was long hollowed of health. She thought she'd never die. I was pretty sure she would.

The thermometer burrowed another cavity in her teeth, your temperature is rising, the sea is getting deep. She spotted Virginia Woolf in the creek beside our house and went outside to talk to her, chasing her

down. There is no beauty, no wonder, no time lapse tricks, just weight. The only trick is to pull the weight. There is no Jesus by the tracks, no insulin, teeth can't hold onto gums, chattering and grinding them to boney nubs, hollowed and grim, smiling when the lights go down. It was much much brighter when the lights went down.

By the oven's heat, I was standing in the kitchen. It was difficult to watch someone disappear that way. I don't have those kind of visions. It's difficult to gain perspective. ...If I could have any superpower, I wouldn't get smaller as I move farther away.

I listen to those Bob Dylan songs with the volume all the way up. I can't turn the fucking music up loud enough. A room full of young men in wheelchairs- a pile of crutches by the door. Bandages, amputees, half-leg, drugs/half-life, liver/shelf life. Bringing our children home from an unnecessary war one piece at a time.

Matter and only matter, right?

A thunderstorm blowing stars around. The creek flooding, fish flopping around by the driveway. Ghosts rising by the doorframe. You are sitting very, very still. Watching it crash hard outside the window. There is a world out there you do not effect at all. I'm fighting for a change. I'm holding onto hope, no depression and light. Everyone needs something to hold onto... right?

But it is not enough. Louder.

(long pause for music- beautiful marching music)

Carlin wore a homemade cotton dress, on it a floral pattern stitched from the hair straight from her head, every day, yellowed and thin, liquor ornamenting skin.

Her husband sunken in the navy writing letters by a 75 watt lightbulb in the belly of a whale.

And she carried all of this in a head boiling with sounds  
And the head and dress and hair are burning up and  
burning her down  
And she brought all of this and loneliness when she  
moved in with us.

When your tongue muscle died and we squeezed words from  
you one by one, syllables stretched and we'd invent  
sentences from fragments.

That was fun. Sad, but fun.  
like a string of bells ringing on the side of a snow  
sled made from an iron lung.

What am I building this for? What the hell am I  
building this for. I have a right to know.  
I was not buoyant enough,  
There wasn't enough air in me to float.  
The clouds were low and grey, like lead weights.

There are a lot of ugly things in this world  
Wind staying mostly outside  
Birds are exploding on powerlines

We are all rising up.  
For Carlin and Garland, Sandy Green and Ida Jean,  
Thomas Alva Edison... and Einstein. We are all rising  
up. From Baltimore to the farmhouse. A lot of old cars  
use gasoline.

For Marc Chagall and Leonard Cohen. Washington's  
wooden teeth. We are trying.

Virginia Woolf has surfaced on a bed beside your boat  
And deep in your new cavity blind rabbits wheeze and moan  
There was a choir in the farmhouse where she stood  
Deep voices pushing dust around a cello's crooked boards  
And a woman on piano singing songs  
And Carlin in her own room trying not to sing along.

Hallelujah, hallelujah.

I can hear a million moths flurrying around the front  
porch.

I beat my way through them and close the door to the  
kitchen.

There is euphoria all around you.

You are swimming in it.