



COACH HOUSE BOOKS, TORONTO

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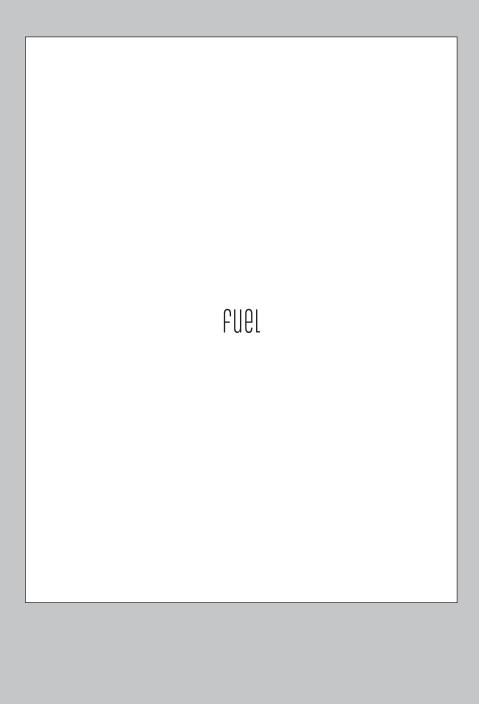
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one street named after a saint or mountain, another after blood, pealing bells, loose live gerunds strung across, pitched in hum, every eye a question, a pan, an establishing shot.

the alternate ending: wreck this, move with speed, a leash, obedient click and what follows, wagging, eager, full breath

after the foot lifts, the cloud of upper sound in flat wet midday warmth. you want drag in chorus, field spent, the clench of taking aim at exhausted scrap, blowing it all – the name of a pocket, a hand-carved tattoo.

in a red state, spell out the lesson here, map out the power and water, or the rising lawn to disappear in

some fresh atlas, the new record. practice wearing details yourself, ghosted, twinned to a lighthouse.

movement in the dark requires geometry or optimism, a hand along plaster, counting pockmarks.

streaked trees from the truck bed the leaky world wets through even this frame and mat

in the reeds, some insistent paper hum in dragonflies mating, their drunken swoop and hover.

the place where the land stopped and the water began to green itself,

we walked here to talk about death, to take off our pants.

you could ask me to push you in, demand to be surprised, your fierce mouth overflowing (bursting/bursting open). the fine skin of a fever, bleaching. there's some paper, sit with it, a salt pig, a fuse, fresh slang, hitches in the running. tell amber in an evening; the plant, the factory we call to, trembles, a near-sweet burnt smell – name it, four or five ways at least.

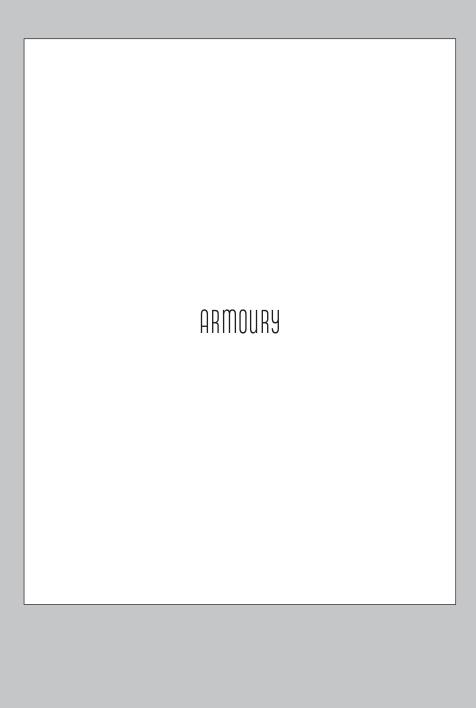
maybe the only way to think is what's cut is closer to being still,
a pearly stream of fuel across the asphalt,
a peal – your hand a weapon,

just touching a plant or a child in this place, just following orders, listening well – that's where trouble waits. welcome arrow, stippled like split bone, the moon's nothing to pray over, a noun in the ear of the watchers

a dog bolts through in arc and amble, clots of people weigh worry

wet nose against the back of a hand, a cool comma, all moons are comparisons, possible constants, unflinching

this begins, quiet, craning.



Echo Chamber

You can tuck your whole hand neatly inside the pocket of your cheek. Some girls can, anyway.

Here's one in a skinny kitchen in Ojai: the slip of her fist as a minnow, fine and quick past her incisors to the wrist, shrugging, no biggie, arm hooked to her face like a tentacle or a hose.

There's a box labelled TEETH in this kitchen. She touches the lid like it could do something special. I haven't been here long – I don't even know if teeth are inside, really, it's just a guess – but I've never seen anything brave or famous come from a tooth.

Even while the automated lawn starts watering itself, ratcheting a stream through the ink of the open window, even as she stops up her infinity mouth, even now, I won't open it.

Knife Fight, Glasgow

after David Gillanders

Your head wound was exquisite, a sheet of red velvet obscuring your eyes.

Here, the commonness of household tools turning, on circumstance, to active meat in complex hallways, the alcove of a payphone where voices make demands or even pray.

I touched the place your face should have been, cradled between the gloved hands of the nurses' quiet frame.

You Asked If It Was Something You Said

Last night in conversation, the full frame dislodged, a cloud held your hair in loose knots as a promise. We woke to a thousand casualties in Gaza, a place where they are running out of blood.

A computer screen in an empty office tower gave the news, the air circulation filtering the sound of the cloud's breath. While I read Al Jazeera, I wanted the crush of skin against my face, rich with sweat, alive.

At home, I eat simple food, make stiff drinks with my sister and watch the sealed city sit like a smoking parcel in our kitchen. No poems like ribbons today.

Snapshot

Marina, her braceleted wrist chops and churns in the rough barley,

a huge curling. Her ghost-pale hair threshed back, drops off with drift, a slender obligation of braid, brush-whipped ellipsis, gliding into the cut.

Armoury

A dress flatters when unzipped. I'd ask for that much, to draw the tab down, lay bare the swan of your spine, the glacial, slackening shoulder blades.

This hotel is powdered latex, leather look-alike, neon, a nod to sea or sugar. You took me here for a two-minute melody anyone could manage, even in psychedelic fripperies or a mask.

Your gown in party print against the mirrored headboard. Watch how it refracts.

Soft

after Winston Chmielinski

chart the ferrous, prenatal repeats,

sputum, throat wound, knuckle into the tape deck, kneel before the blip in surprise – sound his voice, lean.

hours condensed on the window, pearling, tell the beginning, shaven knuckle into wrist, cord-bound, dialing, wall behind lit like an out-of-focus grotto.

don't and toned down in one room at last, one folding the fire blanket, the other akimbo.

still dangerous, keeping reefed.