The Snow I Always Wished For (Mad Poets Review)

Sharon Black, University of Pennsylvania
THE SNOW I ALWAYS WISHED FOR

It snowed on the back of my hand.
It stuffed my ears with cotton, filled my lungs
with its benign asbestos.
It snowed the whole ocean—
stiff waves of meringue peaked faintly brown from the sun
bleary as a grease-splattered oven light.
It snowed over microchip and dandelion and Bisquick,
over the church supper and the ironing board stuck with moths,
over what was gooey and what flaked off and what was
stubborn with lumps.
It snowed over dental utensils laid out on sterile trays,
over the lifeguard chair and the New Year’s float.
It snowed light.
It snowed mercy.
It got into everything—the sap of cedar and the root
of rhubarb, into the lace of cancer-eaten bone and the lactic
acid of athletes in the latest light-weight fibers,
into your studio—the work in progress:
it snowed your magnum opus.
It got into the incubator and the baggage compartment
and the nightstand of sexual aids.
It bloated the windsock and the landfill with its driving naivety.
To government archives and diaries of divas
it delivered its blank stationery.
At the memorial park it pinned nurses’ frocks
on the statues of generals; so in the trees it wrapped
the most gnarled limbs for the wind to harden into orthopedic casts.
It covered the skin rash and the roller coaster of nervous laughter.
It buried all matter of fact and manner of speaking, mounting
windowsills of dietary supplements and excised obituaries.
It closed the road between us though I had only to open my mouth
and taste its frozen milk on my tongue.
It blew through the bedroom spreading delicate bureau scarves,
lining robe and lampshade and the most unnecessary shoes
with its diffident satin.
It stuffed the cash register and the French horn
and the plastic-wrapped newborn with its silence.
Over bags of water and boxes of radon it threw its bluest shadows.
So it transposed everything that was said with the white
of what wasn’t: truth is never so bold as when it won’t stop snowing.
It poured into the Milky Way filling black holes with its caulk
and those bitter chasms of sibling envy it softened with its white moss.
It snowed on death row, on literature and licorice
and official deer counts, over base path and zebra crossing,
beneath the fire escape and the rust-colored rain
and the beating floorboard.
It drifted shut my heart for you to insert yourself
like a diagnostic catheter into the remotest part
for some white-coated expert to hold up to the light
where it snowed the most.