

What was that glowing white palace called human? Only it seemed then that I would never walk upright on two legs again.

The thought attacked me in the dark; wet and savage as the bite of an animal. I knew logic, theory and analysis, recognised their shapes but words still emptied themselves of meaning and the pages of books curled and blackened like bat wings in that heady fire. I feared it would consume me and though I clung to the concrete and familiar shapes of language, reciting reason like a litany or prayer, still they slipped from me, leaving only the horror of tears and the hungry crease.

Your mouth is always tasting itself, it is never empty -- occupied as it is with that singular and constant base experience. Though it may form the alphabet, sample the flesh of fruit or the skin of another, the labiodental fricative it forms in passion or anger is the truest sentiment it has the power to impart.

I knew then, when it found me there; hot and snuffling like the snout of a beast, urging and probing -- insubstantial as a butterfly with all the pent up menace of a bomb set inside myself, urgent, imminent as biology. Knew that uncanny pulse of wonder, felt how close and prone my veins were to the surface of my skin, mapped for destruction. In order to function we abandon the knowledge that we are such infinitely breakable things, perhaps, though; it is not a wilful act of forgetting so much as a deliberate absence of remembering.

Unbidden images came and went, sick and fond to the marrow of my bones, seeing tender bodies in a violent embrace, unsettling, and that musk smell furred, itching, itching -- the sound and body of a bee. We all have claws inside ourselves and they rattle and scrape like a bone in the throat, dormant sometimes, but always sleek and coiled, ready in the blood, quick and hidden among that rich slop of viscera.

We are thinking meat, aware of our own slow decay -- unique amongst beasts who would pity us if they laboured under the curse of that capacity. Prized sentience makes us fear senescence; sharp and cunning animals reduced to dull rutting and infant cries. With my own lips I have tasted the weapon that is my name, swilling its syllables around my mouth and on finding it unpalatable spitting; that act of rejection, complete and without speech while remaining its closest and most powerful neighbour.

How beautifully, painfully absurd it is to exist in the knowledge of what it is to be, then be no more. That's what. That's what I half dreamed on my knees, diving bell heart sinking under the weight of thought, while the milk of skin on skin nourished and destroyed me in equal measure. You are a monster. It has only ever been you.

Rose Ruane

***Rose Ruane** is a Glasgow based artist working with video, performance and installation. She graduated from the Sculpture Department at the Glasgow School of Art in 2007. Since then she has exhibited several times in the U.K and has produced two essays for the Collective Gallery, Edinburgh's New Writing Scotland scheme.*