It Creeps Back In

Patricia Smith

before i can narrow my focus, before i can bankroll a liturgy that qualifies as tribal, i gulp gin and sitting water. i go rigid in front of an unplugged fridge, spraying butter into my mouth. brushing dead hair into the sink, i listen while my blustering cell whispers *weather, weather, weather.* it's an alternate tuesday, so i jump a madison st. bus toward my *uh-uhing* white savior, board-certified, schooled in the lustful coo of the racially aware: *so, tell me, are you still sleeping all day?* yes, i'm trapped in that thrash where i struggle to paint my slut shut. yes, i must insist on settling my bill with bland unveiling. yes, i screech away at bullseye. *depression, especially in its sugared negro version, should not be ignored,* he warns, and that tenet duly rouses the wee pink rituals of my mouth. in the ladies room, i rock back on a hipbone, enter myself with a snaking finger. again i'm mightily awed by the ghost of current. i've become the weather. strange how i manage to say you still need me. strange how i lie in the voice of my mother.

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