

Chimera

I became the chimera in pieces. It was consequential. I didn't read the small print.

I had tried to turn myself into an art installation. Before that my life was stuck on the page, in a sonnet: all my days were metred.

By this I mean I massacred myself. By this I mean it was all just a cup against the bars. By this I mean I couldn't handle spinning and breathing in the dark.

I saved my new voice from the underground. It rode the tunnels for years without fare, picking up accents, dead skin. Fingernails, Tao. All the things beneath our feet.

I mined parts of my body from graveyards. I swallowed a canary on the way back up.

My faces were stolen from a gallery titled "Unfinished." Ghosts circling in smoke rings, a dying wasp inside a fig, a bottle of pills, near empty.

Do you know what it means to be more than one?

I lost track of the winters, attempted to tally the crystalline stalactites that formed on the ceiling.

Recovery is a process of chasing your tail. Swallowing it. Spitting out the venom.

I looked in the mirror and asked the chimera, *how does a hummingbird fly backwards?* It answered, *by knowing it's a hummingbird.*

When my mother found out she tried to swallow me. She wouldn't eat anything else.

I wonder how many people I've eaten in an effort to be whole.

To love is to name and be named. In a word, to be given completely. I feared it. The worst thing you can steal from someone is time.

I became conscious about what I let crawl inside me. They had a habit of staying too long, I had a habit of making things mine. It's the only way I could be.

My days as a chimera were made of playdough. Sometimes I was the one moulding them into sausages and butterflies, sometimes I stuck them in my mouth and tasted someone else's fingerprints.

Sometimes I just try not to think about it.

Sometimes now I'm inside out.

Sometimes I'm a staircase that never goes down.

Sometimes I'm a piss-covered floor that tells you to stop.

Sometimes I just want to fly backwards.

Sometimes I'm better than this.

Not today though.

Not today.

(Line count: 33)