

Kirstie Millar

Insomnia

1.

Picture this: night
Clear and hard as water
A ripple across a ceiling.
Like a pond?
No. Too alive.
A stream? No. Too vast.
A river?
Maybe.
This is something to ponder
As the curtains twitch.
So ghost-like
And listless against the window.

2.

Is that you?
Maybe.
Just out of frame.
But honestly, it is hard to know for sure
Where my own
Body begins
Within this tedious room!

3.

Now imagine: a splinter of
Rupturing light
Flooding like liquid
Also imagine: a figure
Rooted to a body
Which is numbed out
Confronted daily by
Listless pain
And a sinking feeling
(Perhaps)

But it is hard to know — truly
How another body feels.

Meanwhile,
The sickness perches
Meanwhile,
The sickness solidifies
Like a penny
Pinched
Behind your eye
Turning your mouth
Metallic
And mean

4.
Can I ask you a question?
Please, can someone answer me?

5.
I have a confession,
I have been thinking of a ghost
Do not laugh at me!
Why don't you try
To be alone at night
(With just your frustrating body for company)
And not think of a ghost!
You can't do it, can you?

6.
Close your eyes and envision this:
A net of light
Writhing
Painfully?
(Perhaps)
Across an expanse of ceiling
Making its way towards
Something...
But I'm not sure
What.

7.

Tell me,
What happens when a person
Comes to you
At night?
A lantern in their hand
Are they here to place that hand
Gentle against your forehead?
Or place a glass of water
Just within your reach?
Or have they arrived for some other, darker reason?
Maybe they are just an idea.
Wedged
Simply lingering
In your exhausted mind.

8.

Picture this:
My body.
Becoming smaller.
Turning inward
Turning unbearable
And dripping everywhere
Until suddenly—
A fracture. Neat.
Hair-like.
Miraculous
Is found
Within the wall!