Kissing Bug

by Monty Reid

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The one who transforms is beneath.
- Michel Serres

Open

They enter
the system.

If you are open
they enter.

If you are not open
they open you.

You are the pure space
they open

to be impure
to be in you

to be outside
themselves.

World

The worm comes out of your leg
slowly.

Wrap it segment by segment
on a stick.

It enters its unexamined world
completely

because there is
nowhere else to go.

And still, the human host
spools on its axis.

If you break it
what remains will kill you.

Slosh

You are available
and it enters through any of the availability

or augurs straight through the skin
whipping a mad tail which it then discards.

It tours through the membranes
through the gradients of heat
through the chemical slosh.

The pure veins feed it.

In the bloodstream
or in the digestive system
the male worm with his eight testicles
hooks permanently to its mate.

There is no need for imagination.

You are all threshold.

They are never you
but you are them.

You

You, with 600 different bacteria in your mouth

And another 200 in your stomach

And well-groomed plantations of them on your skin

Why would you think you're any different

Mite

The content of dust, the silence
of dust.

The body sheds itself, 10 million cells per day
and re-gathers under the bed

where the mites chirp and cling

trying to stretch the real skin back over
whatever you thought
you were.

It is never just what you choose to believe.
The mites have no other choice than to re-make you
and re-make you

to chew the cell linings, swallow them and spit them out
coated with acid, which makes them easier to digest
for the next mite that comes across them

there under your bed
where nothing survives as itself

and nothing remains of what you thought it was
except the old shoes
which don't fit you anymore.

Kissing Bug

At night, the kissing bug climbs out of the wall
and kisses

the salts and acids of your lips, of your eyelids

in the cool room you were sleeping in
in the thin skin you were sleeping in
in the mosquito nets.

Do you know how you got it, this idea
of an inside, the vector of an inside
how you have rubbed it into the opening
and you itch.

The kissing bug climbs out of the wall
out of the corners, out of the cracks in the plaster
the nail-hole for the crucifix and the drilled holes
for the tv. It climbs out of everything
you imagined it was in

and kisses you until you know
exactly where it is

Love Song on the Goldfish (Diporpa)

Will I ever grow up?
Not yet.

Let the luminous scales
no I am not luminous.

Let the diaphanous fins
no I am not diaphanous.

Let the cool blood forget
no I am not.

Will I ever grow up?
Not yet.

When my actin hooks.
When my suckers and eyespots.

When my attachment clamp.
Let the image of myself

appear and be inconsolable
Let the image of myself

appear and make the wings of myself
make the bird of myself

or just let it appear
with nothing in the way.

Light-gate

What comes in through the aquifers, the deep clays
of your eyes, is never metaphor.

The rhodopsin that lets you see, that builds the photoreceptors
and bleaches in the light

comes from the oldest bacteria

and is blind.

Recalcitrance

A tiny crustacean has eaten your tongue
so it could install itself where your tongue used to be.

It's visible to the naked eye should the eye ever get naked.

It's visible to the recalcitrance of every body
to unlikelihood.

It's visible to the recalcitrance of the tongue
to absolution.

It absorbs a percentage of whatever passes through.

Whatever you think of as you
can't change this.

When you open your mouth
nothing is what it sounds like.

Still

The mortal sprites
the nymphs
the dream dust

the frazz
the chemical spritz

the peptides, receptors
palps, peduncles

mast cells
phage cells

are they angrier than you?

They still are.

Of

In the skin of
In the bursa of
In the silt of
In the serum of

A body sleeps in the wilderness.

The species of skin
remain unidentified.

Monty Reid
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is Garden (Chaudiere Books, 2014)