

K Patrick

A HISTORY OF ELECTRICITY

The architect is well-known. Cracked egg hard hat, punched light spectacles. No tilt in his hips. This handsome is sloppy. Across the table he slides a photograph of your butch bones in a split-open cement floor.

I am heaped. This is so unexpected. Before the architect eats, he blows hard on everything. Breakfast is supposed to be innocent. Something sticks, gloriously, to his cheek. An excavation is required.

Today I am an archaeologist. Start with a haircut, start with seafoam, start with Sappho's broken marble head. Steely tang of your fingernails already in my mouth. Joan of Arc was a notorious crier, too.

Little cough into a hanky. Here's what I do know: everything is made out of butch. Test the brick dust for butch saliva. Measure the atmosphere for butch vibrancies. Take tiny samples of the old wiring. Undoubtedly, it is butch tendons.

The architect is not paying the kind of attention I need. Listing objectives, he says he will have to trace the outline of my fingers. I spread across a napkin. Credit cards are designed to be biteable. My qualifications are weak because I would do anything for you.

Onsite, the architect shows me around. His shoes squeak on your surface, soles not yet broken in. In this room I feel the gravitational pull of your chin. I'm on my knees. Dust bothers my eyelashes. That turbine throat of yours. The science of your mouth left docile.

You put your own eyes in the ceiling. The rationale was romantic: Glass is hard and also penetrable. I recognise the sound of birds flapping their wings but see no bodies. A few grey feathers, accidental on the scaffolding.

This power station was constructed in 1954. Street-lamps appeared everywhere, and new light was accompanied by a faint, consistent noise. Previously unseen corners had to be defended. Shadows happened fashionably. Your once contented hum is still transferable. I feel it between my legs.

Across your spine, rivets make mollusc promises; knowledge of soft interiors. I like you in layers. Vesalius drew the sloughing of muscles. He discovered the jaw was made from one bone, not two. Now here's yours. Enormous and jewelled with pressure gauges.

A smell of cold meat disorients. Preservation is a presumptuous act. My specialist brushes go over your butch bones, pretending to be casual. How long does touch last? Memories, like tears, taste metallic. Or is it just the flavour of my tongue, gone lonely.

Heavy doors are hinged on your elbows. Small piles of porcelain underneath each fixing. Friction is long-term. The architect hovers his shoe over my knuckles. Why is he so desperate for the information of my hands? I slip a disused cable into my bag.

Love makes such stratigraphic claims: your skin always wanted to be anything but skin. There's the arch of your back in the pipework. I try to make sense of your rotting white shirt. Collar has remained intact, stiff with concrete. I unpack a delicate chisel and get to work.

K Patrick is an emerging writer. Their work focuses on how text holds onto and releases the queer body.