

SAMUEL PREMINGER

# Soil and Space: Fumigation

There's a metaphor in her house, been lurking round for weeks

from the mailbox, rattling,  
stolen as a teakettle,  
her useless and meaningful things,

fidget like runaways.  
she's setting traps, the wretched  
thought, bidding it leave

on its own, yet there again, stony glare  
of bookends, a knotty bedpost  
beside her ear asleep.

she sweeps it out in so many seeds of ash,  
burns the diary,  
jimmied with a hairpin, wishes goodnight

the softshoe of worrisome mice,  
rests her head to find so many feathers  
needling the pillowcase through

where she's sewn her maybes, her one day myths, lonely as catkins on willow.

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# Language Barrier

I've read each person's tongue  
is distinct – a fingerprint and  
I'd know your heated curve  
any day. We've only had sex  
for two weeks, but you're hungry as

rain tonight and come 2156 women will run  
faster than men, you tell me –  
what will we chase then? You beat your sorrow  
into charges, into hangmen, a noose, but  
I think you need to know:

men are six times more likely to be struck  
by lightning than women.

What I think you need to know  
is every body, every day kills fifteen million  
red blood cells – we only waste time, trying  
to deconstruct one another faster than  
we self-destruct. You inform me, we're creating cells

as well and besides, a human can survive  
without a liver, kidney, stomach,  
or spleen. How long can I stay  
speaking with my broken Broca's,  
my abscessed heart? I'm quiet now:

counting out breaths, strangling anger, oysters up  
my throat. How do we wait

when every forty-five seconds a house catches fire?

There are 31,557,600 seconds  
in a year. I don't tell you  
twenty robbers break the banks  
each day – I want you to

recognize: we could buy balaclavas. We could spend this time  
wearing down one another's print.