

'Unmoving'

Your shoulders are broad and strong,
Like you've been carrying boxes of experience,
Like you should have known better.

You block my way and—A signal
for me to move—you shrug
Shoulders lifting half an inch
To that pinpoint of a moment
When your voice echoes in my mind,
So familiar like so many others,
“Step aside, woman, this is how the world works.”

The safety of obedience is enticing.
I could move for you, I thought.
I could choose to do that.
So easy. One step to the right. So easy.

But she—has already moved for you.
A woman—has had to move her body
To make space for you in the warmth of her womb,
Your mother, built space
Within her, stretching, contracting, expanding,
Exhausting the air from her lungs so you could
fill yours.

So much has already been moved for you.
How dare you ask for more space?
How dare you ask more of any woman?

As I stand here, unmoving,
What do you see?
I have been called a muse, an angel,
The rising sun, a delicate flower, the summer
breeze;
I am a never-ending source of metaphor.

But what do you see?
Do you see an aggressive stereotype of a
feminist?
Do you see a stubborn little girl?
Do you see an inferior creature meant only submit?

Will you ever see a warrior—
Who deals in blood,
And bleeds an ocean—
Grotesque and beautiful?
I have no armour.
I do not need an armour.
I barely scream at the pain of broken bones
As I push another you into the world.
I am—a woman.
And as that, I will stand still.