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Eve

Chloë James

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Chloë James

# eve

When I was eight  
they stretched the serotonin  
in my brain like  
canvas in  
preparation to be painted  
with hot, red Adam

so I quartered and juiced my  
two arms two legs  
then watered down the familiar soup

at twelve years old  
I handed him four  
aluminum tubes,  
silver ventricles labeled with  
oily red-brown paper.  
watched him slip them into his pocket

and after twenty years learned to spread my  
self across a bamboo gurney,  
primitive easel,  
in our front yard.  
waited for his long,  
sinewy fingers to finish  
methodically sliding along tin tubes from bottom to top  
working out the greasy paint in cylindrical smudges.

waited for him to brush his name  
from the hollow between my clavicles  
along the sternum,  
halving flesh, like a civil war  
on my belly with paint that stank  
of fermented fruit  
and eggs.