

Nineteen

One year, barely a fraction of now,
the flat we live in is vaguely notorious,
no forks or plates, only knives
burnt black and spoons that hide
in bedroom drawers

Someone scrapes the mould off the walls
around our bed, after some mild pneumonia
and I paint a beautiful hawk
there instead, and a monster
you can only see in the mirror

There's the famous fall and ten days on a ward
pacing corridors to stare down the stairwell,
never quite making it over the railing,
and then I'm released, but suddenly
afraid to even cross the road

Quickly pulled back to the same routines
though things are souring, the flat splits
and we move nearby, carrying with me
the fear he'll repeat what I'd let him away with -
but that's not yet

Visiting for an antidepressant prescription,
the astute or intuitive family GP
presents me with a pregnancy test stick,
asks, I refuse, but she persists,
humour me

In that instant my blood begins to clear,
then head, the year it seems that even
the best people turn vampire and die
or don't die yet
while I watch

Rescued by the future
I bloom, grow round, grow sharp,
balloon with rage and hope,
feel ancient,
turn twenty

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