

**Bourne**  
**toWrite...**  
creative writing  
workshops

Marie Antoinette

by Lauren Holstein

A squirrel is staring at me.  
A raspberry in her mouth, front paws aloft, still.  
Her gaze contains both utter freez-ifying terror  
and

genuine curiosity.  
about me.  
Me.

This giant multi-coloured pajama-ed creature  
trying achingly for matched stillness.

in this moment  
what could I possibly do to you?

I might shiver  
or  
twitch my foot  
or  
nod my head  
or  
blink.

am I an adrenaline-inducing monster?

I think of all the moments I terrified  
myself.  
or was it – not a collection of moments  
but  
a drawn-out era?

An Era or Terror.  
A Reign of Terror.

so many decapitations  
the guillotine slicing through Queen

Monster  
Foe of Underlings  
Eater of Cake

a knife through sponge and frosting  
*brioche et confiture*

On some slicing occasion  
all the life rushed into my head  
my body seeping juices  
my bodiless mind ringing sharply with power  
held up, not by skeleton, nor by stake  
but by a limbic sword  
hilt of panic-brain  
tip of adrenal-gland  
heart sliced though the middle  
shining with rubies and sapphires

I lived on, you see  
*Madame Déficit*  
*Décapité*  
*Déficiente*  
*Défectueuse*  
*La Tête de La Tarte*  
*La Reine de La Terreur*  
*L'Erreur*  
*L'Écureuil*

This knife, this squirrel  
Fuck.  
How exhausting, to be both.

And now I sit still in the garden  
Apologies pasting me back together, thick icing  
*Fais excuses, je ne l'ai pas fait exprès.*  
There is no need.  
There are no miscakes here.

This war was a reckoning  
a beckoning

a bidding.  
I asked to be decapitated. Deboditated.  
Survival. Only Survival.

Don't run, squirrel. Let me feed you  
An acorn. A slice of cake. A ruby. A raspberry.  
I am not so scary anymore.