

Feme Fatigue by Tiffany J Herron

We are worn from the heaviness of our womanhood
Our arms are tired from the weight of carrying enough cordage to noose and strangle

Our innards spilled for strangers
Our skin slit open, mammaries and ovaries taken,

leaving behind menopause and figures barely able to fit into size Pretty
We are told we are strong, we are beautiful on the inside,

even without all of our pieces,
rejection, and humiliation grub our core

cloaking their infection with our blood
like an old lady's shawl moldy from depression

We pull matted tethers of anger from our lungs,
we scream and gnaw at binds

moored deep inside, attached to our wombs
It is our obligation to prevent pregnancy, infertility, disease, and every bloody mess,

while we simultaneously host desire wearing nothing more than strings of lace and smiles
Our feet are weary from tripping over nerves,

miles of wires designed to keep our shit together,
they are splayed out for plucking by

our lovers, our parents, our children, our medication
In high heels we tip toe around interruptions, navigate

between lustful taunts and unwanted touches of which we become so unfazed
we believe these efforts are compliments and later, if we wake up,

we make lists of each intrusion, each violation since we were 5 years old
In our nests of comfort smothered in butter,

we burrow into our roundness, or we subsist off the nutrients of tears,
forking into our mouths nothing but tissue drenched in loneliness

Either way we become hollow intentionally hiding our blessings,
we become as invisible, we become as prosaic, as forgettable as possible

It is our responsibility to keep our minds shut while we speak,
to be comatosely attractive on our knees,

to be the sweetness of a hive without stingers, juicy berries without thorns
We are exhausted from forcing life through our veins

to pinken our cheeks, to create breastmilk, to redden our eyes, to pumping out despair
We are puny from the longing to be called

good girl, but as grown ass females,
we hate ourselves for wanting to hear it

Our bodies are weak from being everything