

Audrey Molloy

FALLEN



Gallery Books

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for the women who wanted more

The Tilted World

Then one day she got up,
her world all out of kilter.
The short trip from bed to kettle
was a skate-park ramp.

She rapped at her skull
with her sparkly knuckles
to reset her balance

but all that week, and the next,
she swerved downhill, to starboard,
as though she were a surfer hanging ten,
as though she were back in Perugia,
high-heeling cobbled slopes,
not here, in leafy suburbs,
shopping for dinner.

It's ear rocks, the grey man said
(he wasn't her first port of call),
canaliths or otoconia to be exact,
(she loved how he knew Greek and Latin!)
and what rolls in must roll out again.
And so, he flipped her this way and that —
on her side, face down, head back —

and sure enough, on the nineteenth try,
her vertigo was gone.

Night Visit

I woke this morning to a fading scent
of almond flour and lavender,
a sense of something I forgot to do,
some precious chance I'd squandered.

I dreamt of you last night. Among
a baffling mix of guests — the kind that muster
in some half-familiar galley kitchen —
we spoke like any other time, a proper
back-and-forth discussion, and yet I —
ignorant that you were dead —
failed to ask you anything
important, Mother, like, *did you leave
the salmon out for supper? Or, should I
leave my husband?* I didn't
hug you when you wiped your hands,
hung your apron up and said
that you had somewhere else to be.

What is a dream but locksmith incognito,
breaking into towers stacked along
the lichened inclines, lonely
as the beehive huts on Skellig Michael.

When you were leaving I was deep in talk
with someone in a wool beret; I only
glanced around and threw a little wave
at your departing figure in the doorway,
wreathed in lilac evening light.

Ambiguous Loss

Your child has bitten hers,
and you don't know what to say, to make it right
with the woman who is like a sister to you.

She smiles and says, *We're solid, you and I*,
as though it's inviolable, your holy bond.
And you believe her at the time. You do.



Driving past the kids' old school today,
you saw her in the distance, corralling
her youngest through the gates. You waved.

She might have raised her arm.
It was early and the light was low;
you really couldn't say for sure.

Flare Up

Things fall apart.

— W B Yeats

Things an addict learns to do, silently:
pop two Panadol from a blister pack;
hide a highball in the dishwasher;
pull a cork; empty the recycle bin;
open a tamper-resistant bottle of Ritalin
in your pocket; stream tap water into ice trays;
keep a straight face when a scrap
of glass skewers your bare foot; wipe
a stain from the bathroom floor,
which could be Betadine or dried blood;
lift and lower the lid of a cistern cache;
slide a key in the front-door lock at 3 a.m.
Other things are audible — fierce whispers,
banging doors, all those pretty lies.