

father's day

when you leave his home
leave your children
walk away as if
your past with this man
can be pulled up by the roots
as if nothing ever grew in you

when you leave his house
leave the pieces necessary
for a complete home
the wrench to fix the bed
a spatula and
the non-stick pan
and the children

if you cannot leave your
children behind
leave other pieces
of your flesh
learn to live without
your thumbs or knee cap
without your spine or pelvis

you will see these parts
again, he will bring them
to your table as contribution
each holiday
for feasting
gnaw and suck marrow
recommend it for the stock
flavor the stuffing

when you leave him
leave your children
and if you cannot

find solace in a womb
that grew all his world for him
and this latest
umbilical tug
will not kill you.

what to bring to a die-in

leave:

security blanket

inescapable skin

tongue

justification

bring:

bulletproof vest

reliable witnesses (white)

choking throat

guns

and if not your guns, then your wide screaming mouths
and if not your screaming mouths, then your gasping tears
and if not your tears, then your fist clenched in anger
and if not your fist, then your hands raised in surrender.

bring your own body

pulsing; add the heat of your children.

the ones still left living. lay down.

be empty. silent. become the ideal

image of you. don't _____.

brace for impact.

expect them to shoot.

cajol

like lightning and sand
suddenly molten glass
oh please, muse
strike now

let the iron heat

let the child
care herself

let the seams
stitch themselves garment

let the soap lather and
the dish and
the cloth and
the skin
rinse itself clean

let this be aerobic
exercise, muse
let it pant and release
let it satisfy
as orgasm

let it chocolate in my mouth
rum in my cup
let it pour
let it stick
let it come
let it drip

let it sing
let it wallow
let it run
and oh, muse, let it
be caught

like prey dangling
limp from slaver's mouth.

An award-winning writer and performer, **Amber Flame** is also a singer for multiple musical projects. Flame's original work has been published and recorded in many diverse arenas, including Def Jam Poetry, Winter Tangerine, The Dialogist, Split This Rock, Jack Straw, Black Heart Magazine, and forthcoming from Sundress Publications, Redivider and more. Flame works as a practicing and teaching artist, co-produces the Oakland Slam and performs regularly on musical, slam and literary stages. She is committed as an activist and organizer for a diverse number of theatrical, cabaret, queer, and POC communities. Amber Flame is one magic trick away from growing her unicorn horn.