

**Heart(less)**

*I kept explaining my heart away. Too heavy to carry, too broken to mend, I dreamt that that mess of mangled muscle was absent, no longer a part of me, that it had vanished completely, leaving me with only a cavernous pit in my chest, so that I was empty, finally free of misery & memories & it was a relief.*

*I'd justify its non-existence with seemingly logical comments, like, "No one can break my heart if I haven't got one" & "it's impossible to hurt the heartless" & "you can't kill something that's already dead," & these thoughts made the idealistic illusion that I'd conjured for my own protection so easy to believe in, so real inside my head.*

"What heart? Oh, you mean *my* heart? Yeah, it's not actually mine, hasn't been for ages.

Someone stole it burnt it / broke it / crushed it / served it over ice with a slice of lime.

I lost it / left it on the Tube / sold it on eBay / put it out with the recycling / fed it to a hungry stray / used desire to smother it into silence / drowned it in a bucket of bleach.

It fell out of my pocket / his hands / my body / my backpack when I was drunk / sleeping / picking at my cuticles / busy knitting a new life.

It's in the garage, undergoing repairs / on display in a gallery (you can buy it on a postcard for 20p) / underneath my mother's fingernails.

It's probably in my other notebook, the one labelled '2015' / in police custody, awaiting formal interview / down the side of the sofa with the loose change & your girlfriend's hair clips / hanging, in chunks, from the trees in the copse where he stole my virginity, horribly.

It's up high in the Tatra mountains / stuck down a Cornish mine / waiting for me on Mexico's Pacific coastline / buried under the pitch at Highbury / in a discarded brown paper bag down an alley in the 20th arrondissement / at one of my old addresses, most likely 28A / 46 / 2 but you should also try 1b / 20 / 11.

I actually donated it to charity / gave it to a dead man for safekeeping / lost it in a game of poker / gifted it to science / am not sure I ever had one to begin with."

*How strange it was when I finally faced up to the reality that my heart is very much present, alive & beating, here, inside of me, working hard, playing harder, jumping on the furniture with the persistence & verve of a child who knows that they could get away with murder (with a smile), banging pots & pans with wooden spoons, rattling the bars of its calcium cage, acting like it owns the place, moving moving moving, always moving, fighting to keep me alive, as if it's got no other choice, foxtrotting & quickstepping, as if dancing is all it knows, relentless, determined, wild, as if it's capable of healing, as if it's lived here its whole life, as if it's home, as if it's whole, as if it's mine.*