

splintered with terror

a poetry collection by Linda M. Crate

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two monsters of the same breed

i remember
once
i was vulnerable
and depressed
some guy i barely knew
at college
said he'd take a walk with me
he took me to his room
for netflix and chill
when i strained to watch the movie
i had no interest in
he forced me to touch his dick,
and i recoiled;
he seemed mad until i told him about you
didn't seem to realize
you were both the same breed of monster
cut from the same cloth of desire
shorn from human decency
over indulgent in personal want
thinking that want and desire made it perfectly
acceptable to take what was needed—
i wasn't the same girl then
as i was now
definitely different than the little girl
you forced to kiss you
who you tried to rape all those years ago
frightened and scared
in both situations i froze like a deer
caught in headlights
now i would give you a piece of my mind so strong
you'd choke.

i was finally freed

you're not the only one
to mistake my kindness
for weakness,
but you're one of the first
shatterd my heart like it was your verse;
young and sweet
i only knew love as something everyone
wanted
but i knew that i didn't want you to kiss me
yet you forced me to
not once or twice but three times—
& then it got worse
you insisted that we were going to do it
even though i told you no
you walked over to me and pulled on my clothes,
but i pushed you away with a sudden adrenaline rush
running down the stairs;
your sister assumed i heard my mother coming
but in all honesty
i just wanted to escape—
took off running without looking back,
and some days later when you broke up with me
i cried not because of the break up
but because of the release
i was finally freed from your want and your need.

you wouldn't have been laughing

“bet you don't remember me”
of course i do,
and you probably were betting
on that, too;
from that savage grin—

thought at college
i could start coming out of my shell
all thoughts of you
left far behind me but then
you came to that very same college

i felt betrayed by the universe
and God who kept you away all that time
i didn't understand why i had to see
your face again
unbidden in the dark

felt my heart pick up the speed
like a wounded doe i leapt the highest
don't know what possessed you
to speak to me,
but i wish i could've had the courage

to call you out;
all those years i fell inward upon
myself like a wanning and waxing moon
because of you
all those years i suffered and blamed myself—

i wish i was brave then
like i am now
you wouldn't have been
laughing at me
if i were.

all these "good" men aren't good

i have had to listen to family members tell me how you're a good person, and i remember one time i let out a noise of derision and was scolded by my aunt; she insisted that you were nice—i knew that wasn't true because nice and good men don't do the things you did, and i know we were both kids; but that doesn't make what you did right and it doesn't mean that i can just forget—from that snide jab at college i would hazard a guess you're no different now than you were then, and it makes me angry that people like you aren't seen for the monsters they are; they just are seen as fathers, brothers, and good men; whilst the victims of their attacks are seen as bitter, insane, crazy, or over emotional women that are overreacting—the world we live in is unfair because if it were monsters like you would be seen for the nightmares that you truly are, and i wish that one day that would come true; sick of the white male privilege, sick of the rape culture; sick of all these good men who are no good.

is everyone blind?

i told my mother once that you forced me to kiss you, but i told her nothing more; couldn't find the words to speak of the act you tried to force me to do—maybe i was too good a liar, maybe she just didn't sense the truth the way mothers sometimes do; but it felt like a betrayal when she defended you and insisted you were a good person—it took all i had in me to swallow down a thousand hurtful words because i didn't want to be the same monster as you were, i didn't want to cause wounds i couldn't repair; but i could not understand why no one could see the truth about you—why no one could look past the pretty lies that you told them, that no one could see the monster within your skin; were they not looking or could they just not see?

i didn't want to "do it"

i wish the video games
would've worked
so you could've
looked at something other
than me
i remember you showed me
the yearbook with
my picture in it and insisted
i had a pretty smile
when i was in second grade
before i transferred
schools,
and i remember thinking that a bit
strange as i was in sixth
grade and you in
seventh;
yet i still said thank you
because that's what i was taught you
said after someone gave you a compliment—
when you said things about "doing it"
i just laughed it off
thinking you were joking,
but i think you heard the tension in my
laugh and i think it made you grin;
because i remember you forcing me to kiss you
not once but three times and then later
after the ice cream
trying to force me to "do it" as you had said.

just want my space

i always
shied away from
human affection
because
i always thought of you
taking more than i was willing to give,
and trying to force me
into sex;
so i recoiled when anyone touched me
even my dad
he was always offended
instead of trying to get to the root of the problem
always insisted fathers should be able
to touch their daughter's
arm
i can still feel my mouth tighten—
people should always
respect other people's boundaries
because of you
i don't like being touched
even by those closest to me and i hate
when people force me into
hugs
i just want my space,
and i only hug people when i feel
comfortable with them;
not because
they forced me to.

men like you

i don't know why people force little kids to hug people they want to hug or be kissed by people when they don't want to be kissed, i feel like everyone should have a right to their own bodies; sometimes people don't feel right—since you took from me things i wasn't willing to give, i have been really funny about being touched; and i don't quite like it unless i want it—i think it's ruined some of the relationships i've had—some would say that you didn't get anything from me so what does it matter? i am used to people blaming the victim, i can only imagine what they'd say about me because you didn't get sex only kisses; they'd tell me i was overreacting or to get over it—they don't get to decide just like you didn't get to decide that you didn't hurt me because you did, and i am not going to be forced to sit in silence anymore; i was made for more than holding these nightmares—i am a daughter of light and love, will burn new stars into the heavens for people like me so they know they are not alone; i am not going to be afraid anymore because of men like you.

don't know what you thought

i don't understand
why you thought i didn't get a say
or why you thought it was okay
to push so hard
for something you couldn't
even put in words,
and the more i said no;
the more you seemed to want it
like my voice didn't matter
or my decisions didn't count—
who are you
or any other man
to try to strip the voice
of anyone?
no means no,
and people should be respected
for their decisions;
and their words should be heard
not ignored—
i don't know why you thought you were
going to force yourself upon me
or why you thought
i wouldn't remember you all those years
at college later
since you messed my psyche up pretty bad.

i won't let my light go out

i am not going to let my light die before my time, you aren't going to take that from me; i won't be a monster—i will not be your victim, either, laying before my destiny too afraid to take chances and make my life a masterpiece; i am going to burn every bridge that will hold me back including yours—life isn't always fair, but that didn't mean that you should be unfair; didn't mean that you should have forced your lips against mine, doesn't mean that you should've tried to steal away the first of my flowers—i was young and maybe i was foolish to think you wouldn't have wanted that, but i thought that we were going to play video games and have fun; i didn't think it was going to be something that would change my life forever—i didn't realize you could cry tears of happiness when someone broke up with you before this, i didn't know that i could hold on so hard to fear for so many years and fall inward upon myself; but this little light of mine will always shine because i cannot let it flicker out—too many of the best stars have already fallen from the sky.

strong enough to make me brave

you're not going to win
this isn't a game,
and this is my life;
going to take it back now

you're not going to hold me
in uncertain hands
forever
because i deserve more than that

i won't be muted and persecuted
by things that weren't my fault
you pushed too far but i said no
i ran away

don't regret not giving myself to you
because my body is a sacred temple
wouldn't let it be defiled by your name
i'm just lucky that adrenaline rush came

because you were stronger than
i was,
but my fear was strong enough
to make me brave.

nowhere but home

i always feared
seeing your face again
that was probably irrational,
but then again
when i thought i wouldn't see you
again
you appeared in my life;
a ghost that i would have preferred to remain
in his haunted house rather than
my life—
wish i could let it go,
but this has followed me around
since i was a kid;
every day i have to worry about someone
like you
stronger than me
forcing me into something i don't want
everywhere i go
walking down the sidewalks
get hollered at, catcalled, and hit on
even happens at work
sometimes;
i just want a space where i can feel safe
other than my house—
that's not too much to ask
so why is it
that nowhere but home
makes me feel safe?

things too heavy

i wish no one had to carry
what i have to,
but i know some people
have endured worse;
i hate that #metoo is a trending
hashtag
that i've had to use, too;
because i couldn't hide forever
to pretend the past doesn't exist
is worse than digging deep into these scars
to unravel old wounds and heal—
don't know why
the force of your lips against mine
hurts me still
or why i even think of you,
at all,
when i would much rather just live my life
than spend another eternity in that moment;
some of us just can't snap out of it
though we'd like to
sometimes some things are just
too heavy.

reliving nightmares

it's sad
one little thing
years ago
could follow me so long,
but what you did
wasn't something i could
just forget;
when you saw my face
you could've just walked by yet you
had to plant yourself back in my life
with that smug little smirk
i wish i could just go back in time
with the strength i have now
just punch it straight off your lips
because you are "a foul loathsome little cockroach"
as a heroine from one of my favorite books
would say—
i know it's just my word
against yours,
and the sad thing is they'd believe you
because you're a man
and i'm a woman
apparently all we can do is lie and accuse people
it's a sick world that we live in
where people like you are heroes and people like me
are forced to relive our nightmares every single day.

splintered with terror

my voice
is my weapon of choice
there's nothing
i can do about the past now
except over come it

i speak now
so that girl or guy
too afraid to speak out
about their experience can

none of us deserved
to suffer
what happened to us
at the hands of others

i don't know why
nightmares
like you walk on two legs
calling yourself humans
when you are nothing more
than a monster

i don't understand
why people like you
get to be called men or women

because you're just masks
of what people should be
you look like good people but you
are death
destroyers of worlds
cutting into the flesh of dreamers
splintering them with
terror.

you were probably well aware

i am stronger now
than i was then
went through some things
made some choices
some good, some bad;
but i've been shaped into
a new being
now my flames would burn
so bright you probably couldn't stand
next to me because i could
blind the rising sun
in the east—
all my life i've been told to be careful,
but i didn't think at twelve years old
i would have to face someone like you;
true you were a kid, too,
but that smug smirk told me that you
never grew up
to make something of yourself
just decided being a monster was too appealing
i guess—
should've walked right past me
without your snarky comment because
i didn't need that
sad thing is that you were probably well aware
of that fact.

brighter than the stars, deeper than the ocean

i didn't deserve
anything
you gave me

but it's okay
i am stronger now
than i was

will face this with
everything i have
because i don't need

to be that scared
little girl forever
don't need to be hiding

so deep within the shadows
of myself that i forget
who i am

i am linda
warrior of love and light
beautiful and full of magic

worth more
than you could every afford
daughter of the moon

brighter than the stars
deeper than the ocean
stronger than you'll ever know.

fraction of the pain

i'm not
the girl you want to cross
stronger now
than i was when you first met me
even stronger
than that girl in college
you caught me in the headlights twice,
but i'm no longer a deer;
i'm a raven
with talons sharper than your words
and a beak that will tear
deeper wounds
than you could ever manage—
i am not someone you should cross
can make my eyes the sharpest diamonds
will cut the glass of your shallow
little heart
send it up your esophagus so you can
choke on your own blood
maybe then you'll know a fraction of the pain
you put others through.

that smirk told me so

don't come for me, enough is enough; i am done with you—you're just a ghost, a fragment of memories that can crumble as far as i'm concerned even though i know they never will; but i don't want to dance on egg shells anymore—let them crack, i am not apologetic for my truth anymore; it's mine—i'll own it—good, bad, ugly it's mine; and i am not the same creature i once was so don't fret your arrows will not strike me down anymore—i just don't think i need to see or know you, and you can save your breath for any apology you mat think to utter; because we both know it'd just be for show—you weren't sorry, that smirk told me so.

what you did was wrong

people are always
trying my patience
like you did

people always
trying to push my buttons
like you did

sometimes i think
i would be a better person
should i just live in the wood

because it brings me more peace
than any human ever did
animals, too, give me back kindness

they are loving souls
who see my pain and seek to make
me better

instead of seeing my wounds
thinking they need to rip theirs own through
wish now that i had never met you;

but since i did
just know
what you did was wrong.

i don't feel lucky

no one's mentioned
your name
recently,
and i hope they continue
that pattern;
because the memories aren't good
it feels better to put them
on the back burner
just a pity
they don't burn—
i feel betrayed when people
try to say you're a good man
have to talk myself down
tell me they don't know what i know,
and i don't want to explain
what happened when i was but a kid;
especially since it didn't happen
they would just say i was lucky but i don't
feel lucky, at all.

more than enough

don't know where you got the idea
that no means yes,
but just so we're on the same page
it doesn't;

no matter what hollywood says
women are more than sexual objects
or your property
women were not created to be
objectified
no one was

so stop acting like you're so innocent
we both know that's not true—

irritates me that people say
you're a good man
when i know full well you're not

felt betrayed that my
childhood friend
is friends with you made it
easier to block you,
though;

didn't need you to be
another voice in my head
enough of them mock and revile me
years later
i don't need to think of yours
remembering the weight of everything
you forced on me is more
than enough.

don't know how to rewire my brain

we were never meant to last
yet these memories
haunt
continuously thumbing through
my hair
like a page in my novel
has to be my destiny,
but i'm reclaiming the knife to cut away
myself from you;
don't need to do anything except
burn the bridge between
us for good—
i just want the thoughts of you to end
wish i could get over this
put the pieces of me back together again
yet you're still there
along with every person who's ever insulted me
like the people who gave me kindness
somehow are inferior
i don't know how to rewire my brain
to make it so you don't matter.

their hands just get cleaner

i don't quite smile
the same way
i used to
too many people like you in my life
trying to carve away at who i was
all the secrets i had to hold
so deeply

everyone trying to mold me
shape me
into someone or something else

they have no remorse
for the tears
that have fallen down my cheeks
no,
you cannot get into my heart
not again;

i am stronger
so go ahead and move along—

i doubt that you have ever trembled
afraid and alone
because people don't see you for the wolf you are
until you gobble down the wrong little riding hood
you'll probably keep at your game

because men like you
they don't change their hands just get cleaner
as they learn how to bury the dirt.

your thick skull

i told you no, it should've ended there; but no, my words had no meaning to you—i wanted to have a sweet sixteen birthday party, but i couldn't; because you took that simple joy from me when you kissed me—i wanted to participate in life, but you instilled such a strong fear that i was only a fraction of the person i wanted to be; i missed out on so much and my father constantly liked to remind me of that—no one ever asked me what was wrong and meant it, i learned from an early age that everyone wants you to answer fine; they don't care if you're anchored in your grief—they only care about theirs—so i don't know why i should tell you this, but i hate the way you tried to take advantage of me, forced me to kiss you, and thought you could take anything from me that you wanted just because you were a boy and i was a girl—we're not weaker than men so i hope that, at the very least, breaks through your thick skull.

hard to believe

i guess not everyone
can be a hero
some have to be a villain

you were one of those
were you proud?

i guess you must've been
because that odious
smirk follows me around
as if i've just seen it

i don't hate anyone,
but i dislike you;
won't let you drag me so low

as to hate you
because you don't deserve
the emotions you make me feel
and those that i already
felt—

maybe one day
you'll change and maybe you have,
but i find that hard to believe.

our daughters & our sisters

he got one step closer than you, forced me to touch his dick, but when i recoiled he was angry; why is it that some men cannot accept no? it's gross. i shouldn't have to explain why, but he only calmed down when i told him about you and how you tried to rape me—he couldn't fathom that he wasn't any better, he couldn't fathom that you're just the same; it's really quite vexing that people think they can force anyone to do whatever they want without regard to the person they're hurting—sorry doesn't fix this, the best apology is changed behavior; i don't know if either of you have changed—you're probably both still monsters because i doubt you've had any reason to change and that really scares me because our daughters and our sisters deserve a better future than the ones being painted for them now.

still blaming the victims

no means no
could've just respected me
then i wouldn't
even remember you

but i guess you just
had to be unforgettable
even if it was for the worst reason,

but you're not alone;
i'm sure there are others
that's the sickening thing

how many people have to suffer
before enough is enough?

yet they're still blaming the victims,
they're still dragging us through the mud,
still letting people walk free
for hurting us;

then they want to tell me women
have all the rights
and there's no such thing as rape culture.

blame the people who hurt others

i wish i didn't
have to remember this,
but i still carry
these wounds;
i wish that i could just be free
the past could set me
loose—
yet i guess sometimes we must remember
so no one can ever hurt us the same
way again
because there will always be villains
so we need to be
better heroes
stick up for people instead of minding
our own business,
and be there for those who are wounded and hurting;
yet i see it every day
people blame the victim because it's easier
to say boys will boys than to take action—
it makes me sick
that people have to be broken and dying
before anyone takes notice
when will we start blaming the people who hurt others
rather than the victims?
enough is enough.

sickness of the mind

you're the pomegranate
stain on my
heart

a purple wound
unhealing

i wish i could set fire
to all the bridges that carry
your name

no means no
i don't know why

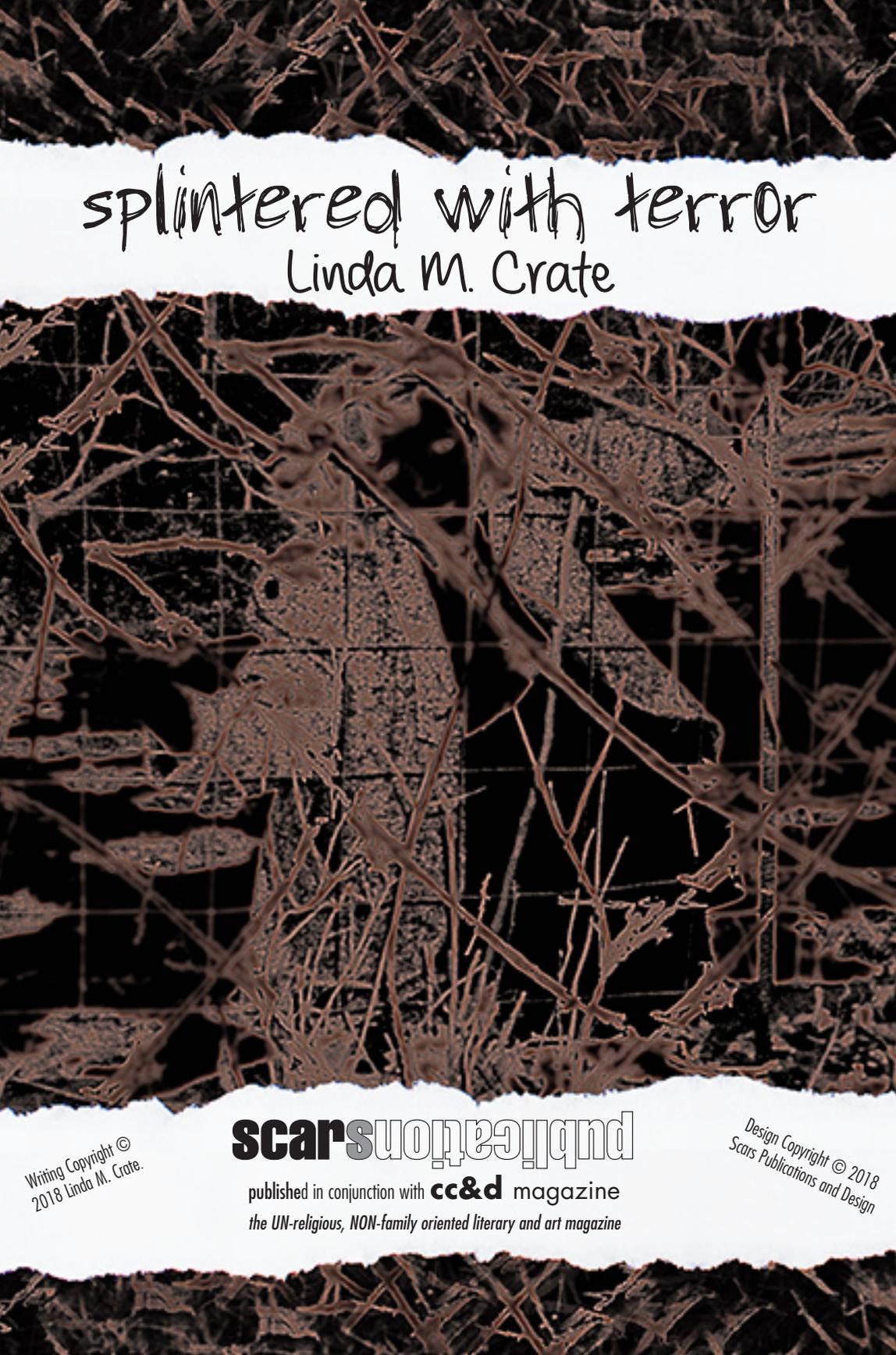
that's something so hard to respect
don't know why you couldn't
just say okay

why some stupid video game
mattered more to you than i did?

it's pretty messed up
that you would care more for
a gaming system

than the person who was
sitting there living, breathing in the same room

as you;
yet instead of feeling empathy or kindness
feel the need to be dominate them.



splintered with terror
Linda M. Crate

scarsuo!e9!!qnd

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the UN-religious, NON-family oriented literary and art magazine

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