

**STILLP • INT**  
A MAGAZINE IN THE EYE OF THE STORM

# THE OVERWHELMING URGE

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## ELLA FREARS

Stabbed in the arm with a compass.  
Stabbed in the side. Ink  
everywhere. Ink in her mouth.  
Saint Sebastien of St Ives, holy  
on the supermarket roof  
throwing moss at passers by.

She's seen *Some Like it Hot* maybe twenty times.  
A hard kernel of a soul,  
she practises softness.  
Pouted baby-mouth in the mirror:  
*I used to sell kisses for the milk fund!*

Stormy, sticky with flies,  
nettles brushing her ankles,  
she bends,  
picks a doc leaf, rubs  
until the anklebone is green.

A herd of cows gather to watch.

He wants to show her something  
by the metal farm gate.  
She, nodding, surveys it from a distance,  
mentally files it under:  
penis; moonlit.

In the dark, the shapes of cows.

The ground is dirty with dirt. The air, dirty  
with smoke; she, clean as a whistle, hops over the stile.

*I used to sell kisses for the milk fund!*

Below is the town, crammed in  
against the yellow beaches  
and all around the sea is endless, aching.

While she wrestled him on the hill,  
the badgers, the horses, the sheep  
worked away, shovelling  
their hearts into the landscape.

When he cried, the wind whisked his tears away  
and out to sea.

She has the overwhelming urge to jam  
her tongue into a plug socket,  
swing an axe  
at her legs, swim out, out, out,  
she's itchy with it.

For now there's nothing to do  
but finger one another  
uncomfortably at the shoreline.

For now there's nothing  
to do but walk  
together in the brilliant air, pick up lumps  
from a freshly tilled field  
and ask – rock or mud?

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*Ella Frears* is a poet and visual artist based in London. She's had work published in the *LRB*, *Ambit*, *Poetry London*, and currently has poems on show at Tate St Ives. Her first collection is *Shine, Darling* (Offord Road Books 2020).