

paper

it wrapped my bones up in a blanket of
something warm that felt like me
the less I became the closer I felt to enough

by the time they started suffocating it was too
late too late too late I had had enough
and it had not

-they assessed my pain as moderate
I screamed inside.

I knew, then, that I would never be enough
not for it, not for them, not for myself
who was too strangled to shout
I am five foot fucking nine
what the fuck is wrong with you people

(needless to say, it was thriving)

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my paper-self ensued regardless, a pile
of moderately unwell numbers, letters,
which decided for me how sick I was
and what help I would get

they made me both small and big
too much of either, they said that I
could not eat – swallowed up
humiliation
rice cakes on a page

dear GP,
the patient is in great distress
she feels she does not deserve to eat bread
see her on this page, this formal expression
of the inexpressible, reduced to bread
to well kempt and quantified
from this professional distance
consider her assessed

all that pain, for bread?
I knew you were nothing
all that pain, for moderate?
we'll never let you stop

(needless to say, it was still thriving)

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and they tell you lots of things about recovery
and they don't tell you lots of things about
recovery
like
how -

bread becomes bread
as then becomes now, yes
I squeezed my identity back from my hunger

and as bread became bread
still I didn't know how
to take back my power from
all of that paper



Photography by Katharine Lazenby