

Thunderous Ode  
Leslie G. Roman

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Inside a sinkhole,  
Dark, grasping,  
Restless thunder,  
Thunderous clouds  
Tumble, no scatter, scatter, ska, sca, sku, stutter,  
My words fall apart, sentences,  
Scribbled on a tattered page,  
Tumble from the sky,  
Fall to earth, scatter, ska, sssca, sku, stutter, stuck in  
My throat, what am I trying to say after all?

How much more--much more I work to be?  
There will be no chicken soup for me  
This time, there will be no harmony,  
No relief  
Repetition of darkness,  
Dark moon,  
No hands,  
No sky  
No horizon,  
Just horizontal space,  
Not an enviable slumber party  
Flat vision, the plains cannot match this flat sadness

A knee fidgets, Oh, dear psychiatrist, you don't say!: "Her knee fidgets anxiously",  
Like a moving pendulum, a steel-like ruler in the sky  
Swings to measure the extraordinary,  
The Thunder, the lightning, the bolts that short circuit  
And through excess swallow the body into a deep cavernous  
Sleep without slumber,  
a waking pulse that disorganizes memory,  
Feeling and affect, come apart  
Did I mention the thunder?  
Ska, scss, scissor, Wish I could scissor out this bleakness

Dear Vincent, Van Gogh, of course,  
Please don't insult my intelligence  
And tell me that your depression brought you  
*The Starry Night* or the *Sun Flowers*  
It must have been *The Potato Eaters*  
That seared my head in half

Weight 88 lbs. Eat now, die later,  
Reach into the survivor backpack,  
Pull out the old protein ice cream milkshakes  
Till death do us not part  
But the scale sings a slightly more weighty tune.

Inside a sinkhole  
A small crackle of light,  
Criss-crosses the consciousness  
Hope rises in the moon  
That one hand touches another  
To reach the moon

Dear Mr. Van Gogh and Ms. Sylvia Plath,  
Where there is no *Bell Jar*,  
There is at least art  
A glimmer of moonlight  
Against the dark,  
We author our own books,  
Tumble as they do from the sky to the beach below,  
To frolic with the geckos  
Alongside lizards and  
Next to colors which we welcome like modest  
Light  
Tea candles--a different starry night  
Than you imagined, Vincent.  
Than imagined you, Vincent.

Author's Artistic Statement: Before her major depression she did not think her art would save her life. Now, she gets asked in disbelief when people see the bright colors in her paintings, "Funny, your paintings don't look like you were depressed" to which she responds: "Why should I have to paint colors that continue to depress me? These paintings are part of series of five entitled "Depression ≠ Work: Faultlines in Productivist Citizenship". Painting is not only a way of being connected to the world, it also a way of being outside the sphere of judgment. Geckos are a symbol of transformation and disability culture is transformative.