



# tend

*poems* · Kate Hargreaves



**tend**

**Book\*hug Press**  
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# Book\*hug Press

*for O, finally*



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**i**

**unsolicited**



## the young ones

we are the young ones  
and we have come for your sons  
our pants stretch tight over thighs and button high  
we mix patterns and clash colours  
shun linen for synthetic blends  
we have undercut sections of our collective hair  
crisped with heat and bleach  
our shoes are plastic and worn through at the toes  
we choose wines for their labels  
eat processed cheese  
hold paring knives at awkward angles  
and have never once used a mortar and pestle  
we can't say we've made it to Provence  
but we got wasted in Québec at eighteen  
we pepper our speech with fucking  
and are, like, inarticulate  
our acne scars gleam under highlighter  
our toenails are black  
and we make public shows of weeping  
give us their hands and we'll lead them  
    through sweat-stained crowds  
or into woods toward artificial lakes  
away from sleepy houses, downtown to the river  
we'll twirl and show our teeth until the sun creeps up  
spill shawarma sauce down our necks  
smear it with the backs of our hands  
disappear into duplexes and cheap upholstery  
we will call the next evening, and they will listen  
stuff their ears with cotton against pleas to stay  
feel the drag toward our caffeine habits  
the way we run, glancing back over shoulders  
our distaste for names and datebooks and chairs  
they will bang on our doors and shout toward our windows  
denounce addresses and object permanence  
press us to emerge again and lead them

to burn popcorn for dinner  
cut hair with nail scissors  
relinquish IDs to sticky tables  
skin knees stumbling on sidewalks  
tail cats through unlocked gates  
    and wind-buckled screen doors  
we have come for your sons  
to wash away their potential  
we cannot garden  
we do not try  
but oh, how we laugh

## plans

I'm leaving town to felt shirts out of belly button lint  
got big plans for the coast

    where snow doesn't harden  
    and you can leave keys in your door  
    making proposals to salt water

I'll learn to weave long underwear  
    out of barbershop trimmings  
melt acrylic nails down for windowpanes  
and pulp utility bills into letter stock

I've been collecting eggshells to grind into pills  
    to reset my bones and fix my legs to the soil  
drawing ink from avocado pits  
and lining sills with water glasses  
    tying my shoelaces to bike racks  
    so I don't wander back east

I'll commit to the coast  
    to polish my toes in the sand  
        and tumble shards and nails into gems  
        wrap the remnants in gold wire  
layer scarves in the winter  
and mail the dust back home

## an early gift for February 14

T

an acoustic shadow the shape of  
echogenic arms  
medical-grade plastic

loose and wandering  
white cross *just bigger than a toonie*

floats in a world of pink and pinker  
and fluid red

and.

The x-ray tech shoots film of my insides  
says I can pay five dollars to download the snaps  
from home.  
save them to my "personal PC" to respond to  
requests to *sendnudes*.

Lower torso minus clothes,  
minus skin minus organs.

Just bones bones and a  
white T  
Autoreply to a dick pic.

A rogue letter bumps against bladder walls  
digs pink divots  
pinker.

Silvers a snail trail of  
proges t erone behind.

Proges t in

Levonorges t rel

Loveges t eronal

Love jester own all

softer le tters

in a friendly pink pamphlet  
stock photo mother  
sharp single  
T

dug its way through my uterus last Monday,  
wiggled through walls and poked out the other side,  
an earring pushed through a years-sealed hole.

T

Rattled my insides until I folded into  
t wo

*tilt ed*

the in-training tech pressed  
bladder kicking harder

*stack your fists behind your back*

twenty-three minutes of  
polite bracing shaking legs

*they'll call with results* and GPS coordinates  
longitude/latitude of lost letters  
slipping behind my bowel

t i l t

clamps pry pinheads into straw widths  
splitting the space behind belly button  
a butter knife under fingernails

two

inches

deep

*They'll need special tools to remove it*

tongs and sounds grasping at invisible strings

*We'll just yank it* (out turn you inside

borders of your body

aren't

guts and medical-grade plastic

T

T

sweat splitt ing exam paper

T

t ickling linoleum