Wrath

I will find a way
To take revenge
On Clair,
For the hair –
And on her whispering friends too.

I will find a way
To watch with glee
As Clair
Feels despair
Along with her
Cheerleaders.

I can be angry.

Not always
Good Kasienka,
As Mama thinks.

Teachers

Why can’t they see what’s happening?
Why don’t they notice the looks,
The smirks, the eye-rolling?

And why don’t they ask if I’m OK?

I’ll tell them I’m not.
I’m not a liar.
Or a slag.

Why do they always ask Clair
to pass out the books
And Marie to read her homework aloud?

They see what they want
Because if they didn’t it would be a lot of work,
And they don’t have time for this;

They have to mark, and teach, and stop the
Boys from killing one another
With their teeth and fists.
This is more important than spotting snickers.

But why can’t they just ask if I’m OK?
Misread

I don’t want to be secretive.
Mama and I share a bed.
Every night it’s me and her together.
There are just some things
I can’t say.

Mama isn’t a good listener:

Sometimes, when I speak,
And think I’ve said something,
Mama hears something else
Completely.

And the reaction is unexpected.

Like last week – I asked for money
To buy a tube of mascara.

She raised an eyebrow
And tapped her tummy.

I didn’t understand.

‘Vulgar girls – always having babies –
Don’t be one of those, Kasienka.
Be a good girl.’

Now someone tell me –
How can mascara make me pregnant?

So when I come home with fresh-chopped hair
I don’t tell her it was Clair in assembly
Sitting behind me with blunt scissors.

I tell her the teacher did it.
I tell her I got gum in it.
Because Mama won’t understand –
And she will find a way to blame me.

The story makes Mama laugh:
‘I told you that habit was disgusting.
But you never listen to Mama!’
Talking

Kanoro listens without saying,
   Just ignore it (which I can’t),
   Or, They’re jealous (which isn’t true).
Instead he nods and says:
‘There is no hyena without a friend.’
And then: ‘What will you do?’

I like this question. He believes
I can do
Something.

So I tell him about my empty plan
To get revenge
On the hyena.

Kanoro looks sad and says:
‘Happiness should be your revenge, Kasienka.
Happiness.’

And though he is right,
It makes me feel worse
Because I do not know
How to be happy.

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