

# Precatio contra violo

by Ivy Alvarez

Lord, give me strength to lie down with the lion, suffer his talons to pierce me, rip me to shreds. Let me endure it to the end. Let Thy bright needles stitch me together again, even as I fracture and crack. Let him not attack my dog — I cannot bear it. She whines and whines in the corner of the room. My cries distress her. I cannot help it. The old sofa enfolds my body. His mangy mane tears my neck. The drip of rank meat, his muzzle, his back-barbed tongue: red. He led me to the back of the car, Lord. He pressed me upstairs, a tied scapegoat. He put a pill into my fizzing coke. He held my throat. I wanted to live, Lord, so I reached inside myself and switched off. And the drug took hold. I slipped on the linings of coats. I slipped on the road. My poor, holy dog. I fought with myself. I opened my chest, disembowelled and spilled. The dark was a carcass a lion dragged in. He slipped in my blood. I could cauterise the dark. The needles were white-hot, though I held on to me shrinking infinitely to a line in the road. My world is burning up, Lord, and I with it.

