

## Survival Instincts

Athena wanted out.  
There was no mistaking it.  
Every day, her fists  
Became battering rams  
Until my head throbbed,  
My stomach churned  
And my vision blurred.

But wise doctors in white  
Gave me a special potion  
To kill the angry Goddess.  
“It’s for survival,” they told me.  
Isn’t that what everyone wants?

So I drank,  
My veins smoldering  
With every shot,  
My skin turning pale and translucent  
Like onion skin.  
Delirious, I was cast  
Upon jagged stones,  
My limbs shaking.  
I lost my flesh,  
My lion’s mane.

“This is not survival!” I cried.  
“This is suffering!”  
Athena spoke,  
Calm and clear as daybreak  
From within the catacombs.  
Of my mind:

*Sometimes survival is suffering.  
And sometimes, suffering is all that’s left  
To remind you  
That you are still alive.*

--Marieke Davis (2013)