



**SHOT, STABBED, CHOKED, STRANGLED, BROKEN:
a ritual for November 20th**

Roz Kaveney

1

It could have been me.

I was young. I took risks.

True, I was white.

I hitched rides with guys

One at least was a killer

It could have been me.

It could have been me.

He came to my door

He showed me a badge

He pulled out a knife

He raped me. I felt

The hilt of the knife

I thought it was the blade.

It could have been me.

It could have been me.
They beat me in the street
They pummeled my breasts
And tugged at my wig
And said they would burn me
It could have been me.

It could have been me.
He drew up alongside
And asked me to ride
And knew who I was.
He followed my cab
And drove his car at me
It could have been me.

2

They died
On the streetcorner with the streetlight that blinked
With the rubbish bin dented by a passing car
Among bricks and bent girders
On the waste ground behind the convenience store
In the car park behind the bar where the toilets flooded
And the johns were bad men. Or in bed
Their own bed where they thought they were safe.
They died where people who die by violence die.
They died because
—Of course, there's no because. Just stupid whys
They died for smiling the wrong way

They died because god told someone gay things need to die
They died because they answered back
Or would not be called out of their names
Or let his hand go there between their legs
Or went on a hot date and told him and he didn't believe them until he did.
They died of other people's stupid violent hating ways.

The ones who died
The ones we know about
Thirty a year—that's more than two a month.
Handsome young transmen murdered in their pride
Duanna, Angie, Kelly, and the rest
Iraqis with their long hair shaved away
Our sisters and brothers
Thirty of them
Dead

3

When people die
Their smiles are taken from us
Who might have seen them
And smiled back.
Their songs are taken from us
Who might have heard
And listened and been glad.
Their stories are remembered
By us, on this day
And always.