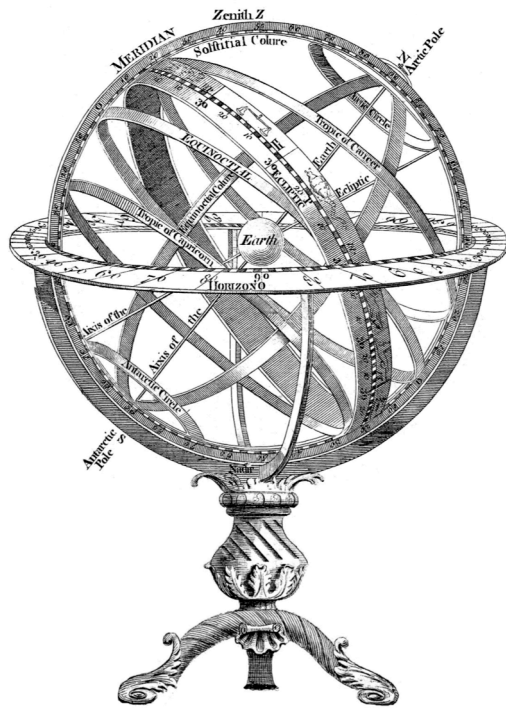


Dress the Stars



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T.A. Noonan

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a Dusie Kollektiv chapbook

<http://www.dusie.org/>



Dress the Stars is set in Edmondsans, a display face created by James T. Edmonson and distributed by Lost Type Co-Op. Armillary sphere image courtesy of Graphics Fairy LLC. The first edition of this chapbook was released in March 2013 in a limited edition of fifty-two copies. Each cover featured a vintage crescent-shaped brandy label.

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after Kate Durbin and Danielle Pafunda

1.

“Simplicity is the keynote of all true elegance.”

—Coco Chanel

Marie Antoinette may have been *our first toddler-in-tiara*

but Crab Nebula is our oldest supermodel.

She is Messier 1, just above Taurus's southern horn

(a whitish light, elongated in the shape of a flame of a candle)

before that, a 1054 discovery by Eastern stargazers

(its brightness must represent a person of great value)

& since we are motivated to *render the stars visible*

to see her

to make a scene

to make her seen

to make others seen through her

we must understand:

the Crab is a periodic table in corset & Louboutins.

2.

“The most accessible field in science, from the point of view of language, is astrophysics.”

—Neil deGrasse Tyson

All elements,
once discovered or fashioned,

become fabrics:
stitch them

& make something.
You'll drape an alloy

fusion gown, sculpt noble bodices
(transparent, of course)

to illuminate
the dark lanes

of atoms colliding in space.

So do siderial wonders

*increase with our means
of optical practice. It's all*

thanks to post-
production, naturally—

how else to show
that stars are atmosphere,

causality, the hydrogen robe
hiding the heavier core beneath?

(Somewhere, a designer says,
The objects in this collection

*must at present
remain ambiguous.)*

No one can see
the inverse beta decay,

protons driven into electrons,
the capture, the collapse.

All we can do is sense
& measure,

like Giacometti impersonators:
location,

relationship,
area.

For the rest, Photoshop:
bodies liquefied, smoothed;

fixed stars made mobile;
mobile stars, fixed;

conductive plasma ironed,
folded, taped, shoved

down the runway
into a gallery of flashbulbs.

They're always waiting
for the latest breakout beauty

& we're always waiting
for carbon.

3.

“It’s true you were alone until you met me. / I was the first to dress you up and make you sexy.”

—2 Live Crew, “Me So Horny [Clean Version]”

Say there is subversive power in the abject surrender of possession, the giving-up of tongue to those who only want a woman for the body that contains it. Say they put her on display like a cosmic Barbie. Say she has no control over this because she has relinquished it. Say she did this of her own free will.

Now, say the body is composite—overlays of radio waves, x-rays, infrared signatures that give texture, form, color. Say her arms are *strongly polarised filaments* that we can see. Say her core is a *central pulsar* that we cannot. Say her bones are a *'torus' around the pulsar*.

Now, say she is a lighthouse, the St. Augustine Light. Say she was established in place of a previous tower. Say she wears black-and-white spiraled stripes. Say she once *crashed into the sea*. Say she has become an *official, privately-owned, active aid to navigation*.

Say we can only see her when she points at us, her red lantern shining in our eyes.

Now, say her interior *changes its stripes*. Say she is different because *changes in most astronomical objects are barely perceptible over a human lifetime*. Say we can observe her reinventions in a week, a month, a year. Say this is part of her process, of how to understand her. Say her assemblage self, *perpetually in rebellious, unnatural movement, evades containment while screaming for attention*.

Then, remember her radiance helps us see others' radiance. Remember they pass in front of her, block her. Remember we measure others by her syzygy. Remember she occults. Remember she is occult. Remember she is the *knowledge of the hidden*.

Now, remember we made her this way. Remember we dressed her. Remember she is a supernova remnant, a dead star. Remember

fashion by its very nature is a celebration of the body's fall from glory. Remember she is haunted. Remember we haunt her. Remember this has meaning, & we are nothing without her corpse to possess, her walk to pantomime, her mouth to move on our behalf.

Notes

1. *our first toddler-in-tiara*: Danielle Pafunda, "Who Gets the Girl: A Note on Possession Flicks: Drawing Heavily on Kate Durbin's Demon Notions, My Favorite Movies When I Was 10, and Some Other Stuff."

a whitish light, elongated in the shape of a flame of a candle: Charles Messier, *Catalogue des Nébuleuses & des amas d'Étoiles*.

its brightness must represent a person of great value: from the Song *Huiyao*, as preserved in *Yongle Dadian*.

to render the stars visible: William Herschel, *Catalogue of One Thousand New Nebulae and Clusters of Stars*.

2. *the dark lanes*: John Louis Emil Dryer, *New General Catalogue of Nebulae and Clusters of Stars*.

So do siderial [sic] wonders increase with our means of optical practice: William Henry Smyth, A Cycle of Celestial Objects: For the Use of Naval, Military, and Private Astronomers.

The objects in this collection must at present remain ambiguous: William Herschel, Catalogue of One Thousand New Nebulae and Clusters of Stars.

3. *Say there is subversive power in the abject surrender of possession: Kate Durbin, "A Teenage Girl Speaks As a Melodramatic, Hysterical Demon."*

strongly polarised [sic] filaments; central pulsar; 'torus' around the pulsar: D.A. Green, "G184.6-5.8 Crab Nebula, 3C144, SN1054," A Catalogue of Galactic Supernova Remnants (2009 March Version).

crashed into the sea; official, privately-owned, active aid to navigation: Diane Hackney, "St. Augustine Light," United States Coast Guard Historic Light Station Information and Photography: Florida.

crashed into the sea; official, privately-owned, active aid to navigation: Diane Hackney, "St. Augustine Light," United States Coast Guard Historic Light Station Information and Photography: Florida.

changes its stripes; changes in most astronomical objects are barely perceptible over a human lifetime: Space Telescope Science Institute, "Hubble Astronomers Unveil 'Crab Nebula - The Movie,'" HubbleSite.

perpetually in rebellious, unnatural movement, evades containment while screaming for attention: Kate Durbin, "A Teenage Girl Speaks As a Melodramatic, Hysterical Demon.

knowledge of the hidden: George Crabb, "Occult," English Synonyms Explained, in Alphabetical Order, Copious Illustrations and Examples Drawn from the Best Writers.

fashion by its very nature is a celebration of the body's fall from glory: Kate Durbin, "A Teenage Girl Speaks As a Melodramatic, Hysterical Demon."

About the Author

T.A. Noonan is the author of two full-length collections, *The Bone Folders* (Sundress Publications) and *Petticoat Government* (Gold Wake Press), as well as the chapbooks *Darjeeling* (Ahadada Books) and *Balm* (Flaming Gible Press). Her work has appeared in *Ninth Letter*, *Verse Daily*, *RHINO*, *specs*, *Phoebe*, *Harpur Palate*, and many others. She is the Associate Editor of Sundress Publications and oversees the Flaming Gible Press imprint. Currently, she lives on Florida's Treasure Coast with her husband.

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