Cover Art and interior collages by Jennifer Pilch

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This is a digital edition. please tread lightly (do not print).

http://www.dusie.org/
gina ABELKOP

W-O-R-K N-O

for Charli XCX and L’wren Scott

It’s the cold dead
office waiting room Charli
It’s my feet in wet socks
beneath the desk
and my upbraided overseer
one cube
over It’s this

privileged hardship
A country of boredom
A week at a time
On weekends
I’m supposed to pull
weeds I almost hate
everyone here and the whole world
When I leave I come down
come down come down
from it Push away push away
from it Hold my life
hard and suffocating
to my chest on weekends
and evenings  Music helps
it does Charli
It’s why I write this poem
to you and for you
I’m meant to answer phonecalls
Charli but they come only twice
daily mostly
solicitors
and it is hard
It is hard Charli not to be cruel
This work makes me mean and cruel
Even knowing someone
at the other end
is being made cruel and mean too
by the same strangling
unnatural wires I need a little
hope Charli I need a little
pop and that’s where you come
in with your pink black
gold sonic life raft

L’wren is dead L’wren is dead
The news makes me feel something
Some dishonorable grief I have
no right to  L’wren I hope if you are not
unexisting you are soft and happy
in the afterlife
L’wren had or
was thought to have had
the dream
job and it wasn’t enough Charli
So what will ever be enough
for me What will I do here
Where will I go to everyday
to make only a little bit
of money to buy myself books
dresses and classes to get myself
away only to come back because
I want more books dresses
and classes Now I’m tired
Charli and it’s only your nuclear
season that’s keeping me
awake alive and wanting
I KNOW I COULD HIT A WOMAN

Open-palmed.
Claws out.
Big vintage ring on my finger
to leave my skin green.
To cause a flinch is good.
Crying, better.
Thumb curled outside the fist
so it does not break.
Split her skin,
mismatch her cheeks.
Knock her to the ground and kick
until a rib breaks.

Throw a sucker punch and keep walking.
TWEETING @JAMESFRANCO TV WHILE WATCHING SPRING BREAKERS
All italics are tweets from @myhyacinthgirl dated 12/20/13

@JamesFrancoTV you sure ain’t from this planet. I’m convinced.
You’re from a whole planet of James Francos.
Benevolent James Francos, sadistic James Francos,
James Francos who chew with their mouths open,
who sit ladylike, who slouch, legs splayed.
James Francos who know how to bake,
who win spelling bees, who get arrested
for public indecency and worse and worse.
Suburban Eden James Francos, James Francos
populating farms, milking whatever passes
for a cow on the planet of James Francos

I hope that was your real hair, @JamesFrancoTV
I hope those were your real teeth,
your real pajamas
your real skin and tattoos, skin and tattoos.
You must own a whole wall of machine guns,
James Franco, or how could you sleep soundly?
One time I held an elephant gun, one time
my brother took me to a shooting gallery
with two handguns and, James Franco,
I am a really good shot. You can trust me
with your guns, with your teeth,
with all that terrifying hair.

I think every woman who swoons over @JamesFrancoTV should watch this movie. #creepyfacestroking
If they can look at you, James Franco, with your hair
in those white boy cornrows, your mouth full of gold,
your eyes behind sunglasses behind sunglasses behind
sunglasses, your body covered in another body,
skin you peeled from strangers, flanked by blonde
girls in pink bikinis, pink ski masks, pink lips and still
desire that breath at their neck then that,
my dear James Franco, that is true love.

I feel like there’s not nearly enough James Franco fellating objects in this film. That would take it into the realm of true high art
Because these days a blowjob is only risky enough
when there’s a projectile waiting at the end to blow
the back of your head clean off, not in that pseudo-sexy
“your cock/load is so big” kind of way but in the way
you could die die die die die not slow but sudden,
no little death and I am tired of poets writing about
little death, James Franco. Never do that to me.
Write about Frank forever, write about Obama,
whatever actor you saw across a room, on a balcony,
face-down in a pool pretending to be for real dead,
but I don’t want to hear about the rest of it
unless you’re cumming and going at the same time
let’s be clear – Franco was fellating the guns

So, do the two blondie girls get James Franco’s vagina bed? Do they burn his bed? I HAVE SO MANY QUESTIONS
Do you sleep outside with no mosquito netting when it’s summertime, look to home? Will you one day return to the planet of the James Francos? Be replaced by a new James Franco? Will the next generation deserve a James Franco in ways mine does not? Do you paint and light the paintings on fire, play the dulcimer then light the dulcimer on fire, cover your body in mud and condiments, forget your own name? Don’t listen to the naysayers, James Franco – they are the ones who bathe daily, who haven’t clapped their hands in a decade. They look into binoculars backwards. They shuffle their feet in heels, complain of the sidewalk’s cracks.
THINKING FOR YOURSELF IS A LOST ART AND GOOD RIDDANCE

I will tell you what color nail polish to wear, which moisturizer is best beneath your eyes and you will learn to paint your own French tips.

Remember the important things: pitch your center of gravity forward in heels, do not to skip leg day. Clench your jaw until color bursts behind your eyes, until you feel heat below your ear like a bleed.

Go on – put that cock in your mouth. Then at least there will be one smart thing in your pretty little head.
And there it was
you with the electric at your hip bone; sorry.

At the table a sharp black gush
of shimmer,
or adult body so big so revolting
you felt the most then. weep at windows
where we feel we want to be. only a window
is a window not a thing to be wept near.
a want as big as meadow.
a girl and an electric wand
reminding of days of body and self-in
self-of, surfaced
like a waxy sheen over the days.
sweet black damn of holy water
and its teeth.

we gnaw so full at summer night we grow among it
soft core white thigh a reminder.
hair so course we will it
and it comes. hair like drills
into the memory of man,

two girls at the table

two girls.
Luisa & Ariadne

in possession it changes
surfaces as moons do,
body out / regulated by tide
of man.

a growth of pistil
as if rearing
in safety of the night.
in possession it widens
milking as a thing does when sutured,
a giving, spooling, ornamental breasts
a prayer.

we wash this thing
we call home
in hope of capture.
we will belittle it until daybreak,
good girl, bread of death.

the last of the white light
long left with the rope,
mauve curtains
expose her white teeth to the headboard
Her Medical Archive

slick hand, slick hands
a souvenir

If only it could all be
European, we could take
pictures and no one would mind

A child would think it a red bottle
It doesn’t show the number of strokes
(wine-dark
boards-broken)

I touch my throat to feel for a pulse certain
that my lips are white

It shouldn’t seem so
aquatic

separated tissue, glass slide
(the agent lurking like rust)

If it were more aquatic, she could drift

If only we weren’t expecting all data
to be triangulated

Swampy. that’s the word
I’m looking for

Glutinous, better

A child would think berries before
we turned his head away and smeared
his palms with honey
up to his wrists
from Ruination

sugar any sugar, anger every anger,
lover sermon lover, center no distractor
--Gertrude Stein

and the wine, and the beasts, and the butcher's raw stock, and the bones on the floor, gnawed to artifacts.

The Y of my body, the brace of bones beneath belly, want only want, a fractured skeleton. And your bed, and your belts,

and the view from your window, your shelf of bitters, your shoulder a warship, two black beasts guarding the door.

One man said make yourself scarce. Hunger feeds hunger, and the scraps aren't yours.
The Moon (XVIII)

A single cactus in an ice storm
still carries a desert.

You understand the power of invention.

You understand how to close your hands
& hold the worlds they try to fracture.

Where today cracks, both light
& many mouthed animals.

The difference between monsters & ideas
is sometimes clear
& other times none.
The Magician (I)

Mud resettles into water & dirt.

A girl, staring into a field, sees the grass.

A field, staring into a girl, sees itself.

These are both properties of power.

When you ask about the future, the universe speaks in origins.

Look at your hands. From them, whole systems of dreaming emerge.
Introduction to Conversational French

The fortune teller asks if the tattoo
of the vagina on your forearm is mine.

You answer, “this is not the last poem
I’ll write.” I ask for six words
written in black, directions intrusive as in-laws.

I get upset sometimes--
choke confessions from fishnets,
from mulberry trees,

demand laughter
from alibis.

All good people,
in good time,

look for clues on flesh.
In tongue.

Swallow enough crimson syllables
and the needle will point
to pencil. Something erasable,

mutable as this forest of eloquent endings
where everything is French.

Let me predict the future:

\textit{vous passez comme le rouge à lèvres d'hier.}
Can you believe that the sun has eyes? In the mirror and I am ready, I am reading my own face & hair, I see my eyes like first time I said, that I am ready, hips thighs etc. Knee in a brace and child knee. Facetime me. In the mirror stones & blue fire, purple fibers @ my neck, rain jamming the windows of the officespace, I am reading my own fist, run slap on pavement like dust-n-hail the words are hurried & we’re here just listening to the good girl mixtape. In December the rain pushes all the glyphosate and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons down into the ground and Quailwood takes you all the way to Saddleback. Something’s pinker than the lens would allow, no I don’t think it’s supposed to be that pink, no it shouldn’t be that pink, that pink is an alarm, there’s something infected in the glass, there’s a weight getting attached to that pink in the glass, it’s not just about waiting for the rain but different, a valley is a ‘depressed angle,’ it should not be pink there, it should not look like pink right there, it should just not be it should be stripped clean

but this ink is full of dread. Flyaway. The new job, the new laptop, the torqued sacroiliac joint, the heat. Can’t have cake. Can’t have soda. Can’t have beer. Can’t have coffee. Can’t look available. Can’t click open. Can’t hear the other one. Throw things to the flood. Everybody’s hoarding everything all the time.

We welcome your questions and concerns and would like you to feel free to call during office hours to discuss them. You have to feel the federalism in your hands. No camera, just a heart beating fresh. You’re allowed to write on wintry streets as long as you store Bakersfield in a single cell in the lung. You have to pray to the high priestess. You have to stop staying still. You have to see it in the corner of the paper room. You have to chart
the phases and light a crystal. I’m just writing the words anybody could write; there’s nothing special or important here. This TV is full of new colors; South Street is fully mirrored now so they’re taking pictures outside the apartment; the affect is in the sliver.

I was popular, and I was lovely, and I played beautifully, and looked beautiful. But when I played in the evening I was sore in les yeux. I felt nailed thru the eye all the way to the back of the wall. She thought in whole sentences as the apartment filled with the river. Measured the round of the sink, the cut of the window, the hover inside that old wall. Wanted to leave the flat city, wanted back inside the valley between the new walls of resin that emit the standard levels of formaldehyde because of triple “the”s in prior sentence. Always adding and subtracting

as a contractual method. A lung behind the ribcage, the want both bigger than body & completely contained w/in it. So the want is actually a pillar, built of both natural and synthetic materials, pushing forward from the spine to the breastbone. Backbends are good for the fear of death the yoga teacher says. Breathe into the lung behind your ribcage, put your hands on the pillar and drag the spine down to the floor, and see—the pillar won’t move. So the room won’t fall

through this square of air. But it’s trying to weld paper to skin. Just here in the officespace with glossy ladies and something bad on your shirt. They say put that feeling inside that tube, there. Blood in the needle and safe as houses. Then, run across the carpet. These are all the things that add up to formula. The institution makes a promise; then, you sign a contract; then, the institution makes another promise which is the promise of the institution. But then there’s a crack in the pillar, no the other pillar, the one holding up the parking garage next door where there is no validation. The first pillar still won’t move even when the rain rises in the street. The officespace is starting to crumble; go to 36th Street for coffee. All the birds are leaving right now. Wait, wrong season. The birds are
coming back, like every dumb spring. He put away death inside his thigh, Simone says. Don’t save the love for the thing

—get out from underneath those pillars where the light’s too bright. On 4th Street the studio’s hot like a muscle and the pillar props up the spine with a dark piece of plastic beneath the kidney. The body is particular, in all its animate parts, and there’s this red cord between the two bodies, but it all comes down to the thing, sorry. About those teeth

and all the bad lipstick. ‘I gambled with love, and in its stead I found status anxiety,’ Kevin says. Here in our home, one person maintains the charts and the other person holds the slab of wood up above the pillars. The charts are made out of moveable pieces of paper but the pillars are permanent at their coordinates in space. The charts are numbered according to the civil calendar but the pillars are actually more lunar. There’s a crystal in the lung. Because moon always wins. Burn the charts

because Los Angeles is a Sagittarius and Philadelphia is a Scorpio. The pillar gets cut. ‘It was what I wanted now,’ Constantina says. I don’t know what comes next: blood or salt, the beating house or the center. A contract extracts value by capturing the future. So we’re waiting for the contract

filled with fake museums for all your favorite memories. My necklace is a rope I tie it and untie, Lorde sings. There is no temperature regulation here, the whole building just sort of drifts in shitty rhythm, no picking up on the cues of any of the bodies in the building, bodies that drift up and down the stairwells, ymight as well disappear, the stairs straining in the dark, boxes and boxes lifting and settling into our lower bodies, deep into 37th Street, somewhere above our faces scent trail of fake fur laced with rose wood and that whole ‘ruined scene.’ A building shutting down like the lower parts of a body
each cloud denser than the last. So go not on your nerve but on your last disaster. Breathe cultivated air, eat beautifully cured olives, tell too much to the damp house next door, mist her ferns. Then guy on Walnut Street leans in real close and says ‘I’d fuck the shit out of you.’ Miss several beats as if this day weren’t already long enough, shutter it down, cook it down and eat it because whatever cruelty. Flickering on the plastic

outlines the point of a limb or finger. Flickering is a light going on & off like luxury. Light is motion but here the plastic is totally in color. And infected, too, and heavy, but those are other words for a different room. For now just flickering as in an opening & before a closing, a flickering is an effort, an effort is kind, and kindness is a link. A loop—no, that’s broken. A motion in light that points to something outside of itself as two figures have come apart now. A kind of anaphora.

Make a depression & you have a vessel. A vessel is an image, an image is multiple, the image gets sorted, gets sore, it feigns order, the vessel tips, it sorts things out, but not all things or all holes. This is a work of critique and a work of response & can’t hold it so here’s a vessel. To contain add weight and lift. Spill it all over the floors a kind of varnished remain. The sonnet is a stupid form Bernadette says; that’s not how anyone really thinks. Timing is a semaphore.
The satchel empty by the time the fall falls around

The satchel empty by the time the fall falls around: That was the point of it all to have the empty. Once there was a snowfall and that had been an adventure but the teachers wouldn’t let us go outside to feel it. I had wanted very badly to feel it. By the time our mother showed up to get us my sister and I there was hardly anything left a little snowbird—or so—it seemed stuffed into a crook of a tree. The letters they tried to teach me I could only learn if they were pretty. There had been some letters that were pretty. The G was glittery grape easily traced. I had tried to learn and be good but the teachers did not like me and the boys had wanted to harm me and so that is why I said that the cake was baked before the ingredients were even mixed so I could escape recess. It has been so long now since I was punished for having drawn the poodle dog before anyone even told me. The world is waving and fluctuates. There was a cost I am now learning. There had been a consequence and then there wasn’t. There was more to bear. My daughter—I have grown I realize so old—presses her face to the glass. When I’m that close she says it’s purple outside.
the doll embodies extremes
mouth in awe, a contest of leggery
easily excitable she spaces like any woman
a vulva can be simulated by any crevice
even tears
gendered to be a not erotic but worth branding
folds of dollar bills a raining
she sips uncanny: crawls around collared
displays a good disposition
Nik says, he loves that fat ass
& it’s true: if the body is a sentence
it balances between disgust: don’t want none
and separation: look at her…
dismantled the gaze retorts when a licking
hits millions, a girl can laugh if she’s not a real girl
if she’s not a real girl, and there are no real
girls in this vision of perfection
the best parts tell us simply of violence
we spend a lot of time viewing art that doesn’t arouse us
how many times have we looked at her butt, Becky?
it’s so round, it’s so out there, what I most enjoy about
this man’s portrayal is the subtle pitting of women against women
based on race and body type…
this is what Walter Benjamin refers to when he tells us
alienation reaches such a degree that we can experience it as aesthetic pleasure
what hollows a woman, another he tells us art is where we enjoy
our symptoms: racing we continue the dialogue but change
narrators: tell me Becky’s friend, in the silence you now hold
how does it feel to be called a skinny bitch? Is this the way
we nail down progress. I’ve been reading nothing but pornography
to clear the way for backward context: the butt is not a sexual organ
under the mantle of power we still trill to titillate to be seen
and we think we have a way of looking but all these treasures
are already owned: little girls, listen closely
there are no bedtime stories about the rapeable body
they all are
To transitions, I say, *Namaste, Bitches*

I would rather sing you to sleep for the rest of your life than admit how many houseplants I have let wither under my watch. Even now dust settles on the rug, only to be picked up again when the a/c switches on. Do you know the teen hours I spent un-contented with my face, my frame? How it felt to never be picked from a crowd at a mall, brushed with powder, called lovely. Then one day you get a brain. Or you have a brain, and one day someone points to it, says *look at this little terrarium.* The body is a process is a product is what I clothe today in cotton for coolness. Reader, where the fuck are you? Here I stand dressed, not quite to the nines, but dressed, anyway. After collecting two years in a home I love, it is time to thin the herd of my attachments and go West in a romantic gesture for bigness. Possibility. Boo-hoo I say to you and to myself, a vessel, small but seaworthy. I run farther and faster than I imagined possible and start to think it means something. My husband cut free the paddles from an abandoned Cuban-refugee boat. Two sets, each handmade by different hands. The paddles, longer and heavier than you are imagining, stand in corners in my house, one set near the front door and the other at the back. As if to say, we are going somewhere. As if no one will die in the shelter of my love.
I tilt my head forward to get lost in the complex forest of my hair. Love is saying, how much do you think my head weighs and receiving an earnest guess. My husband vowed so many things that only matter if we are in the same place. Without him, I coat chicken thighs in flour, buttermilk. No matter your worry, my advice is the same: move from your chest. Without my husband, my sister and I lie on the couch and read aloud about sharks and epidemics. We push our clothes together in a massive closet. One part of me is gone from here and one cannot imagine leaving. Another part searches my husband’s drawers to find unsent thank you notes, shards of glass, and a self portrait as pretty young thing. I remember all the ways he has looked. Love is knowing all of someone’s clothes. Tell me anything and I can make you a timeline for it. If you say Katherine the great white shark, you are always calling her Katherine the Great.
i can resist my own body's debilitating attraction to your dying flesh

bleached tattoos, beached on the wreckage of your rolled sleeves, my first love was a carpenter, also my first husband, there are lathed rivulets and scrimshaw vacancies in my bones as well

if you hear the echoes back from the bluelight and shadow pierced shavings of love muscles, dusted and seared, my drippings also gifts from ex-junkies and angels

i can't always control the way i burn, but if the fumes are noxious, i'm reassured you'll never learn

if we wind ourselves, tight like a bowtie, wound, loose later, lose, lost, router the edges of our own misguided histories

carve out a candle, unlit, in the dark

if i am tentative, tender, flammable, bare: knotted cotton on the floor of the cellar again

then

then then

then
LAPSARIAN

Spring, the first nectarines of the season
have come but the purple callas lilies

I tucked for winter in the sod have not
survived, eaten from below by moles. I

try not to take it as a sign: of cradle
becoming grave, gravid earth gone

suddenly birthless, barren after
deflowering, devouring. Lapsarian:

I’ve seen what lies beyond these garden gates.
is an oral non-steroidal aromatase inhibitor inhibiting estrogen.

Femara is used by male bodybuilders to achieve peak muscular tone and by post-menopausal women to treat breast cancer. In pre-menopausal women, suppression of estrogen tricks the adrenals into pumping out more to goad the ovaries, taunting, plumping, primping. No coincidence that the gland for fight or flight is the site of potential motherhood. If you tell me I can’t, I'll do it or die trying. I swallow my pills. My follicles lay one enormous egg.

Bok Bok Bok means white in Cantonese, the color of mourning. Morning is the best time to test your pee and practice the piano. Maybe Bach, that brutal arithmancy: \(37 + 39 = \) Infertility.
it was as
it was that
labored night
thunderheads
sumac red
bursting black
dividing
sky last night
she laid her
burning head
in the dip
between my
hip and rib
somnolent
returning
All chief wants is to go swimming,
drive around town.

She's given up eating:
too time consuming.

Don't some of us still have a job to do?

Just take off your glasses,
get back in the water.
She has a best friend
she avoids
who drugs herself
like a flower.

Even with her shoes off
her feet sound like heels—
that kind of beautiful.

Still, when she dies,
she is the most beautiful
she has ever been.

& chief is sorry to see her go.
Someone promotes chief
on her behalf
but she declines.

She wants to carry a gun,
stay with her men,
one of whom comes when he is called
until he doesn’t.

He is bleeding under his shirt.

*My hands*, he says
*are not coming back.*
That fan like sound coming from the sky...
childhood has no place here

-anonymous Palestinian girl

Dear Palestine,

Say that 90%
of the body is
ocean drowning

inside your
nativity. It too
wants to swim

wants to close
the screaming
anemone gap
in the sky

just as the trees
inside your lungs
want to climb out

as synonym, as
fatherless
as stalactite

Most mornings
begin like this,
rubbing the red
anthills from your
eyes

listening for funnel
clouds to develop into
helicopters propelling
the world away from
your elbow,

precision making
and unmaking.
Say the stars are ungodly,

say the twinkling
is dynamite and
tonight is a short
fuse.

Say it to the
minutemen who you
couldn’t tell apart,
who couldn’t tell you
apart from the neatly
parted lawn

wet and dark until
opened
like seeds.
Today the table has set itself. In Romani, I love you is translated as I eat your heart, as embroidered swan, neck unfurled as napkin just for me and even though I am only one third of this park bench, my love is this park; as caravan, as flute-tree, as unleashed as Ambrosia.

Make love meaning stay where there are songs meaning stand beside yourself in constant combustion rhythm & blues & floret yourself because to love doesn’t have to make sense like wet grass me.

Pyre me. As morning takes flight, catapult your eyes into me and victory.
I WOULD KISS YOU BUT THERE’S MEAT IN YOUR TEETH

and much around me has slackened

with due sickness

my humps    my lumps

my lovely lady polyps

this internal shift

from years of skimping    on the means

of amassing    amass

    a    mass

***

Now I can’t pretend

it’s not a case of the mean reds

the fiercest fuschias

that makes me want to smash this glass

through a window

break it apart
I have a body it is oddly shaped
two melons and four sticks of licorice
if you’re sweet on licorice
    better check your adrenals

and this too will soon spoil

a symptom then
    a systematic flowering

If there’s a heartbeat in my belly
it’s only my lunch breathing
Shooter

make yourself homely
not the word itself
how you say the word
ah you’re such a good

whatever
I predict we’ll be anesthetized
aggravated into submission
she’s sick that’s very
nice if she feels like it

not consciously
in the first place racial outpourings now
at hand sullen does
she say that about me but
they also have another position
I hope we don’t see you
next week yesterday

escape vague drape
I mean well I mean that’s fine
the under take
so you’re here
heeeey, good

this is American feel
hurricane participle
cut fury crest detonate
in a jiffy and then happily

that’s just one person
it smells it just smells like
snide brick hung on the wall
vehement interpretation

we never had that implicit collection
godforsaken
language assembled
it’s so not worth it for what I make
it got ended awe clap

so you did what you were supposed
to  adore ogle persecute
great grasp past tense
secrete ember shoot

she’s often always heard best
over duress pester
split corpus seams heartless
run it’s the beginning
and you are believed to have been a daughter

a daughter to whom the father is wanting as a result of the son and of the son he is the father and of the father the woman is not to be born but born the woman is all and so patron of the father and of the son that is to say patron of lovers although one does not become patron of lovers without fire untrue one does not become patron of anything without fire and so ice is to the quelling as the father is to the daughter and she born is not cold but quelling she loving the patron is not ice but cold and he the patron not he the father until he the father is the he the heavenly father to which she the daughter to whom the father is wanting prays though who will she pray to now she is patron and though there is love to be forgotten it is not of the father but rather by the father and in the ice there is that which you will love again you the daughter and you the patron to whom the prayer is not cold but ice to you whom ice is fire but undying
My pride painted gold & arted:
clavicle horror, breast growth, long
wild toes. When you crown me
with a great pomegranate describe
the human eye & show its indirect centre —
I want you to soften in this heat.
The maximum value of this love
as shown in this figure
is also named love & is love.
from “Middle Mansion”

The whole day had tasted like rotten make-up, a melting, bus-riding feeling.

But in between was a suited man in the forest and collecting a silky flush of titted animals.

I came into the space and understood. There were many private shelves on which I unloaded that shit and upon which I arranged the animals: absolutely grey with rot, little sloping smiles.
I am re-imagining us now in an insect rain, come in to a farmhouse, an apocalyptic escape hatch, into some money from when

This is the story.

It is disgusting.

It is underbirds gnawing on a skin cloak, pulling and tearing with the viciousness of a big daddy. It is violet.
A mouse chews through a wire.
The mirrored tiles, narcotizing,
and it cannot cannot cannot be missed
what.
In other words, the room was.
The room was a space for cartoons and sick bugs.
A mouse chews and chews into a fat dead man.
The kids lie on the mirrored tiles in their brushed hair.
A phone is ringing, even though the wires are chewed. Ring ring.
Existential Glitter-Vomit II

I do not bubble / rarely want to smile.
I dress as projection,
then dress for protection.

Upward mobility?
So bent over from this *leaning in*.
And my knees! Worn to the floor.
Body like trees that look the same
until you notice their bend.

Upward mobility? Ha!
Where do you grocery shop?
Remember the days—
GET OFF AOL SOMEONE MIGHT CALL.

There is so much expanse because sky.
When clarity is the goal
I feel silvery gray.
like the concept of hair vs. age.

Time did this to me.
Time can take it away.
I am ready to throw
my body in front of a truck.
Existential Glitter-Vomit

I am a revolutionary project.
Put on a beauty patch and
change my mind.

Five minute hair,
five minute identity.

Do you like my old soul?
I am not smiling for your
pink pharmaceuticals.

But I’m so fresh—

Eating toothpaste,
chugging mouthwash.

Every day feel like
a weapon of mass destruction
marketed for the 11 o’clock news.

I am approaching an age
where getting it together
is a furniture display.
[ a little bit gone ]

But when I close the door
A physical space meaning want
Getting used to ‘it,’ whatever
description means
Yesterday:
A stone sea of waves, and then light fell to the left
of the tiller and I sneezed    Today:
here or there, then or now
The sea-night firmament, dishes of mended broken stars
And told you ‘it’ was very sad, indeed hopeless
without a beginning or an end

I couldn’t make my bombsight / wanted to cover myself in pure wax

[ Youngsters have old eyes ]
[ The philosopher’s speech was dull and quite jejune ]

I said, ‘don’t write it down’    on your wife’s sleeve
[ a new genre of honest phrases ]

don’t drink the water, don’t say who you are, here, near the door of the anchorage
not escaping the personal
the involved perception couldn’t be bothered to signal ahead
excise nothing
three emotions walk out onto a sand bar, cross each other, equatorially
the b-side of history
the involved perception couldn’t be bothered to signal ahead
excise nothing
remain in control
three emotions walk out onto a sand bar, cross each other, equatorially
the b-side of history
the involved perception couldn’t be bothered to signal ahead
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remain in control
three emotions walk out onto a sand bar, cross each other, equatorially
the b-side of history
the involved perception couldn’t be bothered to signal ahead
excise nothing
remain in control
cut out the bend of the wound
remaining in control
three emotions walk out onto a sand bar, cross each other, equatorially
the b-side of history
the involved perception couldn’t be bothered to signal ahead
excise nothing
remain in control
cut out the bend of the wound
remaining in control
three emotions walk out onto a sand bar, cross each other, equatorially
the b-side of history
the involved perception couldn’t be bothered to signal ahead
excise nothing
remain in control
cut out the bend of the wound
glue meaning to bones
personal syntax is a grammar from illness
to measure scars of the body against injuries of being
the entropy of the self, no, not entropy, but occasional malfeasance
cerise is a shadow along two planes of the ribs
or, three novels later, still writing about schism

                    intersects

                    schism

“soul,” which lies in a pelican’s beak
adjustable,
available for later

month of birdsong, weather, new anvils
bled rose petals, incantation, nightmares of hallways
a blue sky is soon to be tone

believe me, the underscore of beauty is a split-open beauty
[ fracture ]
[ beauty ]

I love a little kelp fly in the fog this morning
lily DUFFY

from STRUNG MIMED NIGHT

Three lines skittish looking down have
a lot to try for when I
say so. Let them wholly fritter, bend
in the hole bend of nausea I can’t
sputter

watch my sister sleep watch a bug crawl in her mouth sit long enough to watch it
die

Your dress at this height is a monetary exchange I won’t cry for it won’t stand
purpled in its rudimentary light

All this to be
spat on

All this
grab a spade
Ask about me. Little adult-faced girl facing backward not crying, not sorry, not
impeding traffic naked
from the water-tower facing forward, fully understanding the head to be gotten
off in permutation what is

permutation

Thought about tits. Here
they are, neat. Could
remove, cast in
resin, cut tiny slits for
marbles,

won’t.

Not even little. Very actually lofted. Could certainly marry into a
literate ruin.
I love my own hand better before it strikes and is not what I am here for.

More than one way
to phase out a grammar.
Today I beat its ankles

This month was
the extra one—saw his protrusion vomiting into
the snow, started
talking to it

This was all my
own snow, completely pre-furnished. How could he

Now to excavate the grandfather this won't take all freaking day
What with the apartment

My sponsor hiding under a chromed-out woodpile shirks the bucket, its torrential fraternity

Grandfather’s premature foot on the brake

Seen exiting the club

Stiletto in the mouth

A cod-like quality about the face

A quality that can be trusted as it will not call my phone

Restricted in its vena cava like my sponsor, fattening beneath the woodpile. Later we will say so

And supervise my daughter’s eyebrow-plucking

Knowing her by the neck
I in my thousand bodies dining on churches

My neighbor prawn-faced in her

assless girdle

Over there combing the wood
Won’t be needing any of that brill cream will we

That murmur
That pivot
That treefall
That fawn
That plank

Won’t be needing any of

That limb
That rudder
That hook
That hassle
That pasture
That tint

Won’t be needing

That birch
That fawn
That fixture
That ditch
That coin
That mouth
That slit

Will we
Will we
There were legitimate questions. For one, how my lame dog climbed the stairs in such heat.

For two, where was he going? I don’t have stairs. The sisters slept all day in their sweat-soaked bed and I haven’t much to say about it. Better check on that kettle.

None of this dull malice turned-out like witch knees. Whole day not listening gets the brag, the thumbprinted throat. That kettle
I AM NOT A CHRISTIAN AND SO I WISH THEM HARM

How often was she told as a girl that cats were in fact good swimmers.

Who could blame her disbelief.

And so it came as something of a shock to watch a tabby emerge from the East River glistening with the sick of their men.

The joke became that each time a woman couldn’t articulate the truth of their calamities, another man died.

The next joke became did they take turns cutting out the other’s tongues.

The third joke is the old joke of women’s great silence, United Silence of Americas.

Cat got your tongue.

Another man tumbles down a cliff with the storied heft of buffalo.

Gray bubbles erupt from the disease of falling down.

This is not the story one wishes to tell.

This is more like handing the hemline of a gown to a puma.

One would like to beg for mercy now but one can’t.

In a world without men there is no need for mercy.

Even the boys grow up to be men so still, they die.

Such great numbers disappear that one hardly believes in death anymore.

As a girl a man rolled up her shirt after crushing her to the floor with his body.

Somewhere another man collapses to his knees, seizes, and he falls back as his pants darken with his terrible release.

Then the man lifts her from the tiles and throws her on the pee-soaked mattress.

The joke is that women won the war on women.
They have always been such fine swimmers, seals piercing the arctic with the quiet grace of acceptance.

Then the man removes her pants and tells her to watch the cable-less television.

It radiates a blue light.

Blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue Blue blue bluuuuuue Blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue Blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue blue Blue
Blue.

Someone requests Bach as he bleeds out.

There are routines and then there are rituals.

The beauty of infection is its unending will for change, but the paradox of its endless appetite is how it negates change to regulate the world to a system of hunger.

The next day at school, the girl paints a canvas so thick with blue, the paper tears under the weight of its material.

It is not the same blue but darker made darker.

But blue is not a color now, it is only belief frozen into the shock of change, and so it makes no difference.

The girl develops a paralyzing fear of dark blue storm clouds.

She misses her bus.

The paint doesn’t dry for a week.

Years later she will write with the deep worry it was only the color she saw.

No man.

No men.

How long does this go on.

Forever.

Not forever, she replies.
MY MAIDEN NAME IS

I fell out of my mother slick as a gosling. My mother fed me her last name, I chewed its nipple off as she pet my soft pretty skull.

Afoot. Something is. How many. History tells me a soul is nothing without a name. We slaughter and enslave the nameless because history slept through its amnesty. I own a parrot, I own several parrots, they die on their perch. We because I. Slip me the ribbon with a surname and I’ll open my legs. What happens to a body when it thinks it must be renamed. Which node and which nerve and which joint apologizes to the work of material. It is interesting,

the mother on the other side of creation decorates her girl and softens her hair and lightens her face and dabs her brow and places rocks over a wife-gown in the woods so it won’t drift away, just mildew and darken and darken and mildew. And the mother

and the mother and the father remove her name from herself. Her kitten falls asleep in a deathnook, the body tangled around the timing belts no longer a kitten. The mother-blouse pushes up. Ass up in an oldsmobile. Only facts can express a sense, a class of names cannot. I own nothing but the leather seat fused to my summer thigh and I’ve owned nothing since. My maiden name is god teen. It is natural to confuse the arguments of functions with the indices of names. I named a cat kitten and she ran away. A man made me in the night, my eyelids blinked ash and the moon wasn’t even full.
WAR PAINT

Driven through the rubble I become the automatic hum of a fly. What is the hum of a fly. Translator: I signed away what portion of me be whored, my ass soft and firm soft and firm beneath my pelvis. Driven through the empty city which part of me tenors itself to ramshackle: Now I am without a body or, Now I am without sight to see. Sometimes it is like no thing at all.

I wanted to be beckoned into the scene—any scene. Now I can’t understand. Now I won’t understand. It is just that. When I define rhetoric as an argument to the orphans I insist there must be an argument, there has always been an argument as long as there has been rupture.

Two images felled so that the ground must chatter, argue, freeze.

Be the image forming them together again.

Someone is driving me

to a place they have simply defined as Place. I wonder how the poets are doing now that I have become the creator of man. I look for Richard Siken under a rock but what I’m actually searching for is horse mane to weave together his bones, the smoke of burnt porkchops. I do this for each poet, bind him to the inventory of his modes until a hand reaches out and tells me Quit It, I’m Sleeping. I had a King once and an altar for my King. We slept by a river / he fingered me to sleep.

His cock the onset of a mission to fuck the plague away but insofar as memory is the briny royalty of being alive only his cock was King, the rest spilled out.

I lay his bones in a sack. I labeled the sack, Sac.

Should I have buried my dead, ruptured the ground to demand new rhetoric—no I should not have. My driver shouts over the engine that so long as I can squeeze my cunt I am surviving this. There is nothing right about a scene once it has been deemed a scene.

It is like the word Icon whose root is image and which can never stand again to simply be an image. Like my love for men
who never did harm me, they are the scene of disaster, the equine slope of their bodies bent over, the gray balls which serve no secrets, no guesses. I grow seeds in me too, the rumble of the engine scatters away my seeds like so many flies in a trashcan disturbed. I am squeezing my cunt and twisting the hem of my dress into a weapon. With used tampons we dress our faces in warpaint but there is no war to fight, there is only the small argument behind our teeth which we discern to be the peace in owning our bodies, there is simply the scene and its simpering lapse into film.

You see history has always owned our bodies. I don’t want to own my body you see. My stubborn hold on the women who can no longer replace iconography with power. It is a truth universally acknowledged that we are only the sum of our traumas if we be in want of our traumas.

I call my traumas by their Christian names to remove exaggeration from the scene. Specificity balms people to either side of a story. Ben Mike Ryan Ben Mike Ryan Ben Mike Ryan Ben Mike Ryan Ben Mike Ryan.

You see I have recorded the fall as a document to teach us what exactly. Women will always need to be taught a lesson, the driver shouts.

I am building the men in this truck of assumption. I say their names. I squeeze. I breathe their names into the cunt clay, let the brine spill.
Readjust

The notdemon had hoped
to build up the intended cross-fire.
I told you

Uncharted water, mountains or thrown
deeplly in. I have desire
even at the tail of extreme possibility. If only

it means existence if only the dilemma is how we must confront personhood and at the same time live with other people.

If we look at
the agendas that are Magellan-hopefuls. Those motherfuckers.

On a visit to Bas Landsdorp: Explain why this will be a 1-way flight. Why are you so hostile, just
deliver the letters.
After spending time in a weaker gravitational field it will be impossible to readjust, says Landsorp.
What do you know. Successful

applicants will be trained in the energy of recycled and extracted being-for-death. Successful applicants will read their own trees. But is this realistic,
to be supposed that individuals could live without neighborly phenomena.

Reads just like heaven. To be supposed this capacity by which we reconstruct past experience. To be supposed I told you continues to float in the air.

Ob wait you've seen this passage this is the I'm right passage
I told you

continues to float in the air without change in its present state.

To apply one must stream to be supposed the intimate cavalry.
Every 2 years I keep waiting.

One must keep waiting she says in order that you may join the floating in air.
Forever Kills

What is the name of this magical procedure

I Love You Too

Yallah

All sides

I'm breaking up with you what in the world

Habibi

did you forget about me she grieves
In order that you may join the floating in air x 1000
chewed by a child x 1000
cyanide seeds
or just 8 seeds
chewed by an adult
the waste x produces
when a closed-door briefing in a heightened alert. After the far exterior marking on the envelope in this case was not outwardly suspicious.

The letter was found in a routine inspection of the forest.
The letter intended for the middle of. Castor beans are at times more toxic than cyanide x 1000
Hey,
just 8 seeds chewed can be liminal.
alert the child of the closed-door
chewed by a child, or just 8
seeds painted
everybody else does
This changes everything
one for all

pressed into service
liking people deeply
and wanting to disrupt
the day with kindness

indict the system and fly
or flock of an evening
exactly like yes-people
who make categories

to spatialize these unregulated
end times of lifted restrictions
king crowns crushed
dismissive extracts of tears

infused into other beverages
with the smell of mint
or vanilla for eating,
lavender for laundry--

that's proprietary information--
the ratio of shells to person
perceived as threat
shell the whole family
thank you, fear

ruled that flow
rights all magnified
crossed my neck stone
called respect chain
collar what you see
is your projection

fat wallet guilt
seaside retreat tiled
floor with salted
asphalt questioning
what if and how much
to appreciate

love your relationship
choice sorts feuds
a world gone warmed
drinking in candle light
sky light cubed moon roof
eating snake nature

to transform ambience
fear hikes, bank runs
with smoothed jazz
elevated culture of need
to detour through magical
change back to steeled

to internal reflection
a cathedral of brown
and black left us
to trace motives
wanting to live
forever

as standard
question form
trying to be nice
to the sax solo--
get along
New York's alright
Poetry is the Mind at Work on an Impossible Problem

I only know everything
after poetry is true, was uttered sequentially
in a graduate class, an epigram.

It struck me then as it strikes me now
because of the futility of “impossible problem.”
If there were such things, could we drag our bodies from one’s constellation
of possibilities to the next?
If there were such things, could we devote a sacrificed life to an unanswerable question?

Impossibility is not happenstance but a florescence of the mind. It is a lilac garden
forever about to bloom in a lighted and lightening morning.

Yes, it was the prosody of “impossible problem” that resonated; the fat, rounded sounds
of problem, impossible,
and the cut of impenetrable.
PRAYER FOR LAYNE

Do you have
a color

that you like
to wear?

I am a queen
when I see you,
in all of my
beige.

I don't
rule right.

Something grows
from my side

that keeps
me hungry

but it
is not birth.

I am still
not a birth,

just a swelling
wondering if

the earth swells
just like me

or I am at fault
for growing

beyond environmental
expectations,
saying my name
too loud.

Blessed of
the earth,

may we
live skintight

may these
be the bodies

we lie in
tonight.
Man with Avocado

He eats an avocado
With salt and saves half
For her
Before long the avocado browns
This is how he knows
It has passed
Through his hands
He has halved it
And opened it
To the elements
She watches him
Hand her halves
He says listen
She says just let me be
Here just no
He says eat
They fray
In pieces
See how velvet
See how ripe
It is
She knows he is trying
For metaphor
She knows he is
Saying let us stop all this
Love me
I am here love me
Our beauty
Lies in our perishability
It is this
Short life
The death of it
That is supposed to move
See its impermanence
Is what is
If never to vanish
If never to fade away
What would the avocado be
But she misunderstands him
When he gives
Her the avocado to eat
She is not listening
He does not believe in designations
I am a simple man he says
See this
My mouth
My hands
An avocado
When you are hungry
I feed you
LivingSocial Customer Feedback Why didn’t you purchase Belize Romantic Belize Resort + Spa? Let us know!

Hello!

We saw you missed out on the offer for Romantic Belize Resort + Spa at Maruba Resort Jungle Spa. Tell us about your experience.

You can access the survey by clicking here, or by cutting and pasting the following link into your browser:

https://www.customersat3.com/e.asp?IID=846C5CFF44950605091D5AE9D2CD5C79

Thanks in advance for helping to make LivingSocial better! We really appreciate your time!

The LivingSocial Team

The plane we took to Chicago was called Midnight Blue. This is a thing. Calling something what you think it is. Naming it, giving it identity. Let's call that what it was: the first time we went together via sky since the last time we went together via sky. To go via sky. Maruba, what does it mean? Nothing is giving me answers. Maroubra appears as an aboriginal word meaning place of thunder. Maroubra is not Maruba. They do not mean the same. I can imagine Maruba is a town. I might assume indigeneity. What is indigenous about us? Indolence? Madness? We like it easy. We like it hard. Nasty. Our bodies have adapted. Our bodies are not the bodies we once had. How we want to be where we've been. How we want to be renamed. Ian says, let's not say what we want to do, say what we will do. Just say it. There are the wings.

There are only two or three human stories, and they go on repeating themselves as fiercely as if they had never happened before. -Willa Cather
i am here for the meeting
in the house by the sea
i am here to be with the others
things are happening
someone shouts
things been happening
someone shouts back
there is glimmer here
because there is truth
i think both statements are true
things are happening
and
things been happening
they are like saying
there is revolution
and
there is tyranny
they are like saying
we are ourselves
and
we are nothing
like what we could be
if given the chance
here in the house by the sea
we are spontaneous
reacting to cold blood
knowing what needs to be done
trying to establish what we need
to get it done
the dining table a garden
we set down what we have
we pick what we need
to know more of
so much green
more people come
listen to this
no listen to this
we want more
it is possible to transform
we fan out
some to the porch
some fill the bedrooms
we rotate through
everything that has been left to us
what is here is rich
all the others
who have gathered in this house
and labored over the many ways
we are
and have been
we are
and have been
working and working
day into night
for what is ours
for the whole thing
workers, workers
all of us
in this house
The WormWood Star

The wormwood star
has fallen
because I knocked it off.

Numinous trill of lark:
long slow rue (roue)

There’s dream saliva
in my muscular itinerary

I bought a nemaki
for a tiny pigeon
in a fit of pique

on top
of the wifi azaleas
and their little monk faces
Parade of Strange Creatures

She’d been surprised
at the daikon water
she called cat –
more like a vortex
than a whirlpool
ha ha ha
your mom’s a bivalve
with zelkova eyes

“Are you here permanently?” she asked me.

“No one’s here permanently,” I said.
Whispersync Gurlesque

My archival archrival’s
medium spiny neurons

the twang of lamentation
in pug memes

and festive loons
in the whipoorwill call
of strategic initiatives

the theatre of cruelty hairball…

it now longer makes my dance flow
as it did in my pseudo-gypsy period

breathlessly, I sit down
and drink a glass of arak
Two people are in a car. A sermon interjects. The driver is holding a photograph, gaze shifting between the road and the picture. The driver's hand is holding a photograph and still resting on the steering wheel. The passenger pulls at the stitching to the wallet where earlier the photograph occupied the plastic sleeve. Two people are in a car.
The pasture exists. Our conversation swells through the valley. Time does not silence, only quiets. From the porch a ranch and there are the foals. One night the black colt leapt the fence and was hit by a car on US 67. We took a blanket to him. Blood and hair. I threw up in the kitchen sink. Now tell me a memory about horses.
ALLY HARRIS

PLACENTOPHAGY

onianist ill
oval in aster, few lit curt
the spore lunge
a slug, mine anima
ton foreign, core
aerated by fire
into the sloppy mouth

whorls in brag
coke under a green moon

self x cum; bonefond
in bassinet earth
to de-lice, push off a wig
of ants, why-lashed in time’s
fondant, bored
om in dour om
golf, a gag to white
to common grave

a shatter blink nebulous, whatever
nothing to miss
such an old old question

I don’t mind being scolded

soft pile, ocular midnight
ribbon of debris
fields of cartilage
be own to each, let be
not fucking
Revolution

The rat he
has learned his name,
which is to say
he has learned my name,
the protein we come to the bars for.

The woman is
taught to make holes.
She wears a skirt like a sore throat
just to be scolded
by her enormous boss.

It takes a bit.
Revolution is not hiding
in a plastic hut,
is not going back.
It is living

in one endless room
with so many windows
looking out onto the yard.
It is you, small animal.
Let us not get sick.
Jeff Bridges

In THE VANISHING, Jeff Bridges is the remade villain, even though Jeff Bridges is typically the miracle in any given situation. It is 1993, and Jeff Bridges tries to bury Kiefer Sutherland alive. Kiefer escapes.

It is 1995, and someone at 20th Century Fox thinks this is a good idea. *Het Gouden Ei*. And yet,

you learn. One day, someone will try to kiss you outside a national disaster area. You will lose them. Let them.

*The Golden Egg*
He says my heart is swollen thick as a pig hock, and this is a really terrible condition. He says it is likely I will die and my body will become a variety of soft cheeses, moist and rotten. He says this is what he hopes will happen to me, and when he goes, I am left like crackers, broken crumbs because he broke me, not because he is gone: about that, I rejoice.
I adjust the knob to char what is already over.
I Blame My Entrance

I mean my presence like a painting
in a corner, a welcome ghost
still stumbling over the furniture.
I mean to say you are my sanity
without meaning we are insane,
that with some gentle guidance I
could stand tall in a thicket alone.
I'm learning that justice isn't about me
or my clumsy trajectory. If I fill
the town with loneliness
it is an invitation, not a threat,
and I would hope for the clarity
in that crowd to become a settlement
of its own. I mean to be more
like thundersnow now that meteorology
is malleable. Who can say how many
of my bones could break if provoked,
how little I understand the ferocity
of spring. I would like to think
we are all one fragile creature under
one sky, but the evidence bends
and breaks toward an opposite end.
Fugue

I was waiting in the woods
where no one came to gut me,
no one came at all. It is a
peculiar feeling to be
paranoid among trees,
to inhabit the skin I have,
dumbstruck like a star
burning its death path.
I've always known love
would stick on me
the way it does everyone,
but that is no excuse
to get fucked in its wake.
My excuse is waning.
Is it better to dream
in gestures or let the leaves
decay in their sleep. I falter
through the underbrush
like a crushed organ.
Allow me to slip into something a little more feral — my wolf-in-the-apron act is only good for so many blood soups before animal lust flips the lid. Once I understood starving as a survival tactic, I dug holes in which to hide my hunger, to present my flat washboard exterior as default projection, as gleeful martyr, my bleached and bonethrust soul knelt at the altar of bodies discarded. Drape and rattle, honest in their transparency. Beautiful in their inertia. Only angels are permitted to float.

Once I understood starving. Now there is only the deadlock of shovel and regrowth, of push and pull. Do you know how many men had to die to form this body? To make room for all this death? An altar is one obvious form of worship. Kneel and desecrate if you must, but don’t forget the salt. I’ll meet you at the sound of the bell, where they will sash me best in show, sash me least likely to secede from this country of hunger. I’ll meet you there, my heavy, sagging devils all lined up in a row. How many times can a body renew before collapse.

The body knows its salt better than any of its many constituents. My town hall bursts at the seams with romanticized objections. I’ll meet you there.

You hero. You Sisyphean comfort.

I’ll meet you there, on the bridge of self-sabotage, at the altar with my body made of men, and you will retrace the lines of me that you mouthed the most, and you will eat. An appetite denied is a revelation supplied, and the saints are all chumming. Give them their daily bread, their contoured martyrdom. I put a coin on the tongue of every sacrificed man. They taste my blood gladly. You’ll taste it, too.

This cyclical system of birth yields nothing but hunger. What do we do with starving dogs? I laugh and laugh. The punchline is bleeding.

You are what you eat. I take off your belt.
VENUS TEETH

And aren’t their monsters beautiful. And are we. And aren’t they. Beauty as a substitute for sovereignty. God or X’s understudy. Crafted from painted claw and filed-bright jaw, a mask of twisted root and full cheeks marionetted to the point of virginal chub-rub. Folding back on themselves in a state of endless returns. Cherubic exuberance only gets you so far. Your naivete could feed a family of four.

My gut flora could crown millions. Destruction theater. Isn’t this what it is to be a woman? Every ounce of me a pesticide for someone else’s garden. Every string of me singing in catgut cadenza. This is what I mean: whatever burns is given further purpose through ash and bone. Used again and again and again. Into utensil or eye black. Whatever doesn’t die is burned again, harder this time. Really put your back into it.

Eye black fades into indifferent gray. My crown could gut families of four. Too bad the two of us withered into each other with all the precision of thrice-translated creation myths. These silly men and their god-placement assessments. Forget them. You and I, we narrated our grand curtsy, our final ring-rosie-round while sewing frankenstein lines in the upstairs bedroom. I adopted this practice as irony. My little fetal doubt. My glowing psychic vomit, mopped and catalogued for later inspection. Together we stand, divided we fall.

That fistful of orchids you clutched — forget it. Merely a used-up tool for our becoming. Forget about what you said we’d become if we spent too much time marking X’s spot, taking X’s time, making X’s bed. Use X instead to find the pulse of my flyover body, where my rust belt unlocks, where you can close your eyes and forget your name. Isn’t our forgetting beautiful. Isn’t our beauty monstrous. Aren’t we just us. And so we. And so I. You and I and anyone else who wants to be part of this. I warned you we were beautiful. Didn’t I tell him. God, why didn’t we listen.
GRAVEYARD HANDS

With Dakota Parobek

What kind of bugs?
(U r an earworm in his heart.)
Record the bugs
then sleep in the yard.
Record a bird,
invent the common tree.
U are doing the Lord’s work here
convincing a rad dude he should
like you back.
Yung Fricative,
i will cast my gaze over the backroads of Texas
like a God. Like a God.
Are you happy w/ the decisions that you've made?
Would you make the same ones again and again and over again?
Because I don't know about you
but I'm feeling
like everything I've done has been a mistake.
I'm sleeping in the yard tonight.
I'm going to be a tire iron tonight.
That's right.
I'm a tire iron, baby.
I'm the real deal.
That's right:
My hands are graveyards in your hands.
My hands are graveyards in your graveyard hands.
ANXIETY THRONE
With Dakota Parobek

My virginity is aspirational.
Third grade heart beating
with the speed & teeth
of a hybrid beast. Where’s yr
tongue at. You left out a
few links. Be faithful in the telling
of this, our downfall.

The heart is meant to be
at odds, child. The war
of all against all.
Evacuate the small mammal
from my chest. I made this
gcal event all-day so we could
talk. I showed you the video for Bound 2
And yr life was never the same
Have a seat in the anxiety throne
It’s so comfortable
Here is my heavy curtain
Here is my long game
May it sweep us all away.
When will you be nearly as empty.

What are you doing about

new cosmologies

monstrous adults like gods; at

islands

a

nearly as empty.

What about—

even cruelty—

lesson in

well, uncomfortable.

What about—

corona of

scratched-up,

proud

indeed noble.

Where are you now?

How can I believe you?
The Kitty Cremation Tests

Unastonishing what men want
So hard to know. On the radio
Men make a dead cat fake from

Ground meat and bunny fur.
Her name is Sophie.

Three, all Sophies, all boneless
For the test. Boneless when you
Burn her she should be left
Nothing. That's ash, for honesty.
That's your basic psych. The brain
Manikin's sense organs engorged
Where we want the sensing most:
Hands, lips, tongue. You and me
Agree what we want. Too much
Makes the mind's map distort.
Boned, returned, she's not
Their pet. She never was.
We never were.
HI.

Hi. Hi. Isn't it tremendous Chemistry making us be Where? Here, drawn tight, About to. Like To make you laugh a lot Of waves, synapses, Muscles, whole lives of Words words words Words must've lined up Like drums do or metro-Nomes on shaky ground. To mend might be learning To walk the moon bounce. I mean the bouncy house. Where you can't be still, you Know, me. It draws you in. Its motor meter. Sure, Some sorry things have come To pass to bring us here, But I'm not sorry, not me.
As a child, you could not believe the field was without circumference.
You could not believe you could be nowhere.
You could not believe you were part of what was contained in you.

As a child, you would lie awake, trace stars in the dust.
You would lie awake and feel yourself expand,
It is night when you wake. It will still be night.

Lift your eyes up through the skylight, find that the skylight is fluid.
The stars, too, appear to be fluid, but they are of a different substance.
For now, it is only the house which shapes the field.

If you saw them, or apprehended them as they are, the mind would calibrate:
light is dust, color is dust, the nucleus is dust colliding violently with dust.
If they appear to be moving, it is only the surface through which you peer.

You fear them because by their nature they inhabit the void.
You fear them because their towns are the towns of the dead.
You fear them because they remind us we are contained things.

They watch our death, as if expecting us to rise from it.
Repeat the same myth: that the sky guides us, the
sky traces our routines, that the light exists for us to follow it.
Uncover the lamp and
turn over the card: the elusive Star, inverted.
The unmet balance, the concealed light.
In your delirium, the star hums.

the universe is made of dust.
the universe is made of slips of paper.
the universe is made of quotations derived from an impossible conversation.
the universe is made of math.
the universe is made of a substance equal to you, but more of you.
the universe thinks all night and does not sleep.
the universe is eternal darkness.
the universe is the distance between this house and the next.
the universe is shadow inhabited by plumes of light.

None of these statements are true. None are false.
pas de deux

entréé
The whale delivers a message from the underworld, as was its original role. There are only two roles in this theater: man and whale. Water is their mode. Think of it as a tango absent from desire. Both dancers want something different, a struggle to separate. In this tango, it is only the female who leads. No dancer can communicate with the other, but they are constantly speaking.

adagio
We see the pas de deux partly from an aerial perspective. The first time the whale takes over, it seems that the two dancers become one being. When the two surface, we realize the move is to be performed again. The dancers nod, treading.

first variation
What was the intent? Did they practice the choreography? Who has the authority? Is the fulcrum on which the performance rests the imbalance of authority? I refuse to believe that this was absent from the man's mind. I refuse to believe he does not constantly think of death. The first pirouette is where the faulty physics of the dance makes itself known.

second variation
The second pirouette is more breathtaking, meaning the audience holds its breath, as if in solidarity. The conversation becomes disjointed. The music enters an infinite crescendo. We become aware of ourselves as an audience. The man has disappeared into the spiral. He and the whale have entered a field that is liminal, but not without its own grace.

coda
As a child, I remember looking up through the water before rising again. Even in great safety, I felt temporary.
Once upon a time,
Saint Bernadette was born
first child of her mom
A homely woman
of absurd virtue
she had the martyr’s squint
of a Bernadette

A purple saint
an asthmatic saint
of course
she suffered much

What does the world hate more
than women
in public
When I am in my robe
then I am like a mom

And I do well in bed
and do not wait

When I look in the mirror
and my face is everywhere
All you cult born infants
think the earth is your clarinet
and like to crawl across its body

Do you think that you are greater than a mom
When it is hot
I lay on the floor

When I think of what
I have to give

Life has its good points

And the fat, white thigh-bones
of a tourist
Dear mom,
beautiful mom,

Smile, as you always have
and ask me what I need

Remember
I’m your prisoner
When the milk is rotten,
an orchard of cool cream curls
the wool from our eyes and everything we know
is human.

Bottle empty fingers, you are starlight
waiting for buses,
you are fears, hidden lies
in plain sight where street corners
linger for signs. Light smiles through the curve of you.

Fuck the moon, fuck the band, fuck the modern too.
Send four pillars of salt
and turn me into Gomorrah.

We cab & swallow whole alleyways, build sandcastles.
We gnaw at the world’s lungs
that speak words bigger than themselves.

Tomorrow doesn't have to hurt this much
inside ourselves.
Inherit

I weep for the voiceless
little things ridgeless    smooth babies    locked in a lonely room
    grabbing rung to rung in silence

I am often weak
cannot stop myself
and am afterwards appalled
    begin disassembling and the negatives peek through like rivers of lava

I am over-eager when omens cease—good and bad
(to never have to deny that my world is unsafe)
(to have nothing to do but stay damaged and die)
	hank you for kicking at me    looking at me    hating me so you don’t hate yourself

a shell made to be split    a core that stumps alone
Refrigerator Manifesto

there’s this handlebar / for the progress / of history / in my pants.
so I’ve taken to lobbing shoes at the works / which is how I got down this /
foot and mouth disease. please allow / if you’ve a moment:
    a syphon I suck my soft tissues
    through to get
    a better feel
    for the language
    of masters.

When Thomas Pynchon comes out of hiding
to give me this here pink bicycle
I having had will yet razor
the pig fetus skin from its gear switch
debone it with a rolling pin
turn over the engine
with the baby chicks still in it
they aren’t screaming this time
just rocking out. and if the splinters won’t brush off
I’ll just rub them in
to clean my teeth with
as I ride
spray paint in hand
out of your fucking skull.
proofing an adam apple in pencil
coming out there by the back of the house

a familiar liquid and an overdrawn shape
time was i rolled pants like those to smoke them

it’s just my spine’s habit graphing your calculus
rub the work down to a sheet of straight hatches

those times i almost ask “just push me against here and do it”

i could see all the way ‘cross the yard from there
and it wasn’t your weight i missed
it was the wall
erica LEWIS

the silver leaves the drone of clever talk

“you look like one of those moon girls”
how we’re cut
with a wide-eyed sincerity
made soft
suffering from the winter bends
oh there’s a river that winds on forever
the emotional framework of being
stretched between two opposite poles
when people aren’t how you remember them
as photographs in the cul de sac
you’re my castle baby
deep down somewhere
i have some beautiful memories here
god loves you when you’re dancing

and we danced in the river water
i’m very glad that we were able
to make time for catching up
it’s that ancient love that just moves along
that Beta Love
painful or exquisite or both
listening to the same shit
over and over again
love is to die
love is to not die
i don’t want to have these
conversations again
artifact by artifact,
i remember now
i am my mother’s age
doin my best patti smith

it is the year of the horse
your mouth looked [so] cool in the light
a choir of echoes
rising in our bones, our breath
we have too much history
in the same specific place
try not to look so young
life is no longer happening the way we want
say history has ended
you are not only you,  
and i am not only me  
it changes even in  
the remembering

"august day" from daryl hall is my boyfriend
I was thinking about writing’s shifting place
in the hierarchy of needs for me
right now

i love me some home

the radio playing that forgotten song

Deep drums. The kind that start storms
& it is like the best fairytale

once patterns become stationary and you absorb the distance

all blood tastes the same

in dusty rural Americana

worth is actually kind of the perfect word

Sent from my iPhone

until the scars we collect reverse the flow

these are the words we use

and i am not sorry

to say goodbye

I need to be okay with loss

to think about all the times in my past

that I have lost something or given up

how those experiences have enriched me

like a sound that lands halfway between

Oh goddamn yeah
i hate that i’m good at the things i don’t care about

everything we see coming in

from the space around us

two hundred billion stars in our galaxy

the motions of our body

and life running for the train

like a little bitch

As the west coast burns, I listen to this song

which somehow reminds me of you

we lie under the trees and pray

for Midwestern thunderstorms

sit down and look through the book

of botony sketches and feathers

we all try to learn

without sacrificing some purer sense of ourselves

but i’m no sailor

in my heart of hearts

i hope that you are too

it is the year of growing up

sweet mama time

the ease of selfhood and genuine soul

i’m fine thanks for asking

i’m an iron man

Awakened by the clapping

“uptight (everything’s alright)” from *mary wants to be a superwoman*
SLIGHT INTERNAL MEMEX 1

A reader who continues to swing her hand across the screen, as she reads, brings forward at her own pace, moving as she moves, the time of overlying keywords… (Stephanie Strickland)

A storm seeking/seek day/seek certain-type of- a day

Over what city paris-type city air rays/ they resemble

Multiple banks of light, they. Like armor, a thin stamping of steel

phase wound phase distort phase displace phase reverse heart

coil

heart lightning heart unit of current heart of element heart armature.

Hearing wires down outer walls but easily pried.

And guided -- a please-stay kind of memory.

Stay bolt stay cord in corded sleep stay

Stay stagger and wound

Stagger wound stand-by and wait until star compare star ID that hurt

hurt in sky

a relay way of control.

Control that tends to grow and grow

as by dirty contact intermittent held together.

Closed core and parallel most parallel sort of clutching lonely, passing mesh to mesh.

The close
the coupling the greater the code

and that
so exchanges an

hour and arc
clouds could can’t not notch up

the drift drift meet meter of
disrupt live of destruct of of a strange
route through roads that.

And a tree blossom a final hand touching it
goodbye and the turn and the test of heart of sleep of stays

where memory is a form:

First the settle. Later the haunt.
SLIGHT INTERNAL MEMEX #3

sensorial uneven
what happens next defined enter

lattice to contract
red candle spill
odd havoc and all else

arrayed and wrong
and lip torn

other spines wh

ere wh
on/whom to rest
is the where where

stammer side linear trails and
coy pilot-mind makes

does effect of effect

to rack up to map
inflexible air that is thin-feeling

close-argued close-arguing
in lines lines "wld’ve cld’ve"

done to death and worth it ---

floor heat bar heat
snow cave heat cage
meat to want

whip every stunted
heart around hustler the

quirk
eighties’
faux-me

avarice gutter
and mock takes tales
in steady rain

hairpin on white floor
a well-traveled
oregon girl

in window read
friday anais

in soft porn

a grind silence

no fear as if dead
hand-style

in

steady rain
this old night fire star and sleet

a kind of deco way

the

screw and solder  thigh burned to the bone

bone   sphere
skin    loose    stiff
       shoring up

inching      small ecstacies

    a blanket, folding it
in lamplight so carefully ordered
and mint oil   what are we
going to do to do
eyes grave through and so close

the weather center
dried leaves and other spines

only the crazy it would seem
have weak violent excursions
over
a woman

a woman
fine-lean too-long
face in a frame
sense sense
tall and softly all interior

others, their strip gaze
glance
casual, their limbs
shimmer shimmer each
a pale scapling piece
of stone in what mirrorsky

never knew them
nothing like
swallow that

a tableau idea
every half hour

end the docile slip and silking
between pace
that is funny is false that is hate

rare and swollen
fault slam always a

kind of couch slaughter
foot parting thighs

in remote deco way

and ready
yes

wear it out
say feel thankyouforlastnight
semipanic because of it

pull-push-flicker items of repeatable
in prescribed dark
sure writ
the problem of image
the passage of mouth

of your soft-room le phono girl
inelegant wrists and pierrot stare

sometimes you forget as the unanswered but
we are truly dead
in quarters of sleep

screen architecting the blind

never quite sure
what was last open

what was last open

what was last open
SAFE GO DIE
that I am not pulling out of the air
a tiny hummingbird
SAFE GO BLUE
phosphorence on lounge space
ash hallway
of ripped exclamation
flowering of language at viscid sockets
no ‘Likes’ no body bruised by my invisible alien technology self
press DIE
where are you possible in sacred efflorescence
where I haunt myself out of torn expression
easy comment board fascism
run to the tiger
his big paw is not human for long
START. Excrete
curt imaginary
press ‘assume godheads’
unspooled in the time we’re following across tracks
across lamentable pathways glowering
in foule assent
AB INITIO

Birds are such strange phenomena
Have pressed the mute button on our subtropic fantasies
It's a win-win situation, as the vapour of nacreous
flowers thickens the glass.
Rough metaphors shouldering the stitches of softer
& subtler musics
subcutaneous rainfall itches
after the downgrading of a sex.

Fervent timepieces groping
tear the mirror from a wall of ashes
pop hook from whose mouth it gleams.

My face I have wipered of all intelligences
& now offer to you its convulsant territory, wide
with shadow. We ripen unchecked essences,
get hazy over a boulder. Pacing. We could
retrieve an exit or whitewash an accented homily
but we gander, smoke, frolic,
over our tiny unbornt babies
glistening bubbles blinking back into the uterine
snow –

Reality, come & go.
Dress me in heaps of coffee, mud, turquoise & other
assorted trash. Anything ugly taken to excess is the
height of meaning & luxury: poverty is the
proviso for glamour, scripting arc of exaltation & rift.

That's something different to the cursive of artifice
haunting these choked illusions, diffident protection
against wallpapers' church spires
weeping patiently at our humour. Give me back
the interstices of a wrecking wager, sandpaper
rosewater cheeks to be sucked hollow
; prism these artefacts that live inches from crusty
waves cracking the sheen, rusting gasped
words, scattering salt over burnt-black ghosts

A phrasal blessing, not meant to disqualify or
inundate the weirding soul of transmigratory oils,
lashes imperilled moors with long pink trees
while hungry windows vacate the odds
we sink at, best bowed before
yes, the memory of departure blooms encephalic.
From Ghosty Boo

I used to wait
down by the backdoor: dog
in one hand knife
in the other all night
til my girlfriend got home
from second shift.
Senior in high school, I quit
everything.
I heard everything. I felt
everything. I wore her
sweatpants to school and ate
what she fed me.

Butch Daddy you better have big arms and lots of money.
I was suicidality. It sounds like potentiated seesaw: I might leave the house and look to my neighbors, market-bound. I might make it through another day, then another. I am sawing inside trees down. The trees are howling and pissing themselves with fear.

Ghosty Boo brushes my hair from my face and coos.
I am training myself
to be a witch
so healing will be
electric and accumulative.
I hold gems like
precious frogs.

What if I never
connect? What
happens to frog bodies
when they die
inside fish bodies?
My cat tortures
bugs, but I try
to love them when
my hands won't stop shaking.
I need to retire
this body or awaken it.

I try to focus
on rose quartz, rose
infusions. Goddess,
make my blood
rosewater. Please, protect
my deepest beams
and flood my lungs:
larva soup
free me. Fire
pop my cartilage,
Earth, you don't have to soak
in all the ooze
black from abuse.
Let it be
carried away and
repurposed
by insects making homes.
The baby is coming for my brain
It’s okay, I signed it away and went
to the playground, to regulate
What does it mean when
his nose bleeds
What does it mean when the shot
is full of preservatives
Did I do it wrong
Again
Did I put a horse before the cart
Or the other way
So I did it right?
I grew up in the city
Eating bread, alone, in the dark
And I’m better for it
How I love the hospital
but scatter my ashes in a bookstore
But save some for later
Don’t do it now because I am not ready
I am monitoring the progress
of this castle going up around me
I am counting the bones and measuring
brain cells, I hope they are beautiful
They must be
I grew up in the city surrounded by methane
and other gasses
And I turned out great
I even saw some chickens
and worms on the ground
We hopped over them, their grossness
and kept running
I sent a long note to all of my friends about my brain
about the auto reply they would receive
I mentioned the worms
and how it was hot inside my sweater
A man’s sweater that has shrunk around a woman
A woman that is me
I have no real name
Just three fake names
And sliced apples
I have no trade
No profession
I have not apprenticed much
Or moved much furniture
Or reacted well to the injuries of others
But I am covered in laundry
Not in the romantic sense
But I am clean and honest
and I can get to sleep most nights
I think that G-d used to be closer
Now he is comet-like -
growing his tail and streaking by
I hold on to happiness
He drops me a line
I bring talismans to the hospital
and think about statistics
Math is so weird
I don’t understand it
I am not a statistic
Just static
Who is my foil
Who will outshine me
I recede into the darkness
I would never go into the woods alone
Not even for a jog
They never caught the Wissahickon rapist
I am not crazy enough
to take a dumb risk like that
dana GUTHRIE MARTIN

dissimulate ::

i miss
lust-slime,

late smut-
dates,

mud-
slides;

i miss u;

u, a same-
same slut;

me, a dim-
sum tease;

u + me =

mutilated
seeds,

mussed
stems,

dusted
meats;

sidle me,
a mule,

slide me
a mile;

i’m dial-
a-stud;

dial me,
i misuse
divergent ::

I invent(ed) river,
div(id)e(d) river;

river di(rg)e,
river re(nder)ed

I(’ve) (gi)ve(n riv)er,
I(n)tend(ed river);

r(iv)e(r) ve(in,
rive)r ed(ge)

I n(ever)
di(ve)rt (regret)

even ti(r)ed river
I rein(vent)
scherzando ::

a red re(hear)se)d;
a re(hashe)d red;
a red (hea)r (r)e(a)d (here;)
a r(ash h)e(n, a )d(en, a hea)r(d h)e(r)d;
a re(n)d(e)red (ear;)
a(n ash, a hand, a node;)
(ha)r(sh dos)e(s, a noose, a hea)d(, an ea)r;
(o) e(ase! o han)d(some chads!)
a red (cha)r(d, a h)e(e)d(ed red;)
a (ha)r(sh nos)e(, a no, a no-)d(oze
nod o)r (daz)ed (c)a(ndo)r;
a r)ed red
I
The history is the history of
a
word,
an open fight, a fight that time ended,
a common ruin.

In history, we find everywhere

; all the
modern ruins
struggle.

Our epoch is a splitting in two
, in two

From first elements
, the rounding of fresh ground
, the colonisation of

impulse.
in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom—Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusion, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation.

The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honored and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage labourers.

The bourgeoisie has torn away from the family its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation to a mere money relation.

The bourgeoisie has disclosed how it came to pass that the brutal display of vigour in the Middle Ages, which reactionaries so much admire, found its fitting complement in the most slothful indolence. It has been the first to show what man’s activity can bring about. It has accomplished wonders far surpassing Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts, and Gothic cathedrals; it has conducted expeditions that put in the shade all former Exoduses of nations and crusades.

The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. Conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered form, was, on the contrary, the first condition of existence for all earlier industrial classes. Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguishes the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones.

All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profane, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind.

The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the entire surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connexions everywhere.

The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. To the great chagrin of Reactionists, it has drawn from under the feet of industry the national ground on which it stood.

All old-established national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed. They are dislodged by new industries, whose introduction becomes a life and death struggle.
Finally,
as a whole

decay

trace of

has stripped every status

. 
Poem to Prove My Wickedness

I was just lying when you called
   the clangorous phone of this other

outskirt’s motor lodge
   because of the places I’ll put my tongue

that other’s won’t.
   I’m no lady anywhere

and, like the sequoia that died
   girdled and standing on display,

I’m older than I look.
   I’ve been double-dealing for a while now.

There’s a reprieve in knowing
   where I belong and a world of ways

to prove myself disgraceful.
   Your fervency. Your remorse.

But all I had hoped for was that you’d
   convince me I’m more than just a body

while I moan you can’t leave
   handprints on my throat.
Dear Mom,

When I dream
of skywriting
and other men
and billboards that talk

I think
of you
giving
birth

you know
you know
you know

hopping
on and off
that man’s
belly

but listen
you never
listen

sharks
caffeinated
breakfast food
made for children
and QVC

excess
production

language
on everything
on stones
on buildings
on your forehead

mommy
sees words
is dead
people
and love
isn't labor
without care
our refuge
a poem

love is just
turning towards
language
rupture

what if
you lived
inside me

what if
your name
was
SACRAMENTAL

I

scent of nest & sound of bell
& you — your thin, your brittle —
nothing here has a center
nothing doesn't grow wild
    with clash & scatter

II

you                 move me into ambush, into undone
force me           into the brushfire of soil
say shame is repetitive, shame reinvents the sky

III

you are not the first body to open me,
dabbing honey cross on forehead
to atone for trespass

but still
    there is too much wholeness to mourn,
too much flight against my ribs

IV

so yes       go on
                & touch me
feel the way my skin still gives sting
DEAR JESSICA // The video you sent of you disappearing into a top hat was riveting. When I saw your hair, the last of you that was left, fall away past the hat’s rim, I felt like a river on fire. When the magician tapped the hat, & a bell rang, I felt like a burning river being swallowed whole by an obese shadow hungry for light. There is no other way to explain it.

I guess that which we feel is not always reconciled with that which we love.
DEAR JESSICA // I am very sorry, but I have now forgotten what kind of tree grew in the place where we planted your hair. The moon has been crazy since always, & although it seems steady, I’m afraid so do I. This could account for my memory loss.

The moon, I mean. & yes, loss.
Dear Jessica // I was sure I saw you floating in slow motion above my house, so I used an arrow to shoot you down. I thought you needed help. But when you landed on my lawn, I saw that you were only an albino horse, a ghost of a horse, really. I was astonished that god had allowed me to pierce the ghost of a horse, so I knelt beside this spirit animal & I called you on the phone, but you didn’t answer.

When the ghost of the horse began to float upward again, I let it go. It looked like a strange balloon waving goodbye.

*Goodbye, Anima,* you said, when you finally picked up. Do you remember?
alex NIEMI

Broomswallow

They’re only flashes of echo
tightened to froth at any sign
of movement

I have brittle hair
and my child’s shirts are dirty
I gaze in the mirror for hours
looking for the bottom

The tenor of mopping shifted
waiting and watched
the puddles dry

The neighbors
they dripped through
cracks in the walls
they tarred my shoulders
and forfeited the locks

I tumble spied
My child warmed
beside me

there is no growth of you
only the linoleum
in the undersink murk
by the bleach you
tender the presence
of the house.
I want a phlebotomist

who isn't afraid to tell me my name
reminds him of getting drunk. One who binds
the rubber hose around each arm before
committing. One who tells me he's new, then
that he's a little crazy. I want one
who's tender like he knows me, probably
drives a truck, who was born in a small town.
Our time together is short. One who will
dab me lightly, a painter who works in
alcohol. One who isn't afraid to make a mess.
I want a phlebotomist with a solid left hook.
One who takes what he wants without fanfare.
One who knows why I'm crying, who tells me
the truth, then forgets me before I leave.
A.M.

Yellow is the favorite color of insane people,
you told me when I was like watch out, another

cherry stone sunk in the heart. Thirteen was our
legend, molding toward rot. Decomposition is

a process by which water takes me down, blanks my walls
barren. Me being bankrupt, I don’t return your call.

Erosion is a river to the seventies.

Today I own one yellow garment, a skirt I’m too
timid to wear. I stole the skirt, flung the UPS driver under the truck.

I mean, he’s sorry, he could have sworn the package was
delivered, but I would wear the skirt if I went places

with canapés and lavender
buds in my drink, gracing the surface like eyelashes or gnats.

My temerity is twofold, my insides might show. As an adult
you need special courage to own yellow or the right thong.

I have one, not both.

My skirt really is beautiful, wrapped in liquid lemon sunshine, fluid
on a bias. A lie is a stabby kind of hurt. Somewhere

truth cinches my skirt. Like a knot, an affair to unwrap. I could go
all day exhuming my closet. One canary me, twelve-years-old in a T-shirt

chub-a-chub-a choo. She didn’t fly up from the mine.
These polynomials reveal our moods. My polychromics are low

and the nurse stood me up. Sit down, you said, when I tried to plug
my ears. Listen. You were always good at folding paper fortunes,
lacing string around your yellow fingers.

Yellow terror when I phone the ward. For mental health,
press five. For we can purge our closets but cannot erase our minds.

My favorite color is never green
a serpent, a vine, o youth when I needed crayons
for names. Pink when another pal made blushing the only way to be a girl. Discriminant pink teenager: magenta, raspberry, bubble-pop. Pink like a bone chewed raw. Pink boiled in broth. Pink until please. Pink once we stop. Now I like mine muddied with gray: of toe shoe, scuffed or stubbed; of strawberry shake browning in separation.

Two liquids forced together: we call that erasure. With the tube, call that Ensure. We aerate milk and breathe strawberry.

Anesthesia.

He took my cyst. My tumors wait in new closets, my history, her story: gross. I was twelve and briefly brave. Everything in adolescence is souvenir.

I saved the gas mask for my sister, who gave it to her doll. Even today it smells.
REPORT: I had taught m'self to hermit well. But, for you, I tried consciously toying with a clock-centered mouth. I set aside m'offend boxe and got gifted at avoiding thinking too hard on your obsession with dysfunctional zodiacs. We off-keyed along with the the worst of the vintage radios. Caught a sheet-covered brick in my head. Caught a ghost. I embarrassed m'local police by continuing to go out in public sans immunity to the top ten winter viruses. I embarrassed m'art school friends by garbing m'heart in red hetrochrome. I embarrassed m'sef by mimicking dandyweeds. As a couple, we were only good at parties and things that were paid to look like parties. Remember, I was DNA'd in a country full of problem-keepers. I acted like your mail-ordered side. We kissed in post-Christmas closets. Whilst the moon twisted Ukraine-ly. In between bar and car fights, there were many short walks off the beach. The only good time was when you let me use your goldish lighter to set off the fire alarm inside the snow globe factory. Each employee threw a bucket of champagne-scented water at their immediate supervisor. A trio of tiny elk escaped out the backdoor. Even then, I remember thinking, this is nice, but I'm ready to be driven back to my own bed now.
REPORT: You over-mythologize me. My real hair color is phontetical; my real waist-size is glass pear. You mis-hypothesize that there is at least half a compass between m'self and the other two women you have made I love you verbs at during the year before we met. With you, I am never allowed to look like anything other than a parenthesis filled with red typos and stunt troubles. All the health pamphlets advise against this. A bell hooks tattoo does not a feminist make. If you think you're "one of the good ones," you're probably not. My real blood type is Mayday; my real height in centimeters is creep-magnet. No more past tense, please; it's indecorous. Most of my friends call me "Ella." We try covering the floor in slow roses. We try doing it in pharmaceutical order. You use up all the indoor medicines. All I wanted was to fall hard in love with someone who was good at something other than/in addition to telling me what he thinks I want to hear. My real eye shape is feral cat; my real skin shade is radioactive potato peel. Here's the deal: You don't have to tell me everything, but everything you tell me has to be true. I already spent the first half of last spring cannibaling through memory mirrors. What I mean is: there's very little left that I don't know how to hear.
REPORT: I opera dress under a unipolar sky. I work the tiny and regal machine. The one that's made for re-conjuring emotions. The one you started building the day after we met and finished just in time for when you started to realize that my life was nothing like a movie. Horse-heart: familiarity breeds content. I push myself off the stairs without anything close to a fallback plan. Please take this the wrong way: I am glad we didn't meet until now. If this were a less wintery section of the calendar, I would be in need of some much redder units of life advice. I would be in need of a bigger, more claw-footed bathtub. And a bed that could rest two and a half people proper. I would not know what to do with all these ex-dinosaur bones you left in m'emergency belly. If this were a smaller fragment of the universe, I would not know what to do with all these free-fuck'd thoughts you left in m'middle brain. What's the guy equivalent of getting vacuumed on the inside? I'm not being sarcastic, I legit want to know. M'interstices oval all the way the out, but the nausea waits 'til I'm back home. The only gifts i want come December are silver coffee spoons. It's an inside joke I have with myself; stop asking me to explain. You already have more of me than you even want, I don't get why you won't let this one thing go.
REPORT: The year vampires and I Frankenstein and we zombie-song away in your favorite corners of the Chicago-ish apocalypse. There was a bonfire and I had a red yolk in me and I knew we were about to be finished with all of the you comparing me to different kinds of fruit. You were right, I am too good for you, but not for any of the reasons you think. Stubbornly, I gnawed on a double dose of poppywitch. Went to the place off Belmont, the doctor with an accordion tattoo took both my temperatures. The other doctor went, It's cool, you did everything right, but why not say nothing for now? I planned a destination funeral. Then, a brain stem snap. I go back and rose-ring m’center to reassure you I am still plague-proofed and/or can suffer fools ghastly. This mismatch between my shape and your space is making me feel younger in a bad way. In the mornings, I mummy-bandage and mouthwash, well aware that m’real life has stopped looking like the movie in your head you're never going to be brave enough to shoot.
I Like The Red Dress

I like how easy you lead
me to water & call me
siren like the sky’s broken
open & dropped my song
on you / strobe throat
flashing I need you
I need you I see you
I see you / I like how
when I’m singing
your mouth is a fault
line of my best jokes /
all my best jokes are the ones
that turn your smile inside
out / let me burrow in
like it’s sweatshirt fleece //
I like how all I have to do
to wreck the ship is melt letters
together, make honey string & the sweet splits
rope & vaporizes quiet & we both break
on the rocks // slurp it from the shell /
no, you’ve never had an oyster / let me show you
how to swallow a salty tongue / how
we could speak blister or sting
but why bother with barbs / why
bother with closing my mouth
on some bitter pill // I like empty /
I like drying in hot light, sun prickle
on back of neck needling me to blush /
I like our bones showing through our clothes /
our bones worn like jewelry / I like falling
thin enough you can see the words I’ll say
before they’re in my mouth / I like falling
ill & knowing there’s medicine to fix
the fever / I like falling ill so I can savor
all day in bed / the pillow smells like you
& the ocean & a song about two ghosts
bumping into each other / whose house
will you haunt if not mine / I like to think
we’ll die in the same unending hallway
so we can shake our chains & grin & moan
twin Marleys / scare somebody shipwrecked /
scare somebody into dropping anchor
& staying longer than they should
  to stare at our myth // here are the rocks
here is the risk here we are now, a warning //
I like the red dress / I like pouring me in
& zipping me up & turning around
to your teeth like game show lights /
I answered right / I’ve won I’ve won
the grand prize is Coney Island // finally //
Coney Island where you’ll hold my hand & teach me
what \text{\textit{walk}} \ means to a mermaid / I don’t know
who to be if not the rock you’d wreck yourself against /
I like the red dress / I like the red dress & wore it
for you / I like the red dress & I like my own skin
again / I like the honey & the need
High in my
stomach there
you are, phantom
of a flat sea. I never
should have grown
up before
your eyes. I’m the
sparkle on
glass lips.
Type A
in the kitchen wanting
more. Blurry
princess, self-narrating.
For my
name I took
the shells
offered & spit
out your
bones with
wondrous glut.
I have more
eyelids than anyone
I know. No rest
for the sweet
& low-downs
but me when I’m
salted &
night-capped I
arrive at the steps
of an eerie
castle, black
& white
a church
have I been
here before have I
been me before &
turned my
back to myself.
Long black dress.
I’m what you want.
If you don’t
like what you
see, remember
I’m only
a figment, screen
of hunger & pining.
A spook
& you
feast your eyes
Take A Walk On The Wild Side

I drink fewer martinis and watch more movies you would like it here
Cardboard skyline deeply in my chest
I feel the bass you-know-where exactly
Self-portrait of early June
Consider me a luminous rooftop
Soundtrack black bossanova
Palm tree tears
Velvet robes & blue
eyeshadow you’re only a shrug
I’m older now than the hot girls
Think about that, babe
Still considering my eyebrows but no heart
to touch them Fussing with plum lipcolor & loose pantyhose I’m probably going to impress you
Old fashioned with thigh-high split I am hoping to be your eternal world
Bending to extract a pie my mind sticks to you like a bad feminist or someone
deranged hands backside-first to apron
downer cigarette
You’ll marry me but I’ll be goddamned
Without you my mouth becomes my face
My thighs lock into absence
Departure & terminal I’m probably going to impress you
Los Angeles genesis
Black & white 20th century hard-on
If we touch we enter to the world Please let me
And the colored girls go:
THE MOTHERS INTERFERE

When we ‘gat girl it was pink liquid & spillage
all tu-tu & curly locks & spit.

Our sweet cheeks

our curtsy-nibble
rosy twirl
loosy-goosey girl

our baby bunny rabbit
tinky-dinky bird-feeder boy-toy

our seat
for our rump.

Honeysuckle pifflé, lillipution stampede,
little girl—

Where is your mother where are your manners?
TALKING HAIRDOS W/ EXO

Two eggs in the pan and one
in my heart where I let her eat it
out. How a flat girl, yolk breaker
slides beneath me, I can't tell you
how many diseases I have.
Is it even a question, Exo-Girl?

Is any girl's hair blonde or brunette
anymore?

Exo-Girl smacks at my talk
over the cutlery & bowl of milk.

There's a rock in the sole of my kitten heel
and I'm holding the spatula, a sticky grin.

    Exo-Girl, the one frying white on the fire.
    Exo-Girl, my goldenrod seep of desire.

My body-container simmers, host to a breeder
and her clanging wars. There's labor in her face
when I smack an egg on the plate. She smoothes
for a smile and I stab my fork in and eat.

And I know my stomach is withered
and my hair a chemical smear
but my eyes are as wide as the sun
full and loud as a burning barn.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sugar cookie to orange orange</th>
<th>Metal/secret</th>
<th>Blood</th>
<th>Louise/Denise</th>
<th>Bees/electricity/limestone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugar cookie as latex paint, as symbolic of female babyness, meaning no language, soft skin, direct gaze. Pair with: milk. See also sweetness, confections.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/dreamanatomy/images/1200-dpi/Z1.jpg">http://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/dreamanatomy/images/1200-dpi/Z1.jpg</a></td>
<td>[cocktail recipe here]</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MZmx1gZqh1E">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MZmx1gZqh1E</a></td>
<td>Shaking the dead bees from the hive, heavy crust of sugar on the bottom, I don’t know if I can do this again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1895: Anna-Bertha Röntgen on the first x-ray, which revealed the bones in her hand, her finger fitted with her ring: <em>I have seen my own death.</em></td>
<td>After they shot him six times and he was dead, they handcuffed his hands behind him. He had no weapon.</td>
<td>He told us that Christ’s blood spilled for us. This was before cell phones, when weird white teenage boys were just weird and didn’t shoot</td>
<td>Staring at this landscape I am stunned by life and how it is free (meaning it costs nothing to get here), remarkable (meaning remarkable), electric (meaning <em>I am stunned</em>). This beehive ribcage birdcage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and smelling like something other than pretend-food body products. I am oatmeal cookie deodorant. You are vanilla cupcake scrub. People from other times or from Ohio now are Campbell’s vegetable soup.

**Mud/red**

Brown skirted bathing suit as symbol of body

**sewed jewels into the hems of the children’s coats at night. When the bodies were exhumed in 1931, the cache was found intact inside the rotting fabric.**

When the revolution gets here they’ll put a brick in

Deep in a red velvet seat, I’m listening to attractive young people make clever music. On my left side is the lead singer’s English teacher, on my right is his photo teacher. They take turns crying. Denise from

| and smelling like something other than pretend-food body products. I am oatmeal cookie deodorant. You are vanilla cupcake scrub. People from other times or from Ohio now are Campbell’s vegetable soup. | and smelling like something other than pretend-food body products. I am oatmeal cookie deodorant. You are vanilla cupcake scrub. People from other times or from Ohio now are Campbell’s vegetable soup. | people. The Sunday after I accepted Jesus, Pastor Dale filled the Jacuzzi under the pulpit and baptized me. Anyone being baptized was asked to wear white underwear beneath the white polyester graduation robe the church provided. There might be refreshments afterward. | people. The Sunday after I accepted Jesus, Pastor Dale filled the Jacuzzi under the pulpit and baptized me. Anyone being baptized was asked to wear white underwear beneath the white polyester graduation robe the church provided. There might be refreshments afterward. | person. The Sunday after I accepted Jesus, Pastor Dale filled the Jacuzzi under the pulpit and baptized me. Anyone being baptized was asked to wear white underwear beneath the white polyester graduation robe the church provided. There might be refreshments afterward. | person. The Sunday after I accepted Jesus, Pastor Dale filled the Jacuzzi under the pulpit and baptized me. Anyone being baptized was asked to wear white underwear beneath the white polyester graduation robe the church provided. There might be refreshments afterward. | person. The Sunday after I accepted Jesus, Pastor Dale filled the Jacuzzi under the pulpit and baptized me. Anyone being baptized was asked to wear white underwear beneath the white polyester graduation robe the church provided. There might be refreshments afterward. | person. The Sunday after I accepted Jesus, Pastor Dale filled the Jacuzzi under the pulpit and baptized me. Anyone being baptized was asked to wear white underwear beneath the white polyester graduation robe the church provided. There might be refreshments afterward. | person. The Sunday after I accepted Jesus, Pastor Dale filled the Jacuzzi under the pulpit and baptized me. Anyone being baptized was asked to wear white underwear beneath the white polyester graduation robe the church provided. There might be refreshments afterward. | person. The Sunday after I accepted Jesus, Pastor Dale filled the Jacuzzi under the pulpit and baptized me. Anyone being baptized was asked to wear white underwear beneath the white polyester graduation robe the church provided. There might be refreshments afterward. |
| **issues, 1982–present** | **that woman’s Chanel bag and beat her to death with it.** | **Newport, on the English teacher’s right, introduces herself. Years ago, she was the singer’s babysitter.**

Denise: *We have fifteen good summers left. Maybe twelve.*

(Us: Silence.) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **White/nothing** | **Newport, on the English teacher’s right, introduces herself. Years ago, she was the singer’s babysitter.**

Denise: *We have fifteen good summers left. Maybe twelve.*

(Us: Silence.) |
| **White bikini revealing the navel stretched sad like a camel’s eye, the silvery lightning of stretch marks. Pair with: two watery gin and tonics, one hospital straw.** See also: connection, three generations | **The lake people dress in whites and blues and scotch and do not attend the reunion, because of the disdain. The lake people are having their own party on a boat. We are not the lake people but we can see their lights, because we live at the same lake.** | **Bearing the handages, water and sponge, Straight and swift to my wounded I go, Where they lie on the ground after the battle brought in, Where their priceless blood reddens the grass, the ground** |
| County Tipperary, February 2001: Strong winds, 23F/-5C; Tombstone, dated 1886, poking out of the frozen earth like a crooked tooth: *Where you are now So once was I. Where I am now So you shall be.*

Chorus in the form of falling snow: The world you know will soon be under water: Prepare. |
Solution Cave: formed when rock is dissolved by slightly acidic water. Terrains that show evidence of Solution Caves—Karst

This Cave provides color. This Cave blacks to hole entrance of environment. What color fades to eye, water moves inside & back out.

Morphology Hydrology Dissolve the Surface along fractures Fissures my legs open

(again) (again) (again)

fractured BEDDING PLANES these fractures enlarge underground system repeats system of water

more water accelerating the KARST Times of healing require sickness require

These growths to wall Ruined surface allowing them to enter small surface fissures

Splits Cracks Mends (or doesn’t)

Pull the moss back over my mouth

Cave(s) exist I exit intorightnow Inside Onside Caveside

Some light reversed
CRATERS & crevice
crase of yes
some feelmoan to reach in with
Manhands those eyes gloss over Fuckover my emptied sack
BITCHtunnel / BITCHfunnel / BITCHsmack / BITCHwife
(examine the FOIBE)

SOLUTION Cave:

KARST me into where
KARST what eats my land
KARST what fissures
KARST conditions & breakdown
KARST my pigment thickens

Cavetrash: emotional garbage
FOIBE: condition
of withdrawl
overhang / underhang
I grow from darkness & humidity
acidic water
my waves are all

So many bruises
  unbloom
  unbloom
  i never bloom

Solutional Cave: Over geological epochs these openings expand
as the walls are dissolved to become
caves or cave systems
underground drainage my system flows through rock
ACIDIC COMPOSITION
(what solution is this)

The portions of a solutional cave
that are below the water table
or the local level
of the groundwater
will be flooded

FLOWSTONE: A layer deposit of calcium carbonate on rock
where water has flowed or dripped
as on the walls of a cave

Flowing water My surface develops Without a voice of rock
Black water Blues Walls drip with this Acid from mouth
Words to touch Fuck this feeling back to rock

(Some rock dissolves)
Positive-sloping walls  Rise Wall Here  Enter me quickly  if you must

meaning can no longer hold the minerals

TUFA & TRAVERTINE

its nature is laminated

Deposits may grade

into thin sheets

draperies or curtains descend from overhanging portions of the wall

Some draperies are translucent
Some have brown and beige layers
often termed cave bacon

(Domestic Cave)
snap pop the smell thickens as color drives mossy in mouth green dissolves to black

Sizzle of water under surface Flow drives up & out & back in Push Push Push me out of water & back & in

FLOWSTONES can be damaged by a single touch

oil from human fingers causes flowing water to avoid the area which then dries out

Lack of water leaves traces in rock via absence or presence of FLOWSTONE

DIVE INTO THIS SINKHOLE
MY FOIBA OF HMMMMMMM
FLOW OF ABSENCE FLOW RHYTHM LINES WITH LIGHT FACE TO BATH WATER OF ACID GROWTH UNDER HOLE SINKS HERE INTO BLACK COLONY OF PAIN
BIRTHLIGHT TO PALMS  WALL OF SURFACE  HOLED WITH KARST FENSTER  KARST FENSTER  KARST FENSTER

(fractures enlarge over time)
Deus Ex Machina / Amy

Amy seated at her desk writes, and as she writes, says aloud:

In device age, a moat without fortress where she moves
along a domestic friction current, mist softening oaks, starlings cutting in,
when at last she says—to end—Chorus: to end, for
a vein of ink breaks the ring’s taut skin, so she hand-paddles to turn the
crude raft around (unwilling to wait to circle round again), a black rivulet
she manages to enter, hands ink-stained beyond the wrist then her
darkening dress a burning film Chorus: film until she’s blotted entirely
against the world. Now with a means along the thinner more rigorous
torrent, a backdrop of silver grass helps the vein pop, their razor tips
whisper uncertain refrain Chorus: refrain, starlings zoom in, circle to free
silver, to freeze her in possession of a bird’s eye, beasts with an agenda,
dreaded noise, singing of a tree they saw fall in the forest, competing who
sings it best, and despite the din she thinks Chorus: thinks, O the
flapping shivers diminutive bumps (likely appeal to be wind-thumped).
Until gaunt verticals, a nearing copse, pinch the frame, and her energy
flows with the confluence, nails dug in wood, meeting the arched gateway
at one with her heartwood raft, and as a veil Chorus: veil, she gives
contrast of tree to sky one last tonal purge, a weather vein telling the
climate where to go, entering the blanketeted world, eyes wild away from
the catalogue of weights and balances she breathes earth. An asylum
Chorus: asylum — not seeing what she knew to be but where all extremes
and excesses fall from her tongue, all metaphysic and metabolic reaches
far from home, where not a human soul would roam—part of a stain
Chorus: stain, but bleeding over rational gain.
Deus Ex Machina / Louise

Seated in Théâtre Lyrique, Louise watches a ship traverse wide sea.

Slice an icy sheet with the hull

loop the draped curvature and pinprick sky

he's an anchorite landmass swayd by umbilical chain

Woman on the shore with blowing hair.

her location maskd by swallows where swells thin
to tooth of comb

if a noose comes to mirror, she pulls the fabric thro

jagged wave circumference

Chorus: stitch hidden, a star

Captain on a ship attempting to groom himself.

gritcheek in the shaving cup

Chorus: crazy quilt, interlock

a way of seeing darkens

when you’re both the same, each just a measure of sea
Remnants

The inside of a woman is a pink dome.
There is nothing Sistine about the way it is holy,
the way it holds what is cystic and dirty. The body
makes the shapes we learned as children: circles
rolling into each other with meaningless thuds.
At night, the body is ashamed of itself.
In the morning, ashamed. It refuses to be a body.
It is nothing it can name. A husband cannot
understand a sagging belly, can make no feast of it.
God knows how to make beautiful things,
but resists, tantrically. After the mushroom,
the donkey’s eye, why make every woman
into something that can be swallowed dry?
When a mother deer approaches you with blood
on its mouth, it is the beginning and the end of art.
The brighter we are, the more we (are) matter.
In the atmosphere of the living, we thrive on the dark
undersides of meaning and men. In the afterlife, God
tickles rotted bellies back into breath. There, there
must be another way to swallow whatever kind of
beauty is left.
The Rules of Madness

Hey you dressed in a blackout as if darkness could save you -
I have a story about madness that starts with God and ends

with God. It’s about breathing, about who started the conversation
between the lungs and the brain as if organs were merely instruments

we could play. Hey you, don’t go anywhere. I am lonely here
in the woods where the owls mate for money and not even a breeze is free.

Did you know that everything costs more when you are hungry?
When you hang a sign on the sky that says Please Help Me, Please

not even God in his army uniform can pretend to be anything but the enemy
because it is so dark that broken arms are mistaken for infantries.

This gun in my underwear is about to shoot you where you start.
Where do you start the most? Is it your heart that can’t stand in line waiting
to be loved? Is it your foot that is trying to measure the distance
between aching and not aching? Achtung! This is really about God!

About how he fucks girls and doesn’t call them the next day. About how
he thinks their smell is the only offering that will bring him endlessness.

This is about God about how even he can find enemies in corn stalks and short walks
around the block. It is about beginning as a cell and ending as a cell except in the end

the cell is the empty space we inhabit not the dust that made us. When God says
he’s had it up to here with high tides and bow ties tell him he’s right. Tell him
to exhale because you once read an article about breath being the foundation
of the spirit. Tell him that when you try to sleep at night you are always startled

by the howling that comes from an unnamed beast making love to himself
inside your head. Watch his pale face turn red.
Bare-breasted, a woman dons a bear's nose —
another, a lion's mask, broken teeth
clinging to her loose hair, bits of bark
piercing one arm, poorly amputated

A wolf with its mouth open &
crushed between floral cushions
& the fur, gleaming
from gentle brushing —

FKA Twigs on the playlist

Rip & the furrow deepens & decorum
accumulates.
   Claws out, blend
with the wood. The body
in the shape of an eye, or a root.

A portrait with unused legs
what constitutes your belonging

* (address
distaste for another
I)

↓
↓
↓
↓
↓
↓

a dear afro
abstraction = accretion
experience as object
a rug strand
duress: reflect

* (address
usual arguments)

↑
↑
↑
↑

a detachment. source
extract, to erase
a conversation on love,
or: histories — , resistance.
a beaten narrative. & not

a presidential tear.
nat RAHA
Winter Solstice Was Late This Year

Lights out
The night is only
your friend when the signs hum
:::24-HOUR DRUGSTORE:::
when the streetlamps declare war
on peaceful sleep the night is
your only friend

Wake up
Call in your refill
Your arm forever belongs
to the compression of the automated sleeve
of a blood pressure machine
The red light does not blink at you
The red light merely blinks to ease the worry
of many you’s: I am on. I am working. This
is all the red blinking light means

Do you wonder how many you’s have sat
on that faux leather cushioned seat
arm snug in the sleeve and wished
on that blinking light

The last time you saw a shooting star you called it
what it was a meteoroid that would likely
burn out before it reached any wishes
cast upon it
& did you wish
(yes)
for what
(men
married men specifically
to stop hitting on me)
How little of you
(What)
To think only of yourself
(Yes how little
I can be)

How to stage your future?

You can say the number one cause of high blood
pressure is stress You can point at the many factors
that cause stress in your daily life For example
Christmas always seems to be around the corner
and you never seem to have anything *real* worth celebrating
except the fact that your entire Black nuclear family
has managed to live all these years

OR

You can say you got out of Brooklyn intact
You can say the nights you took the train home
alone 1 or 2 or 3 AM you did not get raped
or assaulted by the police although there was
that one time but that was just verbal and sure
your blood pressure increased but you’re alive
You can at least say that

How to stage your future?

Perhaps you’d rather become the foghorn
disturbing the night or become the meteor promised
to occupy this very galaxy you call home
(where the heart expands and contracts in glaring
regularity) or wouldn’t you rather just become
the becoming of becoming that is the pressure of an early morning
jack hammer turning stone into a scream that is the morning
becoming its new self

Red alert: Holiday Rotating Santa has hijacked the holiday
but not before the man burned his neighbor alive not before
the exploding plane knocked out an entire family not before
the torso was finally identified not before

Before

The funeral homes will run out of orchids
but that is the future future when people use hourglasses
to time the next murder of the next black body perhaps
we will lay those beside poinsettias

The future is such a stage

The future can be salvaged
or the future is salvageable

Everything depends on the stage
you are standing on
Does it not
or
n’est pas
or
¿no?
At some point in this day this will end
That time is now
I have grown weary
of thinking about what I’m not to think about
you know life stuff
because I bum people the fuck out
with my focus on
you know
life
stuff
Too bad I don’t
eat cookies
or cakes
or pies
I’d have something to busy myself with
some other trifle
but I’m going to go back
to my old-timey sand in a glass contraption
And count the seconds
I’ve lived here without
being raped and the seconds
someone else has lived here
and gotten raped
by now and the minutes
it’s only minutes believe me
before another black person is shot
by the cops and the seconds
it takes to construct
a story to build a weapon
from the playdough that is
the white imagination

Hush now
Don’t say a word
Mama is the mockingbird
& Papa
is the hand
holding her
by the neck

Shhhhh
Don’t scream

Stream
Stream
I hear the banks
don’t sleep

The moon means
nothing to them

You’re here in droves
and you keep fronting me

and you stay saying industry
There goes the neighborhood

They built a multiplex in my chest
It’s playing you in every theater

Our new plus ones taps their clavicles
Money rattles

Money marches
Money means until it doesn’t
You can’t snuff
the pilot light
once you’re realized

Before the knockout
a smaller hole punched
through the sky

I was wanted
in hair and makeup

You called an offscreen doctor
about your episodes

Why does a scrape
of no length temper

We aren’t ready to die
Not this time
Of course your magic was deliverance
Of course your order was your art

You couldn’t know the drill
of night that holes the moon

You knew my dreams
were just movies

You had my country
in your hands

I loved you on
and on the grid

I could not sleep
I reached for you

My hands don't work
I could not sleep

The time was wrong
Please sleep me home
cedar

once you are married it’s all about the money
how much of it you will never have

I want to sleep with one of my neighbors
I don’t really want to I just want to imagine it
I don’t really want to imagine a specific neighbor
I just want to imagine holding a mistake that close
not being able to run from it
because leaving would mean being even closer to what you fucked up

I want to imagine staying in the same place for a very long time like a tree over decades
but life seeping from the body like money from the bank

we replaced every screen with a mirror
every spring television finale gasp silenced
on a scale from one to quiet don’t scream

hold your mouth shocked open let no sound escape

I see with microscope precision the cancer
in your gums cells like small fat insects
invading one another’s sick bloated bodies antennae
dotted black and losing itself to the multiplication of self
the bigger picture is lost to these microcosmic ghost mountains

it’s okay you can say something now wait no one move

my phone is vibrating and I can’t find it
Fever,

My friend the magician told me over and over not to break character, and then he broke character.

I know what you’re going to say, brilliance, we shouldn’t reformat anything, “reformatting is wrong”, even if we’re bound to stiff columns, even if we’re attacked by lions, both of us, on separate occasions, we should always use the original partition, but I learned that it was wrong to take, so I left to take,

since thieves broke into my mom’s Volvo,

in one line, darling,

give me that look

and in another,

place where I’m erased
When I offered her cake, she said My throat is closing, and she dropped her fork. Wild mice, brittle mice, tailbone blistered from the seatback. Something is missing, and it’s serious. She hid her durables in underwear, in flowerpots, in the mirror after checkups. Something is missing, and it’s a noun, countable, uncountable, a state, a cycle, a speaking, speech, discourse, removal. Use it in a sentence, and it will lay your muscles waste. “Imprisoned for a coup”, blood vessels dance less accurately. It is serious, what recovery from surgery and burns can lead to. I didn’t have the heart of the person I’d just given my heart to.
Where they kill lice with their teeth, like monkeys
and cannot bear to press them between their fingers.
Where kinship is thought a bond less strong and lasting
than those formed in true collegiality.
Where they swear by kneeling, touching the ground,
and looking at the sun, simultaneously.
Where geneticists produced a complete map
of the chicken genome, gallus gallus domesticus.
Where they expose themselves as a cordial greeting
akin to kissing each cheek or shaking hands.
Here they know not miles, but stones.
You wanna know how many of your fucks
would be over and enough for me, finally?
Our daughter has just learned of infinity.
She uses the word widely and loosely.
It’s not a number, but a concept, I explain.
Indignant, she simply says, oh yeah? show me!
One Black Australorp laid 364
eggs in 365 days.
Fear not, you are worth more than the chickens.
Indeed the hairs on your head are all counted,
and multiplied. That’s the number of times
That’s what would satisfy your mad wife—
The boy’s dream: like a flower that blossoms, unknown
to the flock, caressed by the breeze, the girl seizes.
When I was younger, I built a little structure
I called boatshedboat. If I felt some boy’s penis,
I mean, eyes, upon me, I’d say it fast.
boatshedboat boatshedboat. boatshedboat boatshedboat
This kept my mouth open for a long time.
When someone likes what I post I imagine
they like me, or they like what I mean.
Fuck Archibald MacLeish and meaning and being.
I am not interested, I mean, interesting.
The human mind hides from itself, and I find
its hiding place in a grotto or a cave
I find its bedroll and its dried meat I find
its retreat, I find its ancient drawings
of the animal it just slain and the bird head
atop the dying human frame I find
its sex is always erect, even unto death
I find mine quivers at the sight of it I find
that between prehistory and classical antiquity
human sexuality went astray I find
my desire to lay down in its still warm bed and weep.
the book of fat

(me too | spent years | drenched

in ketchup mounds | mini

cocoon | learning the most

from chicken nuggets | wide life

the book of fat | for no one

silent with the dead | horse

a poem | 'til it is | tell it (stank)

passed-down platitudes re:

american blob of blood & skin

glass actress | married off
consumed | cooped | inside the big

| blessed sweet | & sour

flailing in fry baths | do us a favor

you'll | blow (back) | roast on the spit

of zaftig rolls | thighs thick as

all the way | in love

me too | me too

to the yummiest bidder | sin | pigtailed friend rubbing it in

salve | for blistered chub

pink chicken (&) strip | for us

turn real slow | unrobe | tower

a gathering ache | soaked (thru)

with an artless oily love | me too | me too
Where is that Messy Such a Thrill Tipping Point —

That underwater trauma in dire need —
That lie path — that wisdom
streak — that Foucault ornamentation that people put on display —
It’s off the blow charts — do get off my flowchart
Barbecue elsewhere —
well-worn laundry code —
blimps of febreze
And diagnosticians
Get rich quick or die young
We feel enemy — fuel
We feel old — fat
We feel foolish — young
We feel empiricism — waste
We feel electric — boom
We feel bottomless — drink
We feel careful — anxious
We feel love — passionate
We feel toxic — vengeful
We feel valuable — talent
We feel awkward — psychosomatic
We feel failed — dishonest
We feel distressed — sleeplessness
We feel joyful — achievements
We feel plain — boredom
We feel corporal — sex
We feel
All your memories fabricate squeamish desires that mold tantalists

Oh how our pathways crossed most gabhal on the pinwheel strait

I applied my eyes to the toxic zone and feel both invalid and obsolete
Covered in dog hair recoiling shamefully
Pinned down on all sides but a warrior in spirit
A fine capitulary thing
then your father is a nice man
Anti-oath of last night surrender
Share my shame
caught in a wheelie bath of impoverished ties
I lasso after being a wounded ticket to a baseball game
I hit the homerun that knocked
the pitch out of the stadium
So that your mind could be extended to further dwellings
And in the future I will drink only shakes

You punish me but I just destroy you

Telling screams my porch lights off

A slight tantrum in between decisions and boredom

We try to relax and then claim "we were born with skill" under the big chokehold we admire the
see you soon

Losing sleep over the sauce
in your mind you watch people
Posing in Parks with peacocks
You see the arrogant faces on display interbred with bright blue splayed feathers

Porch of the light
August open your mouth
Garlic in your throat
deep sluice gives me high times
I'm intentionally unemployed I spent all my money on salt
Braided algae into my hair
I'm an echo ocular
go later
locate the seal

Taking the vestigial pregame leak
So as not to crowd the next surface
Heckling the rocket ship before takeoff
Symposium on marijuana bills
Fair trade?
Pressing my
Quailed
Enrich smoke
I invoke an interior childlike other archduke of water and Coke
In my sad sleeves I squeeze lemons the emotional gauntlets preserve my speech I remember I never wanted to harbor no relations
My game was always plain

*** I don't want to cheat
The location waivers
Ever so gently corroding time
Entire
Eagles
For bathing your shadows
Fall under the womb
A mother wrestles with
"I shouldn't have had you"
Just as I
Ascender of every poem I wrote
An accident
Coming into being
I feel tired with the thoughts of having to explain myself
Pouring butter over my HP Model
Am exhausted to hear someone saying
"You need to write and live with goals in mind"
I want to force a few joints into their smile
Say "you sexy rabbiteer, it's healthier to live in denial, with vertigo slightly on cue."
—Am I a load-bearing performance, a larger and lighter watchword

And am I now what whistling allegory you sang that I sang—

Am I calling out now,
hungry as all hell
to the hum of the water heater
wrapped in a dripping towel
swelling still around the icon
carved on a table

Am I motioning away
from the warmth
am I going full relapse
my fingers white and away
and plaque buzzing, buzzing
a failure by hunger,
by request

And how now can I be
a sequence on this driveway
wearing these broadcasts
as the radio hums away in my hands
and the sky blows to my signal
This isn’t a poem. A poem figures things out via language. I have no language. Every word becomes a covering up of something I haven’t done. Each ending a calling out, a final, watery note to be repeated without resolution. Then the fade-out.

When I was born I was born good.

That pulling my tights up is a sign. That leaning over to pull up my tights is a sign. That the man over there is stopping and touching himself and that is my fault and my tights’ fault. That I will never know what my body is doing and I will hear always someone tell me to put it away, to discipline it, a body, another body, my body.

Under hold of this threat: little girl waiting to be shook open around a nice man who will inevitably do bad things. That everywhere I go, there will be a nice man who will do bad things.
I say I’m working on a poem thinking about.

I say this is a poem vector. This is a vector towards.

I say I’m working on a female serial poem. Towards anger, towards trauma.

I say I have nothing to give and it tastes sour.

I say I wake with a mouth full of chicory, of woodworm.

I say there are no other words for what I mean by body.

I say I’d recommend not reading it at all, but it’s what I’ve been marinating on if I’m not writing Helen poems and then this just sort of came out.

I say And one part is something I’ve been meaning to say, that it just sort of came to me a few weeks ago, and

I say it’s not a poem, but maybe after doing this I can figure out what else to write about, it’s been bothering me in these kinds of poems.

I say This is not a poem.
Shysces ritardando,
so slow in all the beautiful.

She revival around you
with an almost machine-like
passion.

Bruise garden with her hustler admirer,
filling her mouth and doing the aboriginal.

My partner in teenage,
so pretty in disguise.

Don’t hand your heat
to the heartbreak night.

She is just bleeding psychic hearts incredibly.

Her smile ever so slightly demented,
having lived.

I love you all around the bore andmoreagain.

When you shush me, I do
whatever, I hide
your panties in the Frigidaire,
I hide my love
in the way you bide
the fork of tine.
Because I love you,
I pierce my nice,
my Klimt,
my eclipse.

Because I love you,
that’s what’s
in the mood for.

Because I love you,
I will promise
Mercedes Benzos and Charles Mansions.

Your undivided attention on my divided thighs.

Your divided heart.

She taught me how to love against me.

Sonorous resound from her cherry-pound.

I’m sorry her heart was attacked by her body,
by her undying will to live.

The stories we may tell to the children we’ll never have.

Exploding hearts to all,
and to all a good
Mary-trance.
1.

once upon a time
in the fangs

there was a child

& her sister

"we don't want to waste the sunshine,"

& away they went

into danger

their mother waved byebye

to darkness byebye to light

very hungry

very juicy were the girls
2.

once upon a time

there was a boudoir

boudoir boudoir boudoir

sang the girls sing-songy

& entered

grandmother knew but said nothing

mother

was almost like

the best mother in the world
lived together ever after
saying *ninight* to beloveds

*ninight* Macah
*ninight* Deedee

*ninight* Oscar & baby Louie

*ninight* woods
*ninight* witch
*ninight* grownups
& shit

wild animals are sleeping
their terrible teeth: sleeping
lost & cold are sleeping
tainted food: sleeping

& we are cunning

our red lips
our good little souls
our black
or yellow hair
much as when mushrooms
much as time wooded
setting, Orion piece
tending to the fire, a chair
experience looting liturgical

normal gallons remind
dirt queen, wet
conscience go on groom
sit—lawn shed and shake
time capsule from
pants

least spilt longer star caps
the love run happened
when up backs, under ass that
delight in the o hey morning
above the evergreen belt
every ill fitting feel I ate
portesis with two us, we
rest in cutlery clearing into
buckets barks locks
VAPOUR TRAIN

Turn sideways, break
the space bar
and undo all the wagon trails
made last night in the
dirt out of mica chips
swollen lips
black top’s hot rocks
and soda stings grape
needles hours of sun
spent behind blinds
edged with light

My controlled release over
time + space brings us
to a sod dugout, miles
from any approach
yesterday I put out
flames with my petticoat
today a surprise party in a strip mall
there’s an extra game
on the pinball machine
a pull, release, and
terrain is covered, prizes
won in LED only for moments
but we need real water
and the wonderful thing
is terrible--
time keeps moving,
good things are left
in the dirt, and scares
come up quickly on
monster rivulets which
up and re-root without
notice. I taste rain
and wipe eyes.
Kiss Men in Their 70’s & in Their 30’s

to feel love  to know love
to touch my toes in love
feel my teeth in love
pull my hair in love
polish my nails in love
walk down the stairs in love
get a new hip in love
slick up my lips in love
let my boyfriend love me in love
perfume my breasts in love
pap my pussy in love
meditate in my chair in love
boy friend moves in in love
smell my pit hairs in love
scrub my dry skin in love
walk on my tippy toes in love
blink my eye lids in love
pucker my lips in love
look in his eyes in love
lust in love
drink margaritas in love
play with dogs in love
pick up chickens in love
let Lettie move to LA in love
she LOVES LA
drive the highway in love
sing along to the radio in love
buy a dress in love
snuggle in a blanket in love
go in the hot tub in love
talk on the phone in love
look on the net for love in love
wear a crazy hat in love
snowshoe in love
walk an icy path to the chickens in love
wear hearing aids in love
charge up the bitch in love
hug often in love
blab with friends in love
buy stuff in love
get in the pool in love
listen to music in love
write poems in love
divorce in love
eat Indian food in love
have a boyfriend move out in love
pee outside in love
plant a garden in love
hold the grandbabies in love
love the grandbabies in love
kiss in public in love
wash my hair in the tub in love
swim laps in love
imagine the water is your hands in love
By some strange gladness elated

It was a judgeless
day, or a dream
without turbulence or
prediction—

a hummingbird,
too: a needle,
holographic
nightfall. You,
joy boy.

Closed my eyes
in sweet demising.

Not writing.
Not writing.
Candice Wuehle

DOES the INTERLOCUTOR NEED a GUN CHAMBER, a SATELLITE DISH?

Admit the interlocutor’s mansion invoked desire:
a structure by which one
is served a menu from which one
selects and is served.
We mainlined on autuming cuts, beige
sheen, paisley, pine spheres, centaur
flesh. Our longings
serpentined
so quickly
we hailed them.
We reached
across one another’s china, dipped
blousons in obscure sauces. Haste
becomes the base of being.
As if our language contained the grammar for apology.
We considered out parents,
setting us up, or down.
At the interlocutor’s mansion the elements were othered:
oil, marshmallow, hair, pages.
There was no quintessence, time was not everywhere.
At the axis of
reworks &
reworld &
reword me with an/other
I de-cored cannot even re/quest you admit
in the interlocutor’s mansion
I was your dinner companion,
I may have only believed it was you.

Imagine I spilt salt
and refused to embarrass myself
with learned history, a refusal
to acknowledge anything
over, or against my shoulder. As if I was not made
of salt, as if I was made of need
for more
world crystals, tooth & tongue kissing in complexity.
I’m not sorry I can taste so much iron, or gold.

The interlocutor is dipped in guilt:
but his mansion is mere sequin, sandstone,
bushes burning with lavender, sage, amber, yarrow.
The Spirit Realm vomits to smell his Real Estate.
He is hot, here.
Once,
My father sang the chorus of a song from his youth
over the whole of a song from mine,
his voice slowed to speed of snow,
another abundant echo
I had not noticed
And if there are also flowers in hell
there are also flowers in here; can I qualify
that? I mean, is there a quality to that
which can only be gotten at if I admit my limit
is tempered only by my access to others? I am
an animal
who needs to beg.
I need to know
what my bones are for: my knees, my knuckles,
the long stretch of skin along my back I never
encounter. If my hands are open they are not
closed. Ask the architect about the gate to receive
an answer on the hinge.

The deer has been in the impasse since the hunter left. Ask
the artist about the body
to receive an answer on the gate. An interlude
is not an excuse, for
example it is a pleasure to experience
another’s weight allowing a second access to my own burden,
as when you cover me so completely I am
allowed experimental cartography;
for a stretch our skin is ours and
still I do not encounter myself. I need
to walk through the gate
forever
and
you tell I was talking in my sleep
in your dream.
I am a woman who needs
to see her own back.
Ask the poet
one question.

Is the face the most sacred or the most secular object on the earth?
In the other’s hands in the open
it is neither, but in the alien’s hands in the open
it is both. Again, I cite the diction when at outskirts is the syntax. Against
myself I mean to demand encounter of the frame
not the contents, not the face
but the open hand.

The deer has been in the impasse since the hunter left. Ask
the listener a question and meet your own
masks other halves in abrupt, unanticipated echo. Not the affixed inner, the elected outer as the moon in cycle except exception is created for the disnature of earthshine; overlit arenas of rock in the planet’s dark limb. I didn’t intend to encounter you. Hunter,

I asked the wrong questions. Hunter, why did you leave me with this dotted hide, softness

///////////
It’s September and I am tired. All summer I have tried to write a poem the way I used to write a poem, if only I could remember how I used to do it. If I ever knew. I don’t remember much about my past selves until they come back to visit me (which hardly ever happens, I am hard to catch up with). I do know that I used to sit in bed with my naked legs splayed at odd angles. I used to feel threads of light enter my skull and move down through my body like futuristic rivers. I used to vibrate. I used to listen. I used to be the river, flooding entire rooms. Once: a whole house. A family. I drowned everything in my effort to live more completely than I felt I was. I guess sometimes staying alive takes a sort of violence.

Now I listen but it is too noisy to hear much of anything.

All summer I have been trying to gather myself back into my arms.
(That’s not true but it felt true when I typed it.)
(Maybe it is true.)
(It is true I am always changing the truth.)
(Or maybe what I mean is that the truth is always changing and I am hyperaware of every molecule of space buzzing in around and through me, that is me.)
(It is also true that I am hyperaware of my hyperawareness and my therapist says maybe this is an illness or maybe not but either way there is no medicine for me.)
(I say fuck that something is wrong.)
(I say I think I want some medicine.)
(I say I don’t need any medicine nothing is wrong. I say I am just a woman nobody understands. I say I am a woman and no man will ever be able to hold me the way I want to be held (it is true you can’t contain me). I say I don’t want to be held. I don’t need to be held. What I need is to not be needed. I say (need me anyway). I say (please). I say)
(I say Okay fine.)
(I say (Love.))
(I say (You see this is me listening.
I have been trying to listen.
I have been trying to be a woman
because I guess that is what I am
even though I don’t remember choosing to be a woman
but it is okay because at least I am not a man
except that I have found it is really hard to be a woman
with all these people telling me how to be a woman, that there are good
and bad ways of being a good kind of woman. I have never wanted
to be any kind of anything. I just want
to be myself but by being)
myself I am sometimes being
the wrong sort of woman
because I have been conditioned
to sometimes be something
other than what I think is myself
(because I am a woman).
Or something like that.
I think that’s how it goes.
It is depressing to think about things.
I wonder how many writers are as tired of words as I am (I don’t really wonder how many but I am thinking of you). Sometimes I wish I’d never found words at all. (I feel guilty for typing that because it feels like a mini-suicide. I am sorry but it’s true, sometimes I don’t want to be (I am not sorry). It’s also true that I most enjoy the company of people who know what it’s like to want to kill themselves. Those who have tried. Existing near them is easy, not having to explain myself. A general consensus.)

In my journal I make lists of essay ideas but when I go back to read the lists they sound so very uninteresting. When I go back through my journal I like most the things I stole from other people:

We are all trying to extract from madness the life it contains.

I could write an essay on that. It’s true I am obsessed with madness. Obsessed with obsession.
My therapist thinks there is nothing really wrong with me (I am just wrong for thinking there is, which is probably not what he meant). My therapist thinks that I might be obsessed with the idea that something is wrong with me because I have learned to think that way about myself. I have been conditioned. I have been taught. As a woman, as a daughter, as a person in the world. Especially as a female-identified person in a male-identified world. Especially as a girl. Especially as a daughter to my father.

(Just now I thought of my father and a brick wall built itself up against the back of my throat. I guess this means I don’t want to talk about my father. Except he did tell me he only expected me to do so well at everything because he knew I could. I guess he saw the potential in me. I guess he believed a girl could be something better than a girl. I guess that was nice of him, believing in me like that.)

I don’t want to talk about my father. (Maybe when he is dead I can write about him (God that is an awful thought.). (I really hate myself right now.))

In my journal I write:

No man on the street is worth kissing. I can tell in the way he moves.

In my journal I write:
I sleep with the windows open as many nights of the year as I can. This is something I've never questioned.

In my journal I write:

*You are so untouchable.*

In my journal I write:

*You are so sensitive, anything less than incredible will hurt.*

In my journal I write:

*Today something feels right, being here drinking coffee alone.*

In my journal I write:

*All my orgasms are stillborn, falling out between my legs with a dull thud*

In my journal I write:

*At the moment I don’t miss anyone. I am so nostalgic for the future like so many people*

*I am nostalgic for the future we said we would have*
LIKE A GRAIN

The autumn rot ate me, do you see what I mean
Now she speaks no more
A silent leaving. A silence, having left

She turns like a sun or scythe
Speaks to no one now, even if they’re dead

No soul is worth its weight in material,
not silk, not cloth, not wood, not peat
No soul is worth its weight in stains
But I did not die

She synthesizes her acids
Green turned leaf, bone turned carbon
She says Don’t think you can keep anything, fool
She says I tried to tell you, fool

This is partly accidental this
Is partly proof of something fine and terrible
Something small, like a grain
CONTRIBUTORS


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Which do you consider more likely: A) that *jae LAWSON* bit a radio activist and grew two additional rows of nipples, thus accommodating the nursing of several piles of wood pulp and two very short humans, or B) that *jae LAWSON* lives in Iowa? Please explain your answer in 200 words, and submit no later than the moment of your birth.

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