

SHE

YOU

I

to the women

thank you to molly fischer for her cover image and to
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A Preface

How is the iconic figure made and what is lost in the making? This work is a monument. It is many voices, one of which is my own. It is a story that breaks the tradition of retelling. It is a lesson without linearity. It is misperception. It is objectification. It is breaking windows. It is female. It is violent. What does a nation's war do to the body of its women? Can we remember collectively? This is a cross-genre text that attempts to interrogate the authenticity of the canonical; to tell a story, memoir, through the amalgamation of the character and myself.

This sample of writing is from a completed manuscript entitled 'She/You/I' written last spring. I feel a bit of an explanation is due. I worked with three main characters: Britney Spears, Camille Claudel and the mythic figure of Penthesilea around the idea of war and memorial. The book is divided into four main sections and touches upon the intersection of language, history, gender and the impact of violence on these women.

there are places where we are told to go and remember a common loss. these places are made so people are not consumed with grief and so they do not carry it around with them all the time. people in the same place share a common knowledge. this knowledge has been carefully placed upon them. there are figures we have read about and persons of importance are taught to us when we can barely read and we rely only on pictures. we become used to the pictures of the persons of importance and we feel like we know them, we feel like we can remember the slope of their shoulders, the way they twitch in their sleep. The persons of importance become a constant comfort for us, not because they are comfortable but because we know they have existed and we are used to them. they allow us to make order out of a long history of bitter occurrences. they allow us to make sense of uncomfortable things. we carry them; they float. and at some point they allow us to feel ourselves. we are what we are because we have inherited these persons of importance and the place where we were born. the place is made up of millions of people who have read or heard about a very small number of people. the people of the place are always experiencing what happens to the other people of the place, but they do not know this. we are foolish and believe we cannot share loss.

the tense relationship between bodies and names crystallized the emergence of commemoration as a distinctive form of representation, one that simultaneously subsumed individual memories into collective ones and sought to mask appropriation in the guise of intimacy.

say how do we look/how does she look
say is this your memory/ is this our memory
say our we missing parts/ am i in pieces
say this body is nothing like i expected

*Every war memorial has an identity that
can evoke memory of past wars, and
these evocations may have competing or
conflicting meanings, even though the
sacred and the non-sacred are often
separated.*

it was commissioned at the fountain or
beside ground zero our dust betrayed us and
our skin becomes their skin
became perilous enough to disquiet
Plato, and oh
how we cling to our forms, how we swallow
all matter, how we hold war in our lungs
when we sing we say pieces of me, when we
walk we hide, when we love we forget to
check certificates

there was moss underneath and there were fat
cows and a boy on a bicycle on a small road
headed for town

there was a sheet wrapped around her legs
and the buzzing of a phone set to vibrate

there was the slumping of a body between
trees

we all meant so much to look at like sparkles
or sequins in direct sunlight there were lines
drawn and muslin to tent them it was
everyone's spit on the ground

*War memorials provide sanctuaries from the
present by idealizing the past through
commemoration. Loyalty becomes more than word
or feeling; it has local place.*

there are reasons for our nudity, relief and memorial
we write names across our chests and our breasts bear
them like our own children or young ferns, we are
taught to move slight and skilled so as not to smudge
the names, we are taught to protect them, we are
taught they are beautiful, like braids and bows or
bluebells

the names sometimes make sounds, but not that we
hear in words, we feel them, we know them, like the
sounds of the belly or cracking joints, their sounds
move in part of us, their needs are our needs and we
feed them when they are hungry and we water them
and nourish them to grow as we grow

the names escape us, in dreams and hiccups, we
cannot contain them, they are too great to hold in and
we feel the others' eyes on us we come to see that the
names carry weight and that others will love us or hate
us because of the names we bear, the others want to
touch the names, want to remember, want to make
them sacred or profane

and sometimes we feel the names overpower us, we
wish them off our bodies, we scratch and scrub but we
do not know how to remove ourselves from them or
them from us, and even if they were gone, we would
still feel them as phantom limbs, we would feel them
by their absence, and what would the others make of
us, how would we know ourselves, the severing would
hurt

ooh that Aeneas carrying that old guy 300(the movie)
empire rescue a dolman is a type of clothing
impressive carrying the burden coverer with earth
and smaller stones where is he going? to find Rome?
leaving only the stone "skeleton" of the burial very
nice print the sea/the sky the hunt and break away
friendship battle and an opening at the front long
and loose, with narrow sleeves two rocks looks old
the stuff of research a stone table the hunt

PENTHESILEA a dolman is a type of
single-chamber megalithic tomb intertwined strength
on top timeless covered with earth and smaller stones
Europe not edibility of the ages alone mound
intact sand on the shore gone by excellent blacks
love turned to shale so that there is an all over
opening though in many cases the covering has
weathered away mountains formed from ice enslaved
hard rocks rescue an all over front in that mask i
don't understand two rocks, as a base to another rock

THE Amazon Queen Penthesileia, daughter of Otrere and Ares, had sought refuge in Troy from Erinnyes of her sister Hippolyte (also called Glauce, or Melanippe), whom she had accidentally shot, either while out hunting or, according to the Athenians, in the fight which followed Theseus's wedding with Phaedra. Purified by Priam, she greatly distinguished herself in battle, accounting for many Greeks, among them (it is said) Machaon, though the commoner account makes him fall by the hand of Eurypylus, son of Telephus. She drove Achilles from the field on several occasions - some even claim that she killed him and that Zeus, at the plea of Thetis, restored him to life but at last he ran her through, fell in love with her dead body, and committed necrophily upon it there and then. When he later called for volunteers to bury Penthesilea, Thersites, a son of Aetolian Agrius, and the ugliest Greek at Troy, who had gouged out her eyes with his spear as she lay dying, jeeringly accused Achilles of filthy and unnatural lust. Achilles turned and struck Thersites so hard that he broke every tooth in his head and sent his ghost scurrying down to the Tartarus.

with arms like lifeboats, the myth is not to mock but to establish the difference between the good and the unfitting. most times these creatures are missing parts. they are said to be made of wood and glue and glass. the queen's burial site is unclear. i think she counts as casualty. there is little known before the fight. we are unclear about the place of origin. we know that there was death and we know there was a war but we have no site for this. the image that is captured is a moment before disembowelment, on an urn, now preserved.

she was the only one of us to ever engage in direct combat. they tried to dress her in honors, they tried to give her medals and ribbons, made of alloys and silks, they tried to make her a military man. she was Troy and WWI and Korea. she was the head lieutenant of an all black battalion. she killed as if pitting peaches.

and could she meet the Blessed without you?

love your hands as much as your armor? the
muck we swallow that she will be nothing but
cornhusks it is that day now and
once I wrote a poem about redbrick a
waitress but it was really about wreck we will
inherit your half gods and glory mounted ilk and
thrust onto that stretch of highway it is like Lincoln,
more dead than ever human
because we men make myth for mountains
she might have been there in the passenger seat
dressed for the track she was there like the
rain
did you become something else? do you speak
words or form dust? but all along we were stacking
matches, not soldiers there were
dances happening there was no honor
enough like reddened carpets, they want
to write your name atop hills you,
wind that spooned the road one second too soon
she spat that Blessed thing out
she was fallen, but no better for it.

what do we keep?

i thumb through the glory of the early morning shower, of pigtails, of bloody epic

a photograph of a young man with his legs blown off standing on stilts

or the death of a Yorkshire terrier named baby,

Penthesilea retrieves only 43,300 google hits, sex tape gets 22,300,000

i keep them but i had to try hard

the first time i had sex on my period it wasn't sexy and you flipped the mattress

in the morning i get turned on when i see the stains on your fingers and the inside of your thighs, the closest i've come to victory, as if i spread my legs for a handfull

about necrophilia and the desire to be inside of. and if the body holds warm one last chance to make it. how common. when women die in sheets beside a spouse. on battlefields and racetracks, there is already so much musk, a smell of it, common law, cornerstone on top cornerstone, realities of privacy, people left to people. how the body holds grief. how one body holds another.

about honor, or respectful burial. preservation of the deceased. the ones that are counted and retrieved and the ones that are not. the propriety of the dressed. we want intact. we want the dead to look alive, we want lipstick and shoes on their feet. we do not highlight the failed parts, what was ruptured or torn. spend some time searching for another's limbs, there is a necessary weight in pounds, the politics of loss.

about our body and the urge to restrict desire. what i feel i can do and what i feel i cannot. that the myth states Amazons maimed their male children and murdered lovers. how horny can these women be. how rough. a women feels fucked after taking it in the ass. but i wanted it as much as my partner. occurrence. there is a real cock in the mouth of that marble head. there is the way i am told my body should behave in bed. there is the urge to cut off my breasts.

hope is that britney spears? should have stayed what
a beautiful girl oh, and in this photo your hair is like
grass of me innocence love romance poor girl
Louisiana but what BTW are you happy? what? she
was supposed to be my friend britney britany britnay
britine britanie sweet and cutesie my look in your
eyes exploited youth what do you want from me? it
rather sickens me you can't fool me what big eyes
you have moving to Hollywood ha ha ha by the
media sad story new beginnings and also sad is the
fascination by the public you're all tied up with
yourself a life falling to pieces **BRITNEY**

i'm still in the zone tabloid fodder the more i look
but this is a young mother the better to see you with
my dear you want something you are young you're
pathetic i'm sorry and my jazz teacher played played
played that while we sweated the more i see you have
much to learn two children and it seemed to barely
strike i am too harsh on you what would her life
have been like if she never left i don't even remember
how to spell your name the young all the time the
beautiful in general it's not your fault the tragedy
chord you want something what do you want to
know sure she asks herself the same question from
me what i can't tell do you remember mine

Excluding the 19 hijackers, 2,974 people died in the attacks. The overwhelming majority of casualties were civilians, including nationals of over 90 different countries. In addition, the death of at least one person from lung disease was ruled by a medical examiner to be a result of exposure to dust from the World Trade Center's collapse.

it was the days of guzzling gas everyone knew that. her father died. her paternal grandmother died. her sister died. her uncle died. her first boyfriend died in a car crash. her mother died. acousin died. her lover died without telling her. her friends died. we all were dialing new york trying to get through but the lines were so tied up there were busy signals for hours and hours.

It began the moment the pop singer broke a court order and refused to return her children to the custody of their father. As the emergency services arrived at her home, so did the paparazzi. With the promise of a monster payday, more and more rolled up until the street was thick with bodies and the sky filled with the sound of helicopters. Four hours later, an ambulance, taking a distressed woman to the hospital for an assessment, could only manage a crawl for the crowds filling the road. But if footage of the paparazzi shoving cameras at the ambulance window were confronting, they were not the only ones enthusiastically cashing in on the 26-year-old's downfall. She is hit by drug abuse claims. A former bodyguard has intervened in her custody battle with her ex, claiming she put her two young sons at risk. She may have lost her children, her career and her reputation but She isn't eliciting any sympathy. The famously acerbic gossip blogger Perez Hilton was so overjoyed that her hospital admission increased the number of visitors to his website, he breathlessly shared his good fortune with readers. "You guys really care about her - a lot! Friday was the busiest day we've ever had on Perez Hilton.com. Over the course of 24 hours, we had over 10 million page views. 10,089,428 to be exact. That's insane! Thanks, girl." The

message followed several days of uncontained excitement from Hilton, who posted doctored pictures of her sporting a straitjacket, a Hannibal Lecter mask, as well as one showing devil horns protruding from her head. He slated her as a "f***-up", and posted video footage of her strapped to a stretcher under the headline "The money shot", and a video montage he described as the "highlights of all the drama". Perhaps it would be naïve to expect more from the king of Hollywood gossip, but one might expect more from a psychologist. Dr Phil McGraw, Oprah Winfrey's favorite shrink turned TV personality, visited her before she was released from LA's Cedars-Sinai hospital. At first it seemed he was just a kindly psychologist, familiar with the rigors of fame, offering help. However shortly after the visit, Dr McGraw blabbed to Entertainment Tonight. "My meeting with her and some of her family members this morning in her room at Cedars leaves me convinced more than ever that she is in dire need of both medical and psychological intervention. "She was released moments before my arrival and was packing when I entered the room. We visited for about an hour before I walked with her to her car. I am very concerned for her." He is now advertising a TV special about her. The website for his show, Dr Phil, reads:

"Exclusive! Dr Phil gives his impressions of her after their in-hospital one-on-one." He's not the only one who still sees potential in a three-day-old story. Since being released from hospital on the weekend, she has been trailed by an enormous paparazzi pack.

The perils of troubled the pop star overshadowed the war since late last year, graphs of news mentions on Google's Trends Labs show.

Us has learned that Spears' paternal grandmother, Emma Jean Spears, in June 1966 committed suicide at age 31. Britney's grandmother, who suffered from depression, shot herself in the chest with a shotgun at the grave of her infant son who had died eight years earlier just three days after being born.

A recent memo leaked from the Associated Press, which plans to add twenty-two entertainment reporters to its staff, announces that everything that happens to Britney is news

we plan to watch the orbit and we plan to love it

a warrior of sorts if we expand our language,
if warrior means survival, if it means lasting

and she has lasted, in this cave of fishnets and
menstrual stains

we were literally picking out panties for her

most women do not feel they are women
unless they have large breasts, we eroticize
virginity, or the tombstone, the statuesque

and we wonder if she feels the luxury of
sensation,

there are reasons we cannot classify her as
daisy, the things that come out of her

as collapse, as implosion
we wait for this

a perfect landmark of America in decline

her nature is to last, and our sense of smell
fails us

we have no light but the yellow of her thighs

the conviction that she is frail

we are a multitude of limbs, we lie still inside
the mine

elegy

were the magnolias recovered? lips to lead
to lips to stone. the mother recovers last
another. you were told of this moment
only once, you went back each summer
wearing your soccer cleats. begging for a
lick-a-maid, packing cold mac n' cheese
she had no land of her own, or she would
have lain there, daddy was not, his hands
were smaller than my own. son was, you
lay down in her place once or twice, pink
cotton and girlhood stains your
underwear, touch of a bunny paw, that
ringing underneath the ground, only she
felt, but now holds you, becoming
magnolia.

she becomes this regular spectacle and we forget the point is that she was beautiful. ineffectual, really? and what we symbolize with our heat, what we stress with our hands and bent heads. i have the feeling sometimes i am better than. i have the feeling i am. but i wince when others speak for me, and i do not correct them and i believe they retain historical facts with ease. i think the binary. i think. i am non-operational. i have two breasts and two thighs. i wet my lips with tongue but the act is read wrong. i lose momentum when the coin stops. i daisy. i chain. i bite your neck with a tie dye burst. i am malleable. come touch me lace locked and loose. when a phone rings the feedback makes me. when the theater lights fade my mouth opens. i close my eyes and see red. i feel sloppy when i see girls in crisp cream dresses. i forget to change my tampon and i bleed.

she plans to visit the middle east sometime this year or next and what could be more American than the American dream of pop dressed like a cadet, performing in front of all those whooping boys?

she will enter in nothing but the flag and she will believe it. she will have toy guns strapped to her hips that shoot sequins over the crowd. she will feel brave just for being there. an ambassador. a daisy chain. release.

this one time i saw you in a picture on a hill wearing all white. i knew better, but some part of me thought: this is what i am supposed to be like.



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