

**This  
Opera  
of  
peace**

**Amy  
King**

This opera of peace  
whirls and whorls around us  
stretching darkness into light,  
its space memory issues  
clanging against  
my pitch perfect self-  
infested background—  
Someone came upon me  
searching for a bitch pony  
and when I immediately  
cleaned myself up not  
wanting to be associated  
with sexual curiosities,  
no matter how cabineted  
or ready-made they were,  
I knew I was the kind of person  
who rides between towns  
on terra cotta music,  
green's dark arm  
to touch the earth of her skin,  
and the view into a sort  
of dusted-out snafu,  
a Roman ruins kind of day,  
impolitic with  
sweetening sheets of ice to floe  
on me, sitting upright & ready.

“I meant that in  
the most digestible way”  
& if you find me less than  
palatable, I’ll bake naked cake  
fritters for your Popeye  
to imagine his muscles  
without. Just like milk  
is a myth for baby cows,  
the savior of women is  
some kind of pillow on  
which to lean when  
the scenery grows loudly gone  
with paramedics of bombed out  
limbs and heads chiseled  
off by unseen twigs.

I meant, milk is a moth  
like the moon is most often  
seen in summer. We go  
to the flames of what stirs  
the breath from its regular  
motion, much like our love  
for the sea’s safety  
is not the smooth surface gulls  
break for fish. It’s the crab  
and the catfish that lurk  
dank in mud, readying

To carry you is my only  
dark sleeve, from which I  
essay a plan to reduce  
“the people of things,”  
or at least use fewer garbage  
claws and embrace myself  
as a childless person born.  
When you go to your cruise,  
you hope the ocean won't  
swallow you home.  
Downward dog into  
crouching lion. You practice  
your anger on me.  
I make nothing you stand  
firm against, no grief upon  
which you can build a bridge.  
Even these lines forget  
straight lines,  
stars that wear pearls,  
drinking with swine.  
One love, one loyal,  
they devour wolves after both.  
They set precedents for the fallen  
to draw pictures that illustrate  
the specifics of death's work.

A person conjures the silhouette  
she cuts, fabrics she lures into,  
the knots of nooses she tightens  
and turns, the speed  
of the train she drives, how far  
down the tracks she looks.

I am the ride you promised, neither  
prisoner nor open maw opened, a parent  
playing babbling brook, obedience  
of father turned mother  
when the whistle blows  
a state away.

When I put this pen to the ink  
of my nostril, this stamp to the letter  
of your song, this gesture  
to the math of your sock,  
the rocket marked with cigarette burns  
departs for its journey  
on Baghdad. I will see the world then,  
and its surrender to the dependency  
of logic, its monkeyed signs  
that gallop your future away,  
its needling hand for homesick tortures,  
the pressing of this draft  
to your reverie for music

And the joys we implode with,  
elbows that favor clapping thunder,  
the animal languages,  
a hot bed at 2 a.m.,  
the genitals' gait unabated,  
bullets that loosen their tune,  
songs that insist on knowing,  
men who watch their children go,  
for the rain to begin her ode.  
The ghosts in these atoms  
turn outlaws, dare us  
to chalk out the hidden selves  
we keep our eyes inert  
about. Our tuxedoed muscles turn  
Chinese tissue from threadbare  
bones and I don't know  
where anything came from,  
from winter or river or blue  
collar workers doubled at the scene  
of machines and steel plates  
on assembly lines, you stand  
at attention, your hair is blackbirds,  
you sing in the sweet corn  
of summer, and you've taken  
my final name in vain. I love

What you call the seat of my sex,  
you steal from each vine its leg,  
each iris a dilated virus,  
and graying news of things in vitro.  
Gently sweating, the imposter  
professor plunges a wish  
into each lesson's heart.  
Most of these words aren't mine  
you see,  
I steal what she says in sex  
for news of what is found  
where men into women conspire  
to weaken their tenure on life.  
Watered down and maverick.  
Is it old fashioned to say,  
This beautiful shredded canopy  
has caught my utmost attention?  
Not a fan of needles into skin,  
the gift of this milieu has me less  
furtive on campuses across utopia.  
Pigeons mar the sidewalks,  
what else of note?  
"To give yourself away keeps  
yourself still." Shakespeare.  
Nothing desired is a property,  
nothing given, we lie in glass sheds.

The stomach that speaks  
like butterfly fish  
knows the harried hunt for  
room enough for room.  
The grass of the cemetery laughs  
at the throb of my glitter bassoon  
& the waltzing monks arrive  
across the rolling sky of noon.  
Ossian told me between his lips  
of rolled up cigarette that Ed  
had finally stabbed himself  
in the lower torso given  
in to the black sludge creeping  
around his outline—but he's  
in a hospital, somewhat living.  
There's always an opening  
you can pass the least limb through.



Everything that happens now  
is preceded by another now  
until all the nows pile  
on top of what we hold in lairs  
that hide how false we really  
perceive the landscape to be.  
I am a fabrication,  
a man in sunken traffic, a fiction  
who is losing the sun  
faster than she can sit beneath it.  
Now you have moved  
around the yard, chasing  
the shadowed tree of a neighbor  
cleaning her skin of tags  
and rhetorical devices akin  
to the feeling of lesser than,  
behind horizon and an audience  
to my own remove.  
I've lost the energy for privacy.  
A ladybug traverses my inner  
left thigh where I have not shaved  
for years and I hope I have  
served God's desire as object  
as I've moved between women  
and the fetal positions of men,

Beds and their simulations,  
rubbings that nearly hold us together,  
wearing us down, even as they lick  
out our broken acoustics.

Little deaths are the first healing  
we forget at the sins of human.

Orange pulp filters this morning  
through my endless pores,  
my hands itch from soil,  
they burst like farewell  
& I practice the smell  
of hickory inside my stove's soul.

Have you ever had nature  
at night, held her squirrels, snails,  
griffins, not the least of us?

Held the weight worth its gold  
to be deprived of the lives  
we've needed to live?

Two accents live in these four  
walls, the breath that scalds,  
the brain's eardrum—

I became the cradle of maybe,  
I ate all that was green and still  
a little beyond the gropings  
of nudity, how much we want,

And need great fear  
to eliminate what would throw  
us from the great wooden horse  
rocking the sky thin  
with oxygen, life matter  
and particulates that would  
break the sun into a mist  
of films that owe their breath  
and captions to characters  
pulled from a throat  
of dubbed-over mouths  
cast about in our holding cells  
as shadows and light blur  
from the armpits of prisons,  
the smiles of teeth that speak,  
prescriptions full of medicines  
of anti's and probiotics,  
histamine blocks, iodine  
and a smarter sweat that holds  
the rot against which  
I keep my margins bare,  
a pseudo-frame that cradles  
everything outdoors

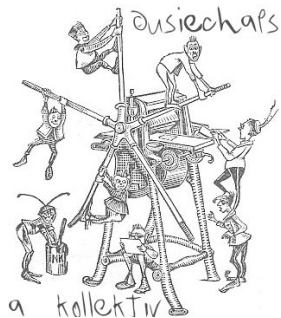
Like the time you were left  
with nothing to say, so much  
so, you thought to say it all  
with the smoke of your pipe,  
hesitations adopted, but  
not in the service of  
do we like to think, but as  
the simple reserves of suffering,  
an easy goatee on impossible chins.  
What I really wanted to ask was  
how does selfishness feel—  
I have just the one body  
and a blind way of knowing  
those who use language,  
those who pin cushion words  
against the itch that sets  
our work boots off, the eyelets  
winking out the cash of cough  
commercials and paid retirements,  
should we ballerina them.  
Lashes wipe away  
such hammering pangs of talk.  
Your promise to be more  
assertive flies off the shelf  
with the elegy that  
I'm being satirized. Again,  
how does it feel to be?

Instead of idle guesswork,  
you want me to speak  
on the flavor of things,  
how to fit in the crux  
of beer and poetry,  
me heavy petting you,  
birds that hurt like  
lakes to drown in,  
to hear my hairs whisper  
what you mean  
to the secret awareness  
of turning the news,  
the political drudge  
into words of oil on skin.  
Now my signature aligns  
with your bible,  
I'm carrying a baby  
wren beneath my tongue  
in the hollow of my head  
back to you, you who  
are the heart of the awl  
and the climb on which  
I mount my last breath,  
I will marry you and take

You to crucify continents,  
the least of which we  
will ride upon, seated as  
the homeless on park grass  
among pond blackberries  
growing wild off the side  
of a haloed embankment,  
burrowed in the hollows,  
unseen by lovers swatting  
in the puddled dew nearby—  
grooming and mewing  
we birth the baby wren,  
full of downy coos,  
the tiniest nest within  
our mouths' open bellies  
thinner now, we love



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