

thistles,
directionless

Jenn McCreary & Kirsten Kaschock

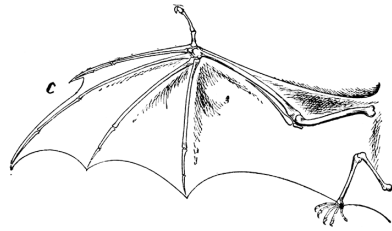
1.

There is always a door
& a door can either be
open or shut (or
swings). I think

I would like it better if
you diagnosed me
from the other
room. Neither

could-have-been nor never-
was, but the shape of things
rapidly approaching. Bats'

wings are hands made uncanny
by opening: skin, a kind
of flight. A kind



of light, an outstretched
illumination— or falling,
water, a veil, that
which glows.

2.

Whole, withdrawn
she writes the room. Words
her negative brides.

Presumed. If
there were such thing as
visitations, she

would have them.
Serve wine in the registry
crystal. Ever

Victorian—
poisoning to preserve,
resisting direction

with stasis.
Compass roses bloom.
A vase of

directionless thistles.
The earth outside lousy
with burdock & black

salsify. Not pre-
ordained. Not apron-strung
—but satisfied?

3.

Still undefined. Clapping
like thunder. A book read
by lightning. Boom. (Flash)
boom.

A weak narrative means
she can feel-up her own
ghost (jump-
spark).

Even the machines are
haunted. Even the chair is

anxious, or
in need
of contact.

4.

Seance,

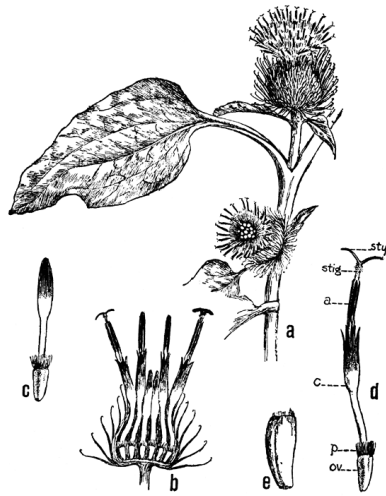
dalliance,

larkspur.

Under

the table is how to pay
for betrayal. Ladle out
the kidney punch, weed

the uterus.



5.

Mumbled pages from a seed-
catalog, eyes roll about, loll

about, easy Opheliana. How girls
bruise. Iridescence prized

for the broth it suggests, beneath
their casings opals roil.

Here is a scarab, steeped like
tea, pinned. Here is a hatpin,

a hatbox, & all its dirty little
secrets. Going out. The idea

is like a candle. Going in. Skin
like a door. Light caged within

ribs, illuminated. Throwing
shadows. Shudders, shutters.

6.

Here is a barracks, the body
quartering sleep. Limbed, all

her dirt in pieces & extreme.
Here are fever-dreams, pictures

of the floating world, islanded
in a stream of stars. Even fevers

are cherished. Visions intact, still
warm, have swum to shore.

Shimmering beneath it, or
a peculiar swooning. *Your eyes*

*are drooping, darling daughter, &
you're dizzy in the head.* Crossing

the moon— thirst, a slurry
of bats. Each mid-air insect

snatched: evidence
of daughterlessness.

7.

Make a bedroom
in the belfry, dress

the windows with mosquito
netting & ribbon. Interrogate

the ghost. Ask, *are you a pretty
thing?* Ask, *how
can you tell?* Don't

believe her, but write down all
her answers. They will make
a fine book. Are you

libraryless? Truthless? A
draft? Have you
concern? Is it soul or
lantern? How are you lit

from the inside like
that? Toothless?
Bookless? Drafted true
blue? Thinly veiled, or

always cast in silhouette or
shadow? If she answers
wrongly, you may keep her

up the tower. Rightly, shove
her down the well. Or
in the closet. Or

press her between bookleaves
like a flower. Or

iron her between two
pieces of waxed paper.

8.

I have found *keep*
to be the best part.

Neither broadcast
seed, nor yield-of-fruit,
but the bottling.

Something ceramic-cast or
suspended in amber, preserved

in syrup. Mason jars
in shiny rows in the root
cellar glow, echo, *this is*

yours, to keep. A book, a ghost,
a girl—already traps.

But to catch
the caught, to close
it even tighter down...

That's the trick.
Sleight of hand, hats

& rabbits. The bit
with the hollow egg &
silk scarves. Sick

sight. Trapdoors, split-
sore, tatters, tulle. *Keep*

this, to yourself.

9.

Cue the music. Something
with spooky

cellos, maybe. A Beethoven
sonata can only mean

horrors. Chansons
of phantom, vapor-animated

radio. Your veins ache, shot
through as they are with

the dead. Encoded. The only
reason you sing. For your

supper, for a penny-farthing
dropped in a shiny

silver cup. Sing of where
you are going & where

you have
been.

10.

I wax rhapsodic. The moon is a
friend

and a hollow egg. I never eat, or
only

chutneys

from the basement:
gelatinous aged peaches, briny squash.

I wane
hypnotic. The moon is asleep

in the hollow of my throat.
I sip

pickle vinegar

from a teaspoon, pucker up.

11.

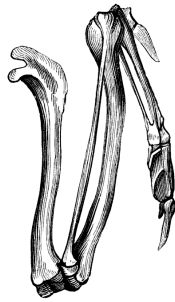
In the hollows
of my collar
bones, I hold

two secrets from
each other.

My bird-bones have air-
pockets. They whistle

& whisper, clavicle
to scapula.

Birds' are bones-riddled. Bones-porous,
bones-
basalt, bones shot
through with shine.



12.

Wishbones &
lucky breaks. Whipsmart
& eyelash.

When is a secret a riddle?
When is a bone a key? When?

Time is irrelevant, a limited
means by which movement

is measured. When
it fits. When it pitches fits.

Slips its socket. Finds
its anchor. The door
moors the idea

of passage to its hinge. This
binary you will know. Now—

I thought I told you
to sing.

Jenn McCreary is the author of *:ab ovo*, published by Dusie Press in the spring of 2009, & several chapbooks. She lives in Philadelphia where she co-edits ixnay press with Chris McCreary, wrangles twins, & charms snakes.

Kirsten Kaschock is the author of two books of poetry (*A Beautiful Name for a Girl* with Ahsahta Press, *Unfathoms* from Slope Editions). Her first novel, *Sleight*, was released in October from Coffee House Press. She likes knots.



Dusie Kollektiv 5
2011