

Paris

Today is going to be a very good day.

I'm going to wear a t-shirt that says 'Everything the President Does is Good and Right.'

If anyone picks a fight with me, I'll glare as if to say "who are you to judge me?"

If I had a scar, I'd lift my shirt to show it off. Pain's just pain unless it's brave.

I'd make a scar if I could.

The honor of bad skin on good skin.

A scar is better than a t-shirt.

A baby carriage is better than radish hair and a turnip nose.

Would you like to buy me some empanadas? I'm feeling lucky.

Now that the wind is relatively low, let's wait for the other stuff to stop. Let's take in the view from my balcony.

You know who likes to take in views? Tourists like to take in views.

Paris is a good place for views, but not for empanadas.

It's time we left this park bench. Hurry up, the rain has stopped.

Bow and Crown

There were four horsemen, and one of them was you.
They came in cardamom and leather. They came in hot pursuit.

They dressed me in a wily pink. I stank of sugar, my
bleeding sweet. Everywhere was you.

I punctuate at every chance. I swallow like a whore.
Between my breaths gills taste the air. A king,

an ace, a wicked game of suicide. I picture rope bridges
in far-off alleys. I picture a picture without the frame.

I bet my life in bees and dimes. I give you up
and let you go. The tide brings dirt and zirconia.

Shudder, drown. You are death & yet somehow
I am still alone.

astrology for a novice lover

sun cusps pisces: metaphors evaporate. we call a kiss a kiss.
mercury in retrograde: I remember writing bad poems about your cat.
you, moon in gemini: of course.
me, cancer rising: you wish I felt a little less like home.
you, leo rising: lips, then neck, then breasts. I expected you to know this.
venus in sixth house: you want: excuses, solace, me to be pretty.
me, moon in leo: jewelry or orgasms or shiny cupcakes.
you, mars in sagittarius: you'd sooner break my heart than break my heart.
me, venus in libra: let's not listen to the sex pistols.
you, sun in pisces: your holy sadness stays the same.
you, mercury in pisces: stare, shrug, do not speak
me, mercury in libra: was it good for you.

I am a lonely painter.

Nothing but blue light

lord

just

blue light

a box

of paints

wind:

waiting for wind

cross-legged

singing

the hero song, the brown eyed song,
the old dream of disappearing into

the underneath

to be taken

clavicle

&

ankle

into what

you said about lightning

how it struck

you twice

I expect your knuckles

to be

electric

but I like the way

you look

at me.

I catch
myself singing
 a song again

a star spangled song
and I am driving
 before I know where

There is a map
 you drew
for me
 in a purple notebook

it takes me to your house
to you, to you

to your invisible
 fencing

a hammock in the yard

 there is no sound
in space. we are approximately
under the moon.

already the hunger
and the tortoiseshell hair comb

my hair smoothed
into your mirror.

cut myself shaving & try not to bleed
on your formica
 your white rooms and walls

everything

looks like a page
from here

you drape white sheets
all over the room. you pose
the tripod.
me

 a series of grays.
 a string of freshwater pearls
draped over the neck
of a guitar.

 my favorite part

is the way I look at you.

my favorite picture
of you
is one you took yourself

where your eyes were closed.

it took me hours or days
to write about that picture
I've forgotten what I said

except that I loved the way
you closed your eyes

inside the frame of black & white

because there was nothing
still

about your sight. what I know

is fireworks gift-wrapped the horizon
which was barely a skyline

but a jagged thatch of architectures
colliding against night

ribbons of fire
blood vessels popping like
champagne corks

I wanted
to have some coffee

& find you.

Sapphists for Hire

Act One

A doll hospital in a subterranean womb. Scattered across the stage, doll parts sleepily awaken and begin to juggle small, red, rubber balls. Arms, calves, ears, backs, spinal cords, brains, and feet splay across the stage. They are the color of an undiscovered species. It is obvious at once that there should be blood where there is not. Several human limbs, boneless and transparent, are dispersed through the tableau. I saw this beautiful handkerchief the other day.

As Pachelbel's "Canon in D" plays, the doll parts begin to hum and chant in rounds, then in unison. They chant the last two stanzas of "the Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." I have seen them riding seaward on the waves / Combing the white hair of the waves blown back/When the wind blows the water white and black.

While the dolls speak, they approach the front of the stage. *We have lingered in the chambers of the sea /By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown / Till human voices wake us, and we drown.* As the word "seaweed" is spoken, the doll parts reach up to what might be cleavage and swiftly pull down zippers. Each steps out of the doll part costume to reveal a different doll part, one clad in a long, sequined evening gown. The gowns have long, mermaid-like tails and have been stained with kohl found in the burial tomb of Cleopatra.

The cast-off doll parts assemble themselves and transform into Geryon, the beast of fraud from Dante's Inferno. The doll parts clad in formal attire silently watch the beast's descent into the orchestra pit, then all collapse onto fainting couches which have suddenly appeared on the stage.

A vat of dry ice spreads vapor and coldness across the stage. In the haze of its icy smoke, as many Charlotte Brontës as there are doll parts appear on the stage. Each Charlotte Brontë, clad in steel-toed boots begins to push one of the fainting couches. The doll parts sew up their imaginary mouths with a needle and thread. Another Charlotte Brontë, this one clad in an evening dress identical to that of the doll parts', appears on stage. The tableau behind her changes to the façade of a gothic cathedral, full of tall spirals and gargoyles on the windowsills. Things are getting kind of gross and I go at sleepytime, she sings. Her voice absorbs all ambient sound from the theatre and sucks a low-cut red dress from the body of one audience member. As the voice of Charlotte Brontë rings out, the walls of the theatre begin to sprout beasts and dragons. These are the hidden creatures in Max Ernst's "Everyone Here Speaks Latin."

Act Two

Atlantis in space. A trapdoor opens from the ceiling. A beam of light falls onto the floor with a thud, then shatters. The trapdoor closes. A steel drum is heard offstage. From stage right, a belly dancer with no belly button appears. Behind her, a long line of anchorwomen appear, bouncing tiny footballs. If a body catch a body, they all chant.

When the troupe reaches the middle of the stage, the belly-dancer turns to the anchorwomen and *sings* *You get a line and I'll get a pole*, to which they respond with *if a body catch a body*, growing in volume. The women crouch, then kneel, all in a large circle on the stage.

A disembodied voice in the middle of the stage begins to chant:

*On my honor, I will try
To serve God and my country
To help people at all times
And to live by the Girl Scout Law*

Slowly, the anchorwomen rise to full height again. Each woman cocks her left wrist and her hand morphs into a coffee cup on a saucer. Each woman raises her right arm and lowers it. It becomes a neverending pot of coffee, poured endlessly into the coffee cup that was once a left hand. Suddenly, no one cares whether or not Kierkegaard visited a prostitute.

An anchorwoman shakes her Etch-a-Sketch, and a golden egg appears on the screen. She reaches to pull the egg from the screen and it runs liquid gold all over her fingertips, then her entire body.

The other anchorwomen stop in their coffee-pouring to look at her. Quietly at first, they chant, *"how does it feel to be on your own? With no connection like a rolling stone?"* As their chant gets louder and louder, they begin to pour from the neverending coffee pot onto the woman in the middle. She evaporates beneath the infinite stream of coffee.

INTERMISSION

Author's note: During intermission, Armageddon occurs. Despite prophecies from Nostradamus, the Bible, catchy tunes from REM, Robert Frost poems, action movies, and freshman psychology students who refer liberally to the Kitty Genovese story, the true details of Armageddon cannot be anticipated. Those present in the auditorium will Make Do as best as possible.

Act Three

The stage, now dismantled, is peopled with surviving actors and animals stranded by the events. As they stand, their faces painted white, human interest stories printed on giant scrolls unroll from the sky. Dorian Gray bats his eyelashes coquettishly. In the distance, silence. The silence swells and drowns out the motionless mouths of the actors.

In the midst of the silence, a vinyl record of "Has Anyone Ever Written Anything For You" by Stevie Nicks begins to play. As soon as her husky voice, deepened from years of cocaine, alcohol, cigarettes, and fellating Lindsey Buckingham begins to sing, a knight clad in armor enters the stage. He wordlessly lifts a wicker basket full of fortune cookies. He salutes something invisible to the naked eye and stands at the center of the stage. He pulls out a fortune cookie and unwraps it, throwing the plastic wrapping down onto the floor like an antelope tooth. He then drops a fortune cookie and turns away, dropping a long helix of fortune cookies behind him. The piano notes fade out in a tidal wave that encompasses the stage, the auditorium, the street, the town, what is left of the world as it was once known. Curtain falls around planet Earth.