

SWORDS

I've had my Tarot read before.
At the Saturday Market in Eugene,
on a beautiful day, probably Fall.

There's a little tent, a little purple tent I think.
I remember it as velveteen, soft to touch. A box of fabric
straining delicately against the upward thrust
of a center post.

The one of spears. The four of corners.

The woman inside had a smushed face,
the kind of face where
you either make deliberate eye contact
or you don't.
Like a thumb pressing into the
willing clay with force but no intention.

I went in to ask about my dad, or whatever.

The cards said something about conflict. Obviously.

Hard choices, powerful men, strong wills, does this make sense?

I'm not good at it
when I'm facing cards and being read
but my sense is that I shouldn't give anything away.

Last night, you were all hanging out in the living room
after the Japanese restaurant
where they know us by name,

and I came out of my room,
and she was laying out the cards,
consulting her book,
not experienced, just confident

"you're, like, fucking scared man,"

I sit down and watch.

Watch you write what matters in your notebook,
watch your face as you face the cards she's reading,
listen to this
girl with blonde hair in a side braid
who wants to work on a pineapple farm in Hawaii
who's breaking my heart because it wants to break.

when you're done and she offers to lay it out for me
I am ready. How do I ask my question without asking it?
What answer am I willing to hear?

"close your eyes and meditate. Everything is energy,
you know, these cards
are energy..."

where do I need to be, *Selah*? tell me how do I get there?

"okay, when you're ready, open your eyes."

Swords,
and heartbreak,
and a choice
I've already made.

"Does this make sense?"

Obviously.

THE ETIQUETTE OF BUS DATING ON THE TRIMET LINE 4 TO ST. JOHN'S

When commencing the courtship process,
one must never make direct eye contact with one's paramour.
Should this appear an impossible task, indiscretion may be pardoned
only if it occurs as a natural transition
from staring forcibly at the opposite window
to gazing forlornly over the top of the beloved's head.

This *coup d'oeil* must comprise the startled blink,
the panicked search for recognition, and
the wordless transmission of one's eternal devotion.

Establish this routine over the course of eight months to a year.

Let the weight of stolen glances
and unacknowledged, platonic grimaces build;
you are laying the foundation stones
of a house whose scaffolding
is honor; whose walls are sheetrock;
whose hearth is Cheerios for dinner
and binge-watching season two of "Orange is the New Black."

Should you find yourselves disembarking
at the same stop, *do* insist your cherished one exit first.
The exercise of chivalry may not come to you by nature,
but rest assured—your unstable lurch towards egress,
indecipherable hand gestures, and
croaks unfettered by actual words or content
will engrave your nameless face on an ardent heart
more deeply than any stanza or wildflower bouquet.

As you approach that asphalt crossroads where your paths
forever diverge, you will feel a lump rise in your throat.
Choke it down when the signal shifts and beckons you forward.
This is love.

Fate inscribes our roles on heavenly tablets,
and we play the hero but once in a lifetime.
Or every weekday at about 7:23 AM unless you're running late.

Someday, on that long-awaited morning, your mournful
dreamy stares will linger and meet
—something like recognition flutters,
something like disdain—
you must restrain yourself.

Though the flames of ardor may singe your thighs, restraint!

This sacred moment is one to nurture.
Savor it. Smile.
Reward yourself with aching vulnerability.
You can cry into your Cheerios later.

#JAN25 2011

You're breaking my heart.
Will you please just be honest with me?
You're breaking my heart.

Don't you realize with every passing day another
fragile, praying part of me is
wrenched and crushed until it
CRACKS,
until I struggle, gasp and cry
"I can't breathe!"
Please...
why?

Until my face turns bruised
and black and red and I lose
Everything I knew?

Instead, you could be
loving me!

You could be linking
arms with me

You could be standing up in ranks
and fighting guns, and death and tanks...
with everyone,
and with me, too.
You could be being me with you.

But, you're breaking my heart.

I'm not with you to hold your hand,
I can't reach out, can barely
stand, let alone fall with you,
although I fell for you long before either of us knew that
you would carve my
love in two.
But keep each piece,
they're both for you.

Don't say those things to me about yourself, you know
they're lies!

Don't burn yourself with
cigarettes and pre-dawn
raids and righteousness,
don't listen to the radio, turn
off your bloodshot TV sets that burn like
eyes that never
rest
but feed and grow and spew

and choke
you,
FUCK THEM ALL, They BARELY KNOW YOU,
but I KNOW YOU, AND I REMEMBER,

Will you please just be honest with me?

I love you.
I miss you.
and I will Never
EVER give up on
us.

but, you're breaking my heart.

You're clearly sick, clearly ill,
or else, why take such bitter
poison, choking on the
sounds of shrill
and shrieking, desperate voices,
screaming at you,
In you
At you "Why would I do that? Attack you?"
NO!
I never could!

I only want what's best,
what's good!

I want to soothe your
fevered brow, and
nurse you back to health
somehow,
and undo
all the rapes and checks
that made damn sure
nothing was left.

That made sure none of
your innocence was left.

You know what else? I want to KILL
those little men with
little dicks
and little guns
and death and sticks and all
the Help
they'll ever need, being 'Civilized.'

But, this anger isn't meant to last.
It can't. It's not.

The truth is that I'm
slowly dying, and as you die
I'm writhing,
trying
to give you all the hope
I have to stop you from
taking another step away
from me.

?

You're breaking my heart.

DAWN

What is the sweetness of night?
Is it the dying edge
of a swiftly moving shadow?

Or

Is it the veil of sleep, beyond which
woven webs of dust and gold
fall delicately across my heart's fine lashes—
of a
face in blazing rest?

How difficult is it to walk away from
the flicker of that creased lid
caked as it is by the accreted corner sands of time
(You know, the ones that build up in your eyes
and pinch you as you rub them out).

Perhaps
the dulcet milk of rest
is more than
what our moon can offer,
despite her ever-fertile movement,
her waxing, waning loyalty.
Perhaps...

...Perhaps what seizes us by our ankles and
rips
the breath of winter from our lungs
is truer than the sweetness of dreams.

And yet the irony my friends
is that when we reach her,
only then
shall we weep
for knowing sleep.

SHOULD I BE ON SOMETHING

I have fucking ADHD.

I'm angry, and I was in therapy for almost three years
Because college, right?
When the revolutions started and
My father disowned me for falling
In love with
Someone
Older
Than
Me.

Can you imagine the shame? lol!

I have a tumor that doesn't show up on any tests or x-rays
But I feel it growing, burrowing slyly into my
fibers and channels
Sending tendrils to patter blindly
And pierce my lungs;

Do you like porn?

I can't stand the deep breathing exercises these ziplock yoga-butts are hawking. It's like, gag me already.

I

I'm surrounded by saints,
Ya Mawlana Jon, Ya Habibullah Ed, Ya Zein al-Faqir,
O Blessed Madeline, Our Master Justin of Perseverance,
Tzadek Angelo, What can you teach me?
Put in a good word with the gods you wrangle
I'm so mad at mine I can barely speak, let alone get
Down on my knees and what

Fucking Pray?

The Point

Is to realize, ultimately,
That every pithy success and
All the stars we cross when we trace a constellation on our lovers' backs
End with a chariot ride into outer space
And a punch in the dick.