

What's Worse Than Going On A Dinner Date with A Cannibal?

Going on two dinner dates with a cannibal
was probably really dumb. Good story, though.
All was going well the first time, regular
(non-human) meal, then back to mine
for the kind of fuck that makes you believe
it could be good with a bit of practice, then
the usual flirtatious but also awkward pillowtalk.
He said, *let's trade secrets*. I said, *okay, let me think*.
Medium-long silence, then, *You start*. He paused
not quite long enough before saying
I want to eat a human heart and brain.
His fingers, as he said this, were doodling
stars and swirls around my nipple.
I said nothing. *One day*, he qualified,
laughing, *and not yours*, as if I should also laugh.
I swallowed and said *Okay*,
I only watch girl-on-girl porn,
all too aware of the (appetizing?)
volume of my thrumming heart.
He left a bit later and I ate terrible, cold pizza
standing half-naked in the refrigerator light,
wondering on rubbery mozzarella
if he had eaten the other organs already,
if there was a hierarchy of human consumption,
the pinnacle of which is the heart and brain.
The second date was much the same, pretty boring,
even with the thought that, at some point
in the evening, I could be killed and eaten
(hopefully in that order). *Call me tomorrow*,
he'd said after. I did not, but sometimes
I pull up his number and compose texts,
daring myself to press send. *Raw or cooked?*
What kind of mind would you like to eat?
What kind of heart? And What makes you sure?
Which of course, is to say, *Why not mine?*

Make Witnesses

We all know how:
eye contact, smile, nod
at the beagle-walker,
a few words with the cashier,
compliments for the girl at the sink
beside you in the bar bathroom,
in case this time is the time you have,
strangely, waited for—your keys
knived out between fingers, mind whirring,
head swiveling jerkily like a fan on oscillate,
mace dressed up in pink, maybe unreachable
but definitely somewhere in the jumble of your bag—
so if someone comes around carrying your photograph
(you can't help but wonder who chooses,
and why it's always the strangest photographs;
if you were her, you'd wish they'd chosen differently)
they can say yes, I saw that girl. She was here.

Ellipse

When the girl I used to love becomes pregnant,
I have a feeling so tidal that I think, damn,

do I want a pregnant wife, the planet of her
awesome and incomprehensible as she grows

toward her own reverberation of that first big birth,
the one from which everything is still drifting off into space.

I want to give her a bath, my wife, and then our child,

a prayer for the flesh I am soaping. Even now I am moved
by just the hypothetical, pulled close to tears,

and would be every minute of those months
where my (my!) two most precious living things

were one, and then every month after that, too,
gladly revolving around them, peripheral as a satellite.

Catholic Gilt

Sunday mornings in bed shine in the light;
the Lord's name piles up

as precious change in a jar; plumes of smoke
plummet from my window with newfound weight;

synapses cast chemicals in 24 karats when I'd like to steal
or fuck or die; a charm bracelet of dainty lies

hangs from my wrist—handed down to me to be
handed off again, baubles glinting and touching

like golden chimes, this one a bottle, this one a closed door,
this one a mouth pressed to an em dash—a stack of bands

hugs each covetous finger; the inside of my refrigerator
is Versailles, shelves and drawers of heavy excess

(gold-plated); my camera roll is a litany of identical,
yellow selfies; and moving, priceless, toward me

is a brilliant golden girl, a golden
look on her like she's arriving at last.

Liar

Helen was a liar and we were obsessed.
She was allergic to meat,
was an heiress whose father
left her penniless, long story.
She had one lung,
had been engaged recently,
she broke her hip, broke her back,
broke into the aquarium
where she worked one summer
and drank water from the seahorse tank,
which contained tuberculosis--
close call, but she was fine.
We thought she must believe herself,
must have spoken it all, like magic
into three dimensions,
that her mother spent thousands
of pounds on elocution lessons
so she would sound like Elizabeth
instead of like Essex, but that Helen
spent nothing on taxis at university
because she had a taxi man who loved her
so much he drove for free.
She'd had cancer, Christian Louboutins,
sex with a man I could have maybe
loved. She'd visited to every United State
with the rodeo she rode in--she was, of course,
a first-rate cowgirl--then ran away and rode back east
by greyhound. She gave out cocaine
practically for free, told our stories back to us,
arguing they'd been hers all along,
and all along I was afraid
I loved it.