

*I had a birthday party*

I turned twenty-one last Saturday.

Against the backdrop of

chatty plates,

heaving eyebags, anxious

nail-biting, here -

cheers!

Try this bellini

with fresh peach puree

(not in season) and

you're here!

(I just made it)

collapsing hugs, and

collapsing lungs, where

my body feels too close to yours, and

do I know you enough like that? and

do I know life enough like that? and

here!

birthday brunch, sit

my dear

head of the table,

head the table,

head on the table,

cheers!

Collapsing lungs masked as confetti poppers

fluttered flustered

socks on the floor

sticky confetti on your toes.

It's a right of passage

to cry for confetti fall

for my lungs to regrow from

flames to flesh, for

padparadscha sapphire makes

lotus blossom makes

breath to

rinse out

your heavy.

Sit my dear, and

cry without shame.

***Marylebone, Central London***

You've been mourning all week about being too blue.

So we bought you shoes with lines of orange,  
and spent the day wandering around shops in Marylebone.

I kept pronouncing it with two many r's and e's

*marylerborn*

*maryleebone*

*marlborough*

just so I could hear you chuckle and say it again.

As soft as the froth on my morning latte.

Coffee shops with  
glass dispensers of mint water for free,  
mugs and coasters in matte black,  
serif magazines too pretty to touch.

*Dear Marylebone,*

Only the rich would buy a y just to hide it away.

We walk in and out of furniture stores with spines pressed to chest. We pick up  
knives and forks worth a finger or two, unravel  
tablecloths big enough to cover queen-sized beds, pick out  
candle holders for our 2 unreal cats,  
gluten-free Elizabeth and acrimonious Patricia-Smith  
(Patti Smith in short).

We are Goldilocks surrounded by ceramic disks,

privileged with indefinite time and ignorance.

Cross-legged in Eames lounge chairs,

you watch while I feel up Scandinavian rugs,

leaving dry skin dust in their ridges for real cats to find one day.

On our way out, glass shatters as two young men scramble to pick up the shards between the lady's legs.

We did not stay long enough to see if the rich actually pay for the things they break.

It had been a while since I last held your hand.

Chiltern Street bows its awnings ahead of us,

Georgian terraces open their arms even higher.

It would be nice to live another life with you behind walls of red and white,

but I'm happy now with your embrace in blue.

***Tower Bridge, Central London***

We walked across the Tower Bridge by accident.

Serendipitous is my favorite word today.

Night rain wash city pavements with  
slick sheen, fickle paths,  
scattered iron filings under a magnetic field.

We are all enamored,  
a newborn smile.

Born to dream of a memory  
again and again.

I took the corniest picture ever.

My British boyfriend on the Tower Bridge, with a red Big Bus going by.  
Two thumbs up, one for each embarrassed dimple etched into my grinning face.

We walk, sounding like *Blue in Green*.  
Miles Davis, John Coltrane, and Bill Evans.  
A turquoise trumpet glows every hand swing.  
Paul Chambers in closed eyes, heavy bass tugging.

I will remember it this way.

Whispered memories from your childhood.  
I cup our hands together to catch their raining vowels.  
I'll pin them on my fridge and shuffle them to make

*love and violet and etoile.*

I am ghostwriting memories for your future.

*Violence on the Riverbed*

I've decided to walk the Williamsburg Bridge home.  
Embarrassed because at twenty-one, I don't know how to ride a bike.  
I cannot feel the way the wind feels in your hair or eyes.  
Rattling inside your ear bones, melodies of air.

Tell me how  
the wind grazes  
the highs of your cheeks and  
the lows of your chin.

How does it embrace without choking?  
I watch you ride past me, tingling gears so gently.  
Fairy dust turned to ashes in my mouth.  
You've left me behind in the middle of the city.

The last time I was here, I walked with you.

We walked from here to there, somewhere, anywhere you said.  
Mindless talking, I cusped your words to hold their crackle.  
Robin-egg blue eyes and a big leather jacket.  
I was still scared of the dark but you asked me to tell you a story.

I dream that there are many me's in many worlds,  
hiding, listening, behind the stars.  
I believe that they are there,

doing the things I would but cannot do.

Yet here you are, looking at me in my world.

Mottled shadows casted on your face,

you flickered with the lights behind.

My other me, were you watching?

I hope you still walk with him.

I hope he tells you about me.

I hope that bridge never ends for you.

I will continue floating on tonight.

The East River is a black blank trembling with poison from city lights.

The buildings are ablaze with fervor, dense enough to smoke the sky fog.

I am a spectator mourning the flames,

holding tight by my side the gasoline can.

The bridge towers shatter the sky. Tonight, I am part of its silver lining.

Wilted bouquets by the side of the bridge.

A single padlock locked on a fence.

Trampled rose petals on the tarnished floor.

Somnambulant whispers.

I used to think it was no fun walking a bridge where you know how it ends.

But I will be back, and I'll start from the end.