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Potowski Rose
Women's rights and Anti-slavery advocate
Freethinker
B. Jan 13 1810 D. Aug 4 1892

Tonight's forecast calls for a fog of trench coats fluttering to the ground
as torrential dancers morph into brilliant thunderheads,
flashing high-top red sneakers and dragonfly tattoos.
(Copyrights pending. Merchandizing in the works.
An agent scouting deals as we speak.
"Ahem, that would be you, Janet. No, not the human.
The other Janet. The one of *Good Place* fame").
Okay. Storm punk: check. Shape-shifters: check. Mythic vibes: check.
Rabid villains?
Please believe me when I say,
I saw that one coming. I really did.
So tell me, do alchemy minds,
(inured to the splendor of ommatidia—30,000 per dragonfly eye),
devour their host in vats of glazed confusion?
The baffled midnight bandit,
(now there's a two-bit villain),
slips into the spotlight,
(narcissistic asshole),
before scuttling to the sea.
(Bye-bye, petty tyrant, preached-up like an overlord).
Good-bye and good riddance.
Even I've had a touch of fever lately.
Reminds me of those thirsty Sapiens,
way back in the day,
dragging their heels across an alien desert.
Heatstroke—hyperpyrexia—steam on the brain.
When the sweet mirage flickered,
they drank the sand and called it water.
Hard to blame them,
but I do believe there's another way.
No mystical thunderbolt.
No deified rain.
And no sparkling halo
circling the locks of Ernestine Rose.
This is not some shotgun wedding of naked art and naked science,
($A + S = N^2$),
though any myth worth its ripple--
tingles with aching, quaking bodies.
So let me end with a beginning.
There's a feline revolt beneath mosquito moons.
An Ernestine Rose emerges from a fractured, fossil page,
while twinkle-eyed dragonflies,
(painted shimmer blue),
couple into a masquerade.
A gossamer choreography for gaslit times.

Outdated, Outmoded—Absurd and Obsolete

“Why looky there, Sawbones,” I say,
and the choo-choo’s holographic screen

responds with a ripple.

“Over there,” I point. “In Dust Bowl Valley,
where the black diamonds roam.”
The clickety-clack of railroad tracks
becomes a yawning sweep of bluffs and hollows
with whorling dust devils
nipping at the heels
of horseback riders.

“Call me a dead man’s throttle,
but I do believe I’m looking at
the Sundance and the Cassidy.”
I pull on the whistle,
handing out free toots,
then I do the *Hokey Pokey*
before singing out with a full moon puppy howl.
The outlaws howl right back
and a tingling tiptoes up my spine:
 May the most merciful ones
 born to whatever the new west might be
 preserve those bandit smiles for posterity.

A thing of beauty, if ever there was one.

They’re gun-spinning pistols
and hat-tipping howdy,
riding the jingle of jail break time,
blowing smoke rings to the sun,
'til Sawbones senses the trouble;
the whoosh of security walls
slam down all around me.
Pinkerton drones crack the sky.
Banshee sirens wail at 120 decibels
(the dead rise from beneath the tracks—
crosses of gold
on bare naked bones).

Houdini bots shroud the train
in plumes of futures past.
I’m stark-dead-dumb on my feet
before shivering clarity washes over me:
 “Sawbones, Goddamnit,” I scream,
punching at the override screen.
But it’s no use.

I can’t stop a thing with a head of steam.
Those squealing brakes are squealing for nothing.
That was Sundance.
That was Cassidy.
Those smiles. Those poor, lost smiles
never knew what hit ‘em.