

The Capricorn Bible

A Higher Form of Light

The highlighter.

A chisel sculpting polychromatic bodies;

Michelangelo's lucent-blooded cutting tool.

Its glow-in-the-dark tip, like a frothing mouth

Swallowing all colors.

A tongue sweating rainbow saliva

Or an Old Master's tainted paintbrush,

Bristles dipped in sun-warmed sherbet.

A hollow body gripped between my fingers,

A syringe that pricked the sunset's skin

And sucked up hues from its chemiluminescent veins.

I push the plunger,

And the needle spits bolts of neon lighting,

Turning paper to a watercolor crime scene

And staining my hands with luminol DNA

As I stroke the dye-soaked felt

Over crucial words.

Fallen Mayflies

A girl sits wet-backed,
Grass-ruined skirt saturated
with murky evening dew.
Her hands gather leaf clippings and fallen
mayflies into fists
While he watches from the slim, curved body of
a tree, eyes like a sugar glider, wet
lenses wide and pondering.

Around her, the water's edge is
a supple black cottonmouth
coiling around the small river, tail in mouth.
And she sits at the threshold,
her toes rapt in their baptism;
she can see chipped nail polish beneath
the swathe of pearl-gray water, and the mirror
image of her body, a clone of liquid glass.

How lovely it would be, she thinks, how clean,

To fall into her face, lip to watery lip.

To swan dive into her own

arms, a languid embrace

And lay beside herself, tucked in the

river's bed forever.

And the watcher's raven eyes, from his stance

behind the trunk, never cease.

Mouth trembling and downturned, lips like

a spasmodic earthworm

drooping from the middle.

The water is warm, she tells herself.

Let me sink into this pot

Like I'm being cooked in leek soup

Like mother used to make.

Hands like spoons delving the water,

Legs kicking like firecrackers

She falls, a banished angel

Some sordid queen of mud, drunk on

spirits, water burning like whiskey in her lungs.

And her watcher, with the blinking beady crocodile eyes,

Springs from his hiding place

Sprinting on impala legs across the lightless grass

Gathering her body into his arms

And pulling the china doll out of the river.

When she wakes, she is sunken

in leavened comforters, apricot candle by the bedside

As though she never fled from home

With the frog-eyed watcher by the window,

looking in.

Two Men Under Arrest, Following the Stonewall Inn Uprising

Solitary together

I clasp him in the midnight cell

Being mindful of the bruising

That makes twilight watercolor stains on his crepe paper arms

And I massage his chain-bangled hands in mine

Folded as though in duplicate prayer.

My thumb skates over the smooth, torn peaks of his knuckles

Tattered, ripped-raw skin like red lace gloves

On a vengeful bride.

I muse on how he wrestled like a brute,

Pennies in his fists, spitting and walloping

And bottle-slashing squad car tires
Mint julep breath swimming with Gerber's words
Exquisite and ferocious as the Sons of Julius
Or the Daughters of Bilitis.
He smells of sprigs of lavender menace
and perspiration, amid the crackled wheeze of drum-beaten ribs.
I kiss him gently on his caked forehead
My powdered lips a belly-up crescent moon;
A breath. I wince,
Something is sore,
From the female officer ripping my fishnets
Lifting my skirt in the bathroom
To identify my sex.
My love, he is stone-pockmarked
Slightly singed from mobbing flames.
We are not men but gooey marshmallows,
Soaked in a bootleg bourbon campfire
Both of us soldiers of the Mattachine machine
And he sadly, spiritually sighs my name
Nestled in the hair-fringed shelter of my arms.

An Echo In The Well

I'm an echo in a well

Bounding off of wet stones

Deep into the stomach of archaic waters

I'm a song some poor fool tossed into the depths

I'm the glimmer of a coin as I freefall into soft liquid arms

I am not a feather careening on the surface, plucked off the back of a mallard

I am not a four-leaf clover with its stem reaching down to the bottom

A slender green arm, faded white fingertips, succulent

Drink the sweet herbaceous water,

Dip your hand in, pearls rolling off of fingertips

I am the insistence of a voice that will not die

But rumble in my chambers

Layers upon layers of sound

The contents tremble from a drop of rain squeezed from the sky

Flashing silver, electric eye,

A fish's cornea, opaque and glossy

Drench yourself in me,

Baptism by old water

The holiness drained outward

Drink from your cup,

Dip the goblet in your fist in my singing river

Swirling like old memories, nebulous, half-constructed

Pillars of dust

I am the echo in the well
Making ripples with a whisper
Lean your ear over my cavernous mouth
And hear my sorrowful moan,
The lament of stone.

Man of Dust

I dreamt of a man made of dust
I caressed him, body of flesh to body of dust
Ancient matter, the musky footprint of the moth
The yawning of his bones as they accepted mine

I could taste his marrow, sweet and fatty
I could smell his quivering heart, all animal blood
Cold liver, chorus of organs crying out for human connection
I felt no flesh, but my hand sunk into his being
His atoms crowded my fingertips, I could sense the electricity of his pulse
The percussion of his breath as it swelled in starving lungs

The thunder of his being, tumultuous storm clouds pregnant with lightning
The static of his voice, tender pauses, orchestral crescendos
Wet eyes, the dullness of the squirming earthworm

He shivered, and shook his dust loose

His dust cascaded in my eyes, over my hair

Gave me a denounced halo

Powdered my mouth like sugar, like the ash of my mother

Which did not taste so sweet

His embrace coaxed warm fluid from my eye, I buried my face in his dust

I would gladly suffer asthma from inhaling bits of his body

So my chest was like burnt ruins of a cathedral

Hollow

Filled with dust

The last licks of orange flame seeking oxygen

I would gladly swallow him whole

Or piece by piece

Molecule by sacred molecule

He would fill me with life,

The graze of God's fingertip

And I am Adam

But it is not that I am not Eve

I came from my own rib

I am the garden and the tears that water it

I am the fruit and the snake

All coiled body, ripe with swollen flesh

My heart is a tumor with teeth

Infinitely gnawing

Gnawing on his dust

Grinding it between my teeth

Tasting the staleness of my own teeth

The smooth, raw bone

The barren wasteland of dust

My tongue, a gray desert

With no pink moon

Just half of a silver one

Like a cleaver

About to butcher me

To dole me out, pound by pound

Until I am eaten as

Dust.