

Lucia, in the Kitchen

My mom came in talking about Medicaid
Lucia was holding and rocking the baby.
I was drinking a Presidente and listening
to Emancipator records.

It hit me,
my mom needs insurance.
I do too
so I can get my hernia fixed,
but I don't wanna pay for that shit.
I've already lived with it 6 years.

Oh, a black chick is coming over Saturday.
Off work she goes by Luscious
has a master's in criminal justice
and plays the bass.

We work at a crappy,
strip mall college.
She bumped into me
on purpose and growled
'bout how she never
been so unhappy before.

I said me too, me too.
I was starrin' at her
when we met,
without meaning to.
She was eatin'
Jamaican jerk chicken and rice
and rice was fallin' all out her mouth
and I was staring at her not caring but thinking
about how I talked three girls crazy earlier that day

about ancient mythology
and how the Inca didn't build shit
and saying I lived in Florida but I'm from Mississippi.
You wanna be baffled, I said,
go to Puma Punku, Bolivia.

Lucia, Lucia, rocking the baby
hopefully to sleep
sometimes hopefully not.

His little feet
his little weenie.

His tan, stubby baby fingers
pointing at what he wants.
What he thinks he needs,
telling me, *No da'dy!*
when I go to kiss and hug him.

My mom needs insurance,
you know, so do I
so does he
so does Lucia. Lucia,

over a hot stove
in the kitchen,
our tiny kitchen,
holding and rocking the baby Gabriel,
frying empanadas, plantains and fish
missing her Chibcha relatives,
the Andes and all its ghosts
and festivals.

Here, we just obey and consume.
Obey and consume.

TORN

between
being a man
and being
polite.

If I said
anything at all
I'd probably say
hey,
I'm not a calculator.

To think easy like you do
is buttermilk, fresh eggs and cornbread
on the table every morning
without worrying about
who made it
and laid it out.

wives tale

Go on and on
about how I'm
never there
see what happens.

Cook up
confectionery lies
like old witches
in old growth forests, jealous of young brides
Hungry for children.

Love is hook
and bait for babes
shook from the safety of pleasant dreams
too soon
mid-winter nights
in towns with names with too
many syllables in them.

I could never love that ugly face
that ugly face that ugly fucking face.

I might be scared but I'll close my eyes
throw the cover over me
and you won't exist
won't have existed
ever existed
existed.

Thank you very fucking much

Would you let me know
if I was bothering you.
The people at my job let me know.
I say, hey, does this bother you.
They say, yes, it does.

I back away from venomous snakes
like I back away from uptight
pricks in cubicles they've turned into dens.

I don't stand around and examine them.
The snakes that is.
Their eyes are terminal.
That's the best I can do. Like fighter pilot's goggles.

Are we clowns?
Sad faced and pathetic
reeking of beer and weed.
Me, I mean. Me.
Am I a clown for thinking we could have it made.

I wish *over coffee* that I could say something clever
and make you feel cool for paying for it.
The steam floats tugboatishly from our mugs.
I wish there were some hills
we could try to reach the tops of by dawn.

I'd like to wear my winter coat again
and the mud-grip hiking-boots from our Iceland trip.
Remember it? We crashed the car into a volcano almost.

It was cold as a witch's tit
but you just had to have a picnic.
Where the wind came from
I'll never know.
We both got red faced, snot-nosed
so sick we had to stay in bed for 2 days.
Under a thick quilt
watching a log fire pop
and hiss. You got me to say what it was
you wanted me to say, then tugged
and played with my little puppet strings.

You lied and said it was a picnic.
People don't picnic in the cold,
that's called survival. It's not
fun like you been raised to believe.

You brought two bottles of Andre's Champagne,
with ballpark franks and buns
and no freakin' relish or mustard.

It's times like this we must step up
and educate people:

I'm country honey, not a poor fucking piece of white trash.