

a song for a long gone lover

today I was woken up just around five thirty
by the whispers of the asphodels
the screeching of the great horned owls in the barn

I breathed in deep
and got up on two legs
waddled through the chicken coop to hunt for hidden eggs

the hens glare as I walk past like they know what I stole
I've been burrowing myself underground since I became the mole
now that you've gone it's as if I'm not whole
using eggshells to brew a potion for your soul
starring at nothing through the keyhole
I read somewhere that seven thousand americans died in the dust bowl
I plan on regressing back into a tadpole
you got one thing wrong. I do not lack self control.

summoned a wave of river water to dry land
lit a roman candle right there in my hand
by it's light I sailed along the rio grande
across northern africa stretches three thousand miles of hot sand
pissing in a river while I dance to the skeleton band
I make believe I am a man, zip down my fly and just stand
in every dream I have I am holding your throat in my hand.

Dear Angelo,

Can't you just feel my boat row?

Sincerely,
Jane Doe

I thought of floating down the river dead
took my ring finger out from its little box instead
still squirming and pulsing
dripping as it bled

I wrapped
and wrapped
and wrapped around it with red thread

I have never felt such a sense of dread
the water supply is still poisoned with lead
country folk stinking and inbred
I should've never gotten those books that I read

even when my fingertip turned blue from lack of circulation
the phantom pain of that old laceration

I could still feel your sweet mouth
and I realized that I would die alone here, buried in the deep south.

Dear Angelo,

the days pass so slow

Dear Angelo,

I don't think I can leave you
tethered by umbilical cord, unable to ever let go

baptism in the river did nothing to make me repent
I wonder if I'd've been better off had I joined the convent
I also wonder how you can afford your rent

I'll feed the chickens and the sharks
roman candle still spewing out sparks

lunch was stale bread,
canned tuna and our champagne
spit it all back up and down the kitchen drain

I still keep the hearth burning
keep the waters churning
keep reading and learning
keep constantly yearning

I still crack my neck like a glow stick.

you know, I have a lot of things in common with a glow stick

poison on the inside
bitable and long

I'll stain the inside of your mouth
bitter and burning neon long after you've gone

Dear Angelo,

you face is the only one I know

the evening's always hardest to get through
I try and face it with chewing gum
and my face made up like siouxsie sioux

but there are creeping shadows
cloven hoof prints
dead fish floating at the surface

how could one house hold such sharp and scary things?

Dear Angelo,

I burn at the sight of wedding rings
caught cabin fever
driven mad by flowers and owl wings

I had to lock away the butcher's cleaver
break open the drawer and we can eat like kings

our cold bed has made me a believer
but only in rusty mattress springs

whoever is the dream weaver
I am unraveling your strings
and tying up my tire swings

satan is not the deceiver,
for it was god who made the griever.

every striped bark scorpion in this damn state stings
over two hundred thousand square miles is bound to hold sharp and scary things.

Dear Angelo,

I'm drying up in hot air
clothesline lined with crows
catching nothing in the snare
the dvr still recording your shows

Dear Angelo,

we once were quite the pair
now we both have to live with what you chose.

Angelo-

please come back to southwest texas
how I miss you so

the rio grande will still flow
along the border of mexico

Angelo-

did you keep on playing banjo?
I can hear boots dancing do-si-do.

pull the pin and you got four seconds before the grenade will blow
state law does not prohibit minors from purchasing ammo
five thousand years for a bristlecone pine to grow
sandy koufax beat the yankees in '63 with his left-handed throw

the lascaux caves were painted seventeen thousand years ago
there is nothing left of the bishop's castle in glasgow
and I'm going to die before I ever see snow.

Dearest Angelo,

there's nothing that can stop it
you should've figured I wouldn't quit

you're a foolish boy, Angelo

you and I both know
as above so below

as sure as death claims all men
you will be my lover again

together forever,
back down in hell.

THE BOOK OF CHRIST

My father spoke of gods. Preached of their mercy and their saving grace, plucked from rock bottom and blessed by the holy spirit. My father was reborn into sobriety with a shotgun in his mouth.

My father blessed us children. Named my brothers and sisters and I in the holy light. Made us worship each day, memorize our verses forwards then backwards, eat the flesh of heroes and smear ashes on our foreheads. Our father raised us as children of god.

My father scared us all. Screamed until his voice went hoarse and pounded fists on the drywall. For such a holy man, he seemed to gain satisfaction from slapping my face red with the sacred texts. Our blessed father beat us bloody.

I was a sin since before first breath. Born because of death, last of the fruit of the rotting womb. Angels whispered to me, told my father this and he touched wires to my skull and read my brain on machines and made me swallow different pills each week. Forced my head under holy water until penance filled my lungs and I sputtered out scripture. God had nailed his child to the crucifix, pumped her stomach full of amphetamines and wine from soaked sponges.

I always was a firm believer. Married to our savior since before I first bled. Wrapped my fertile hips and swelling breasts in sackcloth, tied my hair back and didn't touch my own skin until my sixteenth year. Studied verses until my eyes stung red, knelt at the altar until my knees bruised purple. I am forever my father's daughter.

I lived in fear of damnation my entire adolescence. Full years spent behind walls plastered in holy text, an entire youth spent under beds with glass shards and colored pencils. I unlocked my bedroom door for the very first time, on the brink of adulthood knowing only my father's name and the books of our faith. Walked through my house of infancy, now with the tread of a woman fully grown, found only an empty pantry and the ghosts of my siblings. I looked for the holy father in the liquor cabinet and in between my legs, but I could not find gods anywhere. I had been forsaken.

I had second birth in the steps I forced my feet to take. Found myself on the freeway, untying my wild hair and shedding my clothes until I walked naked next to speeding cars and left in my wake the skin of past life. Drank the red of my first self and opened my mouth to words not of scripture, put my hands down my underwear and found second faith. I was born again, blessed by the city stench and all the men that I kissed.

I prayed to my new god in the backseats of cars and diner bathrooms. Worshiped on my knees again, ate the flesh of sons and brought forward to the altar the blood of christ from my own stomach. Manifested stigmata along my forearms, little holes nailed into my veins. Spoke in tongues when god himself coursed through my body and reached my holy heart. Wandered through the sewers and wore the same black on my eyes for forty days and forty nights. I was a prophet of my faith.

My old savior and I met again in crumbling buildings and gas station parking lots. A bottle full of blood held in his left hand and a cross sucked into his mouth. He spoke around the metal, words that sounded just like ones branded on a girl's fingers and hung on her bedroom walls. I could be born again a thousand times over, and still never forget all those verses and books and scriptures and texts. I watched him speak from his spitting mouth. My snakeskin shriveled in fear of loud voices all the way from the interstate. When I heard those latin words, I felt my old holy ghost breathing down my neck, haunting me still. He preached of devils too. I looked at the father as if seeing him for the very first time, and I asked him why every heart is flaming.

I finally understand why men must have faith. With a gentle touch and a knowing look, my father said back to me, "My child, your god has been dead a long while. I am all that is left, the god of scorched earth. And you shall read my scripture until you go blind, and preach my gospel until your fingernails claw out your own throat."

no one

Look me in the eyes when I eat your flesh

I straddle the line between here and there, born on and dying in the folds of the thresh

my pulse has been weak for centuries, I'm held together with sagging skin and fraying thread

my heart has been beating since before your gods were a thought in your father's head.

when I look at my thighs I see death

waxing and waning as you drew first breath

I was a child before your ancient woods were planted

blood seeping wounds and shadow spells chanted

I lived a thousand lives before you glimpsed my face between the trees

tear down the idols of your father and sink to your knees

I have no youth, no worth in my bones

carry the weight of my body, heavy with stones

I am older than the gods of your people

my body is now your church and my mouth your new steeple

I am the absence of light and the sun that blinds

I am the joy, the blood of birth, and the grave that reminds

I am your mother, your father, your savior too

the ground you walk on and your body's very tissue

there are buttons to fasten and shoes to lace

whisper my name into the empty space

I was born without a face

I am no one

I am no one

I am no one

TO MY FELLOW LONELY GIANTS

Somewhere deep within the whites of my eyes, there is a lonely giant taking a piss. It trickles out my nose and pools in my lap all sparkling and golden. Wars waging as I wipe down this wet seat. My giant is baking under the Anatolian sun in his full grecian armor. When he meets Achilles and Patroclus, they shake hands on the sands of this foreign land. Achilles' hair gleams as yellow as the puddle at my feet. When the night comes, the giant watches the two boys kiss while the sound of a lyre fill the air. My giant walks along Orion's Belt, humming the lovers tune alone. He can piss into Poseidon's mouth from here.

Somewhere deep within the hollow of my mouth, I know exactly what's going on. I am hidden in the woods of Taylor Mountain getting skull-fucked by Ted Bundy. Mouth hollow no more. My eyes only go as deep as my skull, but even now, louder still, I can hear the giant's trickle. It sounds like a friendly voice on the other end of a suicide hotline. That same voice asked me to help carry a briefcase to his car. That sounds like crutches walking on pavement. Teddy loves the smell of rot and the softness of my putrefying body. Rigor mortis no more. Soon my jaw will disintegrate, my blood will congeal wine dark, and he will leave me where I lay. Alone among the California Bay Laurels. My giant plays tee-ball with the tire iron while I circle a Florida State sorority house. I will piss on the front door.

Somewhere deep within the stillness of my ovaries, there are eggs lying dormant. They will soon wake from their slumber and start to scratch at the tissue walls of their chamber. My babies cry whenever they lose a brother or sister to my unrelenting ovulation. A giant pricks my womb with his warrior's kopis. I am running red like Troy did. I am running red like Lisa Levy did. All us heroes with mouths wide open, waiting for the weight of passage to be pressed to our tongues. There are no drachmas here. We lay and watch as a giant moves constellations across the southern sky. Charon's obol remains unpaid. We will not be saved. There are no gods here. Not in Florida.

Somewhere right under the skin of the Georgia state line, piss is traveling from the Gulf of Mexico to the Mediterranean Sea. Every dammed god in the sky can cast their curse on me. Fifteen minutes in a Chi Omega house is all it takes for a killing spree. The fates were just too cruel to let Achilles and Patroclus be. Giants and dead girls swinging from the hanging tree. We march towards the funeral pyre in pairs of three.

Hell lives right here in Tallahassee.