

## Hush up Hady 'bout Preacher Reach

Hey Jackie Hey Beautiful Jackie  
Strong Jackie Hi Where are you  
picking blue day flowers  
dirty heels a real country girl  
where you run barefoot off to?

Found her in the bottom of the  
well no foul play suspected  
they all said she fell but  
surely that's not what happened  
Jackie weren't no fool

I knew who done it  
but they didn't ask me  
Cried in the river  
craw-dad fishing  
but I wasn't no snitch &  
I was smart some two

Smart enough to know  
slavery's over but  
no white soul on Earth's gonna  
believe a nobody quadroon girl  
say it's the white hamlet preacher

Minded my own business  
in my shack kissing the river  
Stayed out of the way mute  
as the day I was born

Mama said I barely made a sound  
"Just wash them clothes in the river Hady"

Time shore is funny

She and Clem's gone now, Papa too,  
before the shack felt like a house  
"That's just a stream, that's just a creek"  
It roared like an ocean when I was four  
everything felt bigger then the world

He killed another lamb  
months back, a white girl  
this time with orange hair  
He helped in the search  
and I was screaming inside  
but didn't make a peep

Didn't see it with my eyes  
but I knew it was him  
because sometimes I just  
seen pictures flashing by  
ever since I was a little girl  
Mama called it a curse  
until I find Cass in the  
woods when I was eight

It don't get real cold  
here in the winter  
but the air's different  
He would do it again  
Be easier to kill him  
then tell anyone in town

Knew that too

Sadie had one of her pigeons  
steal me a gun full of bullets  
Looked me strait in the eye  
Wanted to stop me but guessed  
right that I'd just go across town  
to buy a goose gun that shoot  
sideways or not at all

Waited for him hiding  
outside during his sermon  
after the vows until he said  
goodbye to the last soul  
me waiting in the stone cold  
something in my chest  
was itching to run chicken

But I stayed stiller  
It wasn't cold enough  
to see my breath but I saw it  
clear as he came thru  
the doorway and picked me  
out behind some willow trees

Then he smile like a preacher  
turns it on like a lamp  
"Girl you come here for God?  
I seen you before looking at me  
you ain't late! To worship  
God you been too scared Hady  
to ask Him into your heart?"

"You killed them girls"  
I say trying my's best  
for it not to hear  
like I's axing him

But then he come out  
the real preacher  
eyes black as coal  
palms out smiling long  
like a wolfdog's tooth  
His voice change too

"This ain't the end for me  
I seen the way it ends  
and this *ain't it slave*  
You got some proof?"  
He wait  
"Nah I dint think so  
But me?" He pause "I do"

Reached in his pocket slow  
pull out a flask of black magic  
smiling his devil smile took a  
sip hisself then holds it out  
"Tastes like fire and brimstone."  
Had me hypnotized almost  
until I blew him away

Dropped the gun and ran  
right away like Sadie say  
Ran faster then in my hole life  
Clean off in the river  
Washboard under the moon

Lock myself in my shack  
Wait for tomorrow

Tomorrow comes early  
Police bang on the screen  
Preaches gone and is sum  
dried-up blood and they  
saying some white men saw me  
running hysterical last night

And I laugh, say I ain't run in  
thirty years They keep buzzing around  
like honeybees and search the shack  
and riverbank for weeks for weeks  
but they ain't ever arrest me

No proof, no body  
I get away with it even  
though some white men suspec  
Sadie smiles with half her teeth  
but she won ever tell  
Not inna hundred years

Years later  
Some company offers  
to buy my land but I  
stick in my heels  
stubborn as rubber  
like Daddy my whole  
life's in this shack

Where else would I go?  
Can barely walk or sea

these slow molasses days sho

Glad I did what I done  
even though instead of saints  
I wake up sometimes and see  
Reach he's inside the shack

Jackie, Margaret two they floated  
up the river to try sweet-  
talking me to go with them  
But then I touch something real  
old in the room, older than me  
a pebble, a teacup, or Mama's ring  
and it brings me back

Time shore is funny

Cause lately theys my friends  
make me laugh and bring me  
icy sweet tea and dandelion  
wine 'cept for minister Reach  
I'm all alone here We sing  
old field songs and gospels

I make them wipe they feet  
under Papa's warped cuckoo  
We chatter and gossip like hens  
for hours and hours on end  
They never fool me for long  
but I pretend theys got me  
fooled just fur the company

## That Stupid Poem I Owed You

When will you leave  
my heart alone pulling  
at strings A master  
puppeteer while I play the fool  
fumbling falling, stupid in love  
reaching for nothing that's even  
there while you spin the fishing spool

Mother of Nations but she doesn't believe  
in anything that I say because I am  
after all the clown, the thief playing fire  
with the joker and she hates me  
Stronger than everyone else like that  
black Kid with the little brother who grew up  
on The Wire on HBO, in the Baltimore jungle

Everything always falls apart for me  
It's you better than brand new  
Bought a bride today & a glass  
trifle it was 13 Misdemeanors  
they gave me but we settled on  
three years probation & two  
weeks in a Virginia jail

Felt the immensity of the wall of rock above you  
on vacation in Nevada when you were eleven  
Hung around your room just to read your diary  
it was just to sea just to sea  
I'm soooooo sorry also

I didn't take a picture too

Drown me again and drown me again and then save me  
Forget about it but still remember all the bad things *I did*  
Pull the plugs from my phony heart that love you so deeply  
Convince me to swim until I can't see land then tell me  
I'm a bad person *and* mentally ill *and* go no contact  
crumbling my entire world down totally completely

Imperial Bedrooms made me do it  
You used that West Virginia timeshare  
and Tom Green show to get rid of me  
What a bummer pal  
A parting gift like a chainsaw  
dropped inside from four stories  
Thanks for the summer buddy

But you're not \_\_\_\_\_ or rich or handsome  
You're not even funny  
"I'm not as excited about this as you are"  
but hey here's some gas money  
Rushmore twenty years later  
I'll build an empire like

Who is Howard Roark, Alex for 400?  
John Galt built the motor of the world  
Not Warren Buffet, Pepsi Phil, Henry Ford, or Charles Koch  
But I'll buy up all the real estate and low income housing anyway  
Mayim I'll go ahead and make it a true daily double  
What is everything in this New World makes me want to choke?

I'll dye my hair  
You won't even recognize me



I fix my teeth, wear a wig  
 Join the Khaki Scouts, cologne like rue  
 Your envoy now that I'm a jaguar shark  
 circling the death of youth culture, Killer BOB,  
 Bill Murray, Sigur Rós, open water, and soju

Like Ayn Rand  
 you never had a heart  
 I felt your heart  
 I can feel it right now  
 You're in my blood on air, sea & sand  
 You *were* my blood like V.C. Andrews

Flowers in the attic, siblings in Seoul, a city of ocean  
 You *were* the prettiest girl in that comedy club  
 You have always been  
 the prettiest girl in the whole world  
 but not because you're the only one here  
 Though when you Arrrrrrrrrgh

I'll learn how to do our taxes in a  
 Post Apocalyptic World, trust me  
 I can teach you how to shoot deer,  
 cut the fish of gills, and barter Mad  
 Max-style with Appalachia rednecks  
 swabbing decks on the Blue Ridge Hills

I can feel the immensity of the wall  
 of you in the Great Concavity where  
 my heart, frozen as ice cream, used to be  
 Five hundred miles away through sheer  
 glacier, cold stone, creamery  
 and will you please talk to me?

There are words I wish I could take back, always  
when it's too late and there's only I'm sorry and I love you  
Memories caught on a cloud, a swelling crescendo  
Discovering Infinite Jest doesn't have an ending in college  
or eleven-year-old-me figuring out the bug catching net on  
Zelda is what defeats the final boss for Super Nintendo

When it's over I always destroy everything  
like napalm over flame trees in the Vietnam jungle  
or a childish tantrum-sized explosion  
brought to you by the American Military or Kim Jon Il  
But when you back out a hundred times  
it means you can't really mean it on 101 love or until

All those sad old dopey songs play some eternal  
longing I was a ship lost at sea or Art Bell  
and you were an ambulance siren or a small turtle  
inside of a buoy the size of a thimble or a seashell  
Spinning spinning round and round ready to whale

Between the Big Dipper and Little, under the stars of Draco  
You never gave me a real chance to show you  
that I wasn't hung on every single word you say  
or bobbing for apples with William Tell me I'm not going  
crazy like my father who would switch manic sometimes  
stay up four days a stretch, and do tai-chi in the park  
while smoking ungodly amounts of cigarette roolly tobacco