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SPEAKER, READER

The reader should hope this is something that can be fixed.
The reader should know there is a permanent lacking.
The speaker speaks in summer when it is hot and things are prone to wilt.
The speaker needs patience a nervous energy requires.
So does the reader.
The speaker endures a panic attack described as “spiritual ovulation.”
When the speaker was alone in a bookstore, the panic returned.
The speaker should focus.
The reader should accept this offering of the speaker’s affection.
When the speaker has these attacks, there is time to notice simple things.
The reader should notice sirens or weeds or trains.
The speaker should see what is in and around the speaker’s face.
The speaker rolls her eyes back in her head and listens.
The speaker is seized.
The reader is excited.
Artifice, beauty, and silence do all the work for the speaker.
The moon’s reflection over the river is there for the reader.
The speaker feels free in a way unparalleled by reason.
The reader knows no technique to bring the speaker out of pain.

THE LAST PEOPLE LEFT ON EARTH WILL DIE HAPPY

Lovers had bills to discuss. There were jokes of punching tax
joyously onto ticker tape while estimating the cost of moonshine vats

for the end of the world. It was sweet to make sweet of
chores, marriage, perceived loss of freedom, apocalypse,

whatever echoes the end of self. They knew not to give is to lose.
Bombings married constellations and kitchens, stars as light bulbs

now part of the floor plan, the rubble turned balustrade,
a point from which to view chandeliers made macabre. There were jokes

to calculate before decaying into the most threatening tales of themselves.
They laughed at cars driven by pride, people afraid to die intoxicated, in pairs,

in piles. Rows of cars billowed exhaust of those running from loss;
winter coughed. The sky gave them snow and when whittled

by warmth, chose to freeze again. Lovers discover freedom as icicles,
as melting threats, the large, lonely ones found crowning empty houses.

DUENDE IN CAMDEN

Lucy, hair an electric moss like that of the ivy attached to the lattice of America, a battle between the heaviest oxidized dye job. Lucy, coiffed by her 12-year old daughter, too, stands behind the corner of their Camden market booth, a cheap copper homage to her hawking mother as healer, a ring as “free gift”, the don’t-forget-rheumatic-cure swathed in pearls, both bands and bodies anorexic bent, the daughter left her name unmentioned, their eyes said they hadn’t had decent brie and my observation brought me over saying, *London is an attempt to heal*

Lucy, detailing tales on the craft of my purchase (jewelry box), nodding at warp speed on 12’s dream of ballerina blasé-gamine, only in America, neither of them had been. 12’s twirling weak pirouettes to a loud elevator tune. Lucy, whose figure resembled a wilting oleander launched me saliva first into a beta-blocker hunched over, to fork over £15, I focused on 12’s wet glittery eye shadow, thinking no crinoline will save you, no fresh tuberose in your hair, saying *America will wait for you*

FOR N:

New York City:

Shh, I know your troubles with Bastille Day,
ten days before my birthday.

We celebrate by burnt wine, meat,
illegal fireworks, high pigment lipstick
taxied 'round Columbus Circle,
attach artifice, paint avenue,
bludgeon, blow open.

I can't continue, with you.

I tirelessly fill casts shaped of your promenades,
beaks of West End highway crows, drips, drip,
they dazzle cold.

Blood and steam took conversation,
chose stolen scissors to
gnaw the quick of intention from
our bewilderment. I sculpt ash from dead
lightening bugs armed with machine guns
that pump you plump with
an afterthought of smolder.

Washington Square,
mouth your afterthought.

The dedicated gestation of
going down on a graveyard
are drowned in the fountain
of Lincoln Center and its scent
of masticated raspberries
fill the bronze tub, an ocean,
an aggregate of washed-up syringe,
the hi-def zoom on an ex-sea foam pixel
and a sun-fucked version of wood.

VOODOO

I woke up glowing before having time to swallow it whole. I have never kissed someone's ribs before. I could hardly watch. I die at the thought of tasting stale. I vibrate, seize, twitch. I beg of you: do not turn on me, turn me into you, put me deep inside sleeping you and take me away. It is not your everyday I love. Let me preserve each of those nerve endings. Why are they endings when they only begin the idea of a grinding backbone? Your cheek, sweat caked, baked to a warm. A new kind of human, I can smell that. I forbid you to take this from me, this new body, this buzz.

ORCHESTRATED MOAN

Pills dangle from every mouth at the opera house while I tell myself
to get out of the way, get out of the aisle.

I know the composers have sex, the orchestra, everyone up there.
I know by the disintegrating formula
in the smallest echo of vibrato, soprano
an antonym of stutter, no place safer than another.

Look, these performers have lost their heads, shrive
with patented mechanical instruments
only living when handled by a human being.
I am terrible in first person, a less-successful ornament
next to the hands of woman pulling her mouth
open wide as advertisement.

She belts the Italian for "*half the trouble you get into
comes from coming,*" our drugs half-life, our wide-set pupils,
our performances, our aural and erotic poisons.

Goodbye powerful scales, I have been experimenting
with tenderness and I seem to have forgotten
what I wanted this poem to consist of, love?

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Syracuse, 7 PM, you and I
in the bastard hour of evening.
My breathing is shallow from
how long you have taken me
into your arms. If I were able to live
for continuous eras, there would be
multiple, radical, unfathomable
plot twists as we eased into the dirt
of one another's years. I have made it
through twenty-seven, but the measure
of desire exceeds my short decades.

Syracuse, our bodies are holy
and not separate, our bodies pulled
through a knot of snow squalls, the boats
of Onondaga Lake. I don't have enough breath
to live multiple lives or skin to graft beyond you.

Syracuse, your pale blue church is knot
carved and abandoned but its yard trees strung
with lights, with death in season:
red, green, and white mechanical candles
lit for each fallen leaf, electronic leaves shorting bright
toward the bone cold. Together we possess the same rare
blood type of nighttime that plays on the radio channel,
airwaves illuminating choral organs
and the organs of our body. I imagine
it is the church speaking to me, and so you. *Stay*, you say.

Syracuse, I will spend my life serving your sky
my idea of the holy, the laureate of our mutual
decomposition. We grow painfully fast toward tomorrow.

STENDHAL SYNDROME¹

Together we have spent the last two fourteenths of March, Pi Day
3.14, I walk into the eternity of the museum with a painstaking heel.

Poor lighting, a Soviet glare. Someone should take care of that.
Someone should take care of me: a garish item in nice

isolation. Impasto swatches. Thick Stalinist stone.
I wish I could go back and read my old philosophy exams

as narrative, as terrible verse and wish. You move close to me
by the copy of O’Keeffe, the mined diamond moment of our being here.

Once the fraught starfish of my left hand pulled a tarot card
from a deck where several small swords punctured a large sword:

“must fight what pierces me.” You are her self-made cage, mine
the diamond in me. Outside, the wind mauls the city.

No one else in the museum. Unlike me, cubism
is not preoccupied with the end of things.

In the gift shop, pillboxes but no postcards with smoldering acts
of Futurism, no security shot of your arm lacing my shoulder.

¹“Stendhal Syndrome is a heartbeat, dizziness, fainting, confusion and even hallucinations when an individual is exposed to art, usually when the art is particularly beautiful or a large amount of art is in a single place. The term can also be used to describe a similar reaction to a surfeit psychosomatic disorder that causes rapid of choice in other circumstances, e.g. when confronted with immense beauty in the natural world.”

PROJECT MKULTRA

Based on "High Anxiety: LSD In The Cold War" by Raffi Khatchadourian

Not long ago on a talk-radio show was a conversation on LSD administered to the public for possible demolition of emotional barriers.

A testimonial of the experience details a desire to enter the throat of a platinum blonde mannequin dressed in sequins, large close-ups of flowers. She was described as a woman who got drunk with Argentina, a hybrid of leaning and bohemian, open to drug you with reward.

"It was an armamentarium metamorphosing over time. There were memos and letters. Visions of personal items, too: golf scorecards, college essays, all the drugs I've taken on my hard drive, a rented room with heat. It was too much to resist."

Later in the interview, star witnesses said people woke up at four-thirty in the morning to study their condition, half-dead from "Sex in Outer Space," the lonely maelstrom of clicks and clacks, a noble cause and the victorious disability to obtain them.

To think, nerve endings crushed in A New Concept of War, brutality without lethality, characterizing humanity by hallucination, decorating our enemy with ethos through chemistry.

The discourse through the radio into the effects of 'nervousness' seem reasonable, a systematic effort with a new vista of control. Are we undesirable, ill equipped to develop sound in any kind of sober word?

"I need to know everything that has happened to me because it could give me some peace and fewer nightmares, I have found a mixture of defensiveness and empathy, some people find it satisfying to look back and condemn if it lends itself to redemption."

MY NAME WAS NEARLY TAYLOR

If I am a river, its current is smoke.

If he is a river, its sediment is us.

I need to return to the city of nurses who slapped us both.

He needs to return to New York, patch over his slurping black holes.

Why does New York insist on varnishing blue over a red state?

Why do the nurses insist on silt, sadness?

My brother talks of vanished moss on my hand,
dreams a séance where a ghost flew up my nose.

My brother contradicts a pig's a pigment, suggests a suicide hotline,
promises a stain that drizzles the entire way down.

Who will tell this story? Into the gravel he goes and sings.

He will tell this story: lacks an emergency exit and cilia can't dial 911.

My mirror reports to me: a holy roller, bulldozer, no boudoir buffoon.

His mirror reports to him: I dream those days over and over again.