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All Things Lose Thousands of Times

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts

in

Creative Writing and Writing for the Performing Arts

by

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Elongated on the dirt
a skiff is rescued
not by the angelic
but whatever is loose in the waters
always seeking death,
that little burning thing.
I.
Concerto in F Minor

There is no spring through window shades
of Hotel Little Regina. Only
the severe bones of Bach’s harpsichord.

Mercy falls curiously into the river.
Flesh, a boat swaying as violent

as Bataille’s frail body of want,
his naked boy lying on the grass
at night, soaked and saying:

*the starry universe,*
*which merely serves as backdrop.*
His bare curve now in mud—and if I prevail

towards dream—will turn to a breached animal.
I see us bedding in these scant leaves.
But you, I don’t know.
This yellow earth. The pale clay.
Women and Children for Sale

1
So young like silk heaven!
Light pulls my bamboo hard (aaahs and ooohs) for this sweet potato!
Forget her and the yellow shutters.

Bicycles swarm—
they’re coming.

2

Broiled-fish-Asian landscape where mercenaries
first hoisted their grandiose operas,
tossed their nets out for
translucent shrimp!
Jet a marriage, carry her to bed,
calmly jaywalk
with confidence.

3

The domestic market:
he’s paying all before a thousand selected queens
saddled behind glass and stage.

They’re wearing the tightest lace & blue jeans.

Miss, this is something!
Obsession, a little job abroad.

4

They shake,
smoldering before gilded midnight.

They come, primed for EXPLOSION.

One applauds, frozen-faced

at Franz Bar in the Alamino. Her name Ka Rene.
Before we go any further, let me tell you why I seek struggle:

a little noodle soup and rice liquor,
the debris of a giant firecracker,

to plunge from a butterfly
of a boat on golden waters.

Good Mor-Ning,
North America!
Hell-O.
I boil the classics, roast with plum sauce and the fiercest ginger.
I eat Gone with the Wind.
Scarlet exists
in the Bay of Tonkin.
It was difficult to get a visa.

Demon faith carries a girl
over fields, over Red River—
pagodas in full smoke.
Altars never wonder.

Flower balloons arrive from the village, interspersed in small powder loads. Eyes, alive!

If you go out early, good-looking!
The damp winds bear the image,
half a world away
arranged before children were beaten. We’re in the tropics,
above sea level, at the latitude of Calcutta,
Indochina. Bombs, farms, annexations.
The northern border flouts. They suggest that I don’t need a translator
Take the train across Cambodia, very rich people!

Good food,
baskets on strings,
bikinis front row,
mandarin robes,
blue bodhisattvas,
gold, more children.

I ask a young man,
Care how they look?
Looks chaotic, but paved over,
they're gone without a trace.

10

Go away crackling of fried beef,
butchering of two dogs for the pot
of love.

Been bone-hungry three days, another waxes and
I can hardly move.

Private resistance
of the bloodstream.

11

An inscription on a drum:

water buffalo
and pig.

Dragon inside
wherever I go.
Hands but no Telescope

A few friends one hand and nowhere to go.
Ride and spin in a carousel of bodies
as a man watches while chartreuse painted toes
mottle the earth. My arm stretches
like shaft of arrow. Dream, you have turned me again
into blood on a lucid white slip.

If only I could scrub off his
but there is no lye soap strong enough,
for this skin. No needles strong enough
to allow me to forget any of you.
Black Tigers

A bunch of breasts from either arm, and that lone question—do you friend, even now, know what it is all about?

~Wole Soyinka, from Civilian and Soldier

The sun slips between panels of fichus. Dripping. She travels only at night. Beds in ditches for too many hot nights. Her body arrives in the ghoulish thicket like so many girls do with a bomb strapped between both breasts.

*

The Velcro harness starts as an itchy burn then turns into second skin. Black tape travels like zebra stripes. Tar.

Her thumping chest—an only blanket.

*

A rigorous comb and cut with unsharpened shears. See how girls shape up real well, ready to scatter the ground any time.

Litter across the jungle, turn a city to shambles. Shoulder, breast, elbow, lip no longer shackled. They tie their buns back in bundles and bundles of black. Their mothers have turned into mangroves. No. A dream and a yellow river. The men form into a line under shadows of strangler figs.

*

The wild bird’s plucked and severed with ease. Plumes and pink meat in her hands. Gummed to dips of fingers.

Teeth like sun, like the scaled peel of snake fruit. But when she’s strapped, how she can slither through any damn hole, any dark line of in between. *For country*, she says, *I shall be severed*. Spread with voracity,
then refined to seeds and meat.  
*This land.* All hunger girls.

*  
The manioc and mud and rust mud of a river. What a mud muddy soldier she’s become. Breasts fastened mounds underneath fatigues and sweat. A topaz sari disposed on that river’s shore. It’s lined in reeds needling moisture. Mosquitos pepper running water.

*  
The buzz, buzz and zip. Inevitable sting of cyanide, then a smooth leg the hue of dunes and cherry bark. An ornament, a trophy, all alone lying there—full gleam.
Aubade Cassette

I sew together pieces with string
from 77 Poems, the white
page widely open, Lacerda says,
_ nakedness is more and more terrible._

Each diagonal of loss is measured:
a running field, a perimeter
of mouth, each crawl to rumpled sleep.
But to loss Darling, I prefer talk
until the flags and meat burn,
I replay it in my head like Hikmet’s
smoldering red chimneys of Istanbul
and bars of Bursa and yes, surprise!
Even women betray each other
for contour,
for beauty,
for burn again.

But the disorderly placement of hands,
the barrier made from the vertical of cigarette
against chin meant a diagram
of secrets and I am tired of the startling.
The clear plain of desertion.
Parts of a Body before it was the Body’s Pain

along its sides, the sacrum holds one thousand petroglyphs
but between spine and hill

too much silica and feldspar barring
an opaline valley
its sheet after sheet

taken up by grist
each stringy muscle or marl into another life

the fibula is a palm blade
severed from its length
by monsoon & the mangrove’s octopus root

drinking from the same cave-lake
before reincarnation

at the cliff shore
drawdown, the stones say

before those brown vestiges of ancient squares
before gemstones like prayer bite by bite
feasting on the cutthroat trout

from above, one is seeing
an electric party of wings—

what is first gathered
then disassembled on the floor
that spirals to summation:

a husk
a crystalline pictograph
a coating of the eyes
once sang of purges:
pearls, pearls, pearls
Woman Leaves Psychoanalyst Office

Oil on Canvas, “Mujer Saliendo Del Psicoanalista,” Remedios Varo

My eyes can do nothing else
but stare at the way she grips
her father’s beard as she leaves the office.
    His head a sliver of meat,
hooked between
her thumb and pointer finger.

*
So many women I know have it hard letting go.
The first woman I fell in love with,
all my fear inside my head.
Rainwater funneling down a drain.

When she turned around, the back of her neck
no longer a neck
but an extension of my arm.

*
She holds him, precarious,
a savory chicken heart, un-skewered
over a swollen, hankering tongue.

I think what unabashed courage.
What backbone of natural sorcery is this?

Tell me the incantations
for this kind shedding.

*
Why I wanted her or wanted to be her.
How I hated her.

When she snipped off all her locks,
let them blazon on the bathroom floor.
Her father found us
as I knelt before her, knees pressing on church-cold tile. 
His glare pale as carabao bone.
His fist, that year’s watershed.

* 
She suspends her father’s head.
A dead goldfish before a toilet bowl.
If I look long enough, I can almost hear *flush.*
What She Wills [The Trees Behind]

With all the danger involved
at least you know the missing
is not a blank letter or diminished
garden, instead your mouth full
of such shattering sea
and the peninsulas ravaged
like the lean flesh of a neck.
How many times
with no map and barefoot, you must
have told God through the slim crevasse
of both palms, you were ready
to let go of all that water.

The geography of a country,
wax-like and grandmother finally buried
in Laguna, its quiet shrine
as close to infinity as a small
planet gleaming.
Each summer you take what little
money to escape, eager
for the pulpy bits of yourself
moving, no longer cut in half
but some bandaged organism
with each opening of dark
an easy
compartment without clinging rope
or barricade, not any exotic brand
or objet trouvé like Laurencin’s dancers
rather from clouds an animal forms,
a wild cat slipping inside an oblong hole.

You think of the different places
now washed over by rain,
very well,
they tell you, under fractions of sky,
because they’ve watched all things lose
thousands and thousands of times.
II.
Another World Gathers

I sleep in a bedroom once a horse
stable for a monastery.

The monks have all turned
& the skinned cork strips to red.

I am a weak thing. A body down,
an eaten up mosquito net.

A white candle drives out fear,
a red one drives out lust.
The Young

Chatterbox / of a slow boy / a thing / a toy
May he / have life / like an unfallen tree
What if / lush life / sounded / young monk savoy

and bruised arms / became trumpets / enrapt joy
What god / if I god / let me / be more than she
Chatterbox / of a slow boy / some thing / some toy

Frantic for taste / in dark clubs / what fine boys
think I’ve seen you / carried down Tennessee
What if lush / life sounded / young monk savoy

and days always / tasted that good / agree
like the rubber / bends / elasticity
Chatterbox / of a slow boy / thing thing / toy toy

Next time / those knuckles fly / hit redeploy
Dance some / even when city burns / times three
What / if lush life / sounded young / monk savoy

Through ash / broke glass / Venus is a viceroy
Who can tell its weight / when reflex / love’s small knee
Chatterbox of a slow boy / I thing / I toy
What a life / lush sounded / young monk / savoy
The Islander Motel

Many years ago—how many? I have no idea; all this goes back into the mists...
~Charles Baudelaire

It starts with the ones who pay by the hour.
A silent street and a mask
hung down to her feet.

Enters a face that goes white like the bathroom’s everything. In the diminished room, she seeks to taste:

here, eyes are pennies of joy,
hands giving. See how they hold marvelously everything.

Tossed over sheets clotted with azaleas, how does she feel about her own smell, her own opening and closing like a robe?

Once in the divide, another playing appears.
The flat back of a sofa, at first poses as an obstruction before it turns to a stage of rise.
Shake the lights up.

Her single figure, a-much-of-nothing-machine. Its parts buzz then illuminate after a remedy or an offering has been seized:
uncanny shapes
knuckle in a mouth
foot nestled in a fold
dancing the slippery magic

Exits a stunted bug with trembling legs—spells: separated what is left of her muted gleam.
To Dream of Drowning

Promised down
to a tunneling black.
Of what might be

the opening
of an oversized
body. A god

inside out, tossed
across chasms.

Tissue equals naught.
Throat equals portal.

Because in iron,
the roundedness
and control
of clay, perhaps

this is why I
believe it happens,
this craving

for fierce
locomotion.
For everything elysian:

funneling
& dark matter
for so long.

When it’s done,
a glistening twine

of hair is all
that’s left.
Umbilical

from the trident
body to this wrinkled
surface. A dorsal ripples
through the water’s curl. When I wake,

let light be soluble.  
Be more than flesh

or pulp. Let me  
call it a name

other than sun,  
other than another

numb porcelain  
taking the hot liquid  
after its been sieved?
**Woman Eats Milkfish and Hibiscus**

Long, silvered fatness
she picks out from two hundred bones.

A dream of culling feathers
from a bird wing.

This must be her last dinner
with the mga tokó lizards,

this hunger for the galactic,
camouflaged within the leather
of tamarind trees.

And Visayan islets rusting
and breathing, where seawater
meets corrugated metal.

In the hut next door,
someone's twitchy Sanyo purrs.

Across a garden of bitter
melon, the radio:

*Move over
and give us some room.*

Through humid foliage, ghosts
never lose their softness

for good crooning no matter
the fission or diodes.

Take no escape,
among the cockled jaws
—she's a hideaway girl

And with her, they wait
with jellied feelers wriggling
to corners of porch
like unfettered dress straps.
To sponge bathe white fish
in cane vinegar until
it umbers, salts some more before
the declaration of tongue.

When all flesh’s been swallowed,
save the flowers for last.
Draw back mouth

into an uncapped gourd,
A call for rain,
a call for water.
Love Darts

It’s 6 p.m., everyone’s unpinning laundry from a line—
socks and chemise hovering like assorted doves
while the garbage underneath presides over
the alleys that always remorsefully think back.
Maybe its time jostling you
that you need to move?
Find a foreign place, sleep with a stranger.

We eat snails and you tell me you’re tired of living straight.
The spying wife, the bedroom window overlooking
a shred of beach, the breakfast you’ve unanswered
too many times—eggs with their unbroken
yolks and exposed jelly.

Our waitress drops forks a third time as she holds
a plate of shells piled into a steamy hillock.
I use a toothpick to yank shriveled larva out.
It springs back into a curl. Hatched

from some deep sea conch like Paula Rego’s Unicorn
minus the unicorn and pink dress.
Defensive, you quote Sappho with much resolution,
mention Samuel Delaney.

They’ve got street credibility. Sure, Spartans
were doing everyone, too. I agree.
Thought it was healthy as vitamins.
Try the clams. They taste less forestry
gurgling in their translucent stew and chives.
Take it as an act of chivalry. Like cocktail parties
when one goes alone. You don’t need to understand
what guests say. You can switch records when no one’s looking.

Have you heard of blue polymita snails? Their lapis
bodies cooling inside wayside caves, gliding like sailors
in their navy suits, no hands, make love by stabbing.
Self-Portrait as a Vampire in a Bad City

*after the film, A Girl Walks Home Alone At Night*  
(*Directed by Ana Lily Amirpour*)

Secrets can be taken apart  
like little screws  
from a dead clock.

> Into readied heat, rekindled to breath—  
alert without want of sun,

she doubts the ancients, rebukes  
any God-given things,  
their quick, unnatural handle of power.

She resists their sense of rites,  
their invasions and talents,  
their detached wings,

those old furnaces like lines of jars, fumes  
bottled for safekeeping.  
What is even worth keeping?

Without a necessity to run, she occupies  
the meditative buzz  
just, like, that.

Elsewhere in corners,  
ascending not  
to sainthood.  
Underneath blooms  
a sign of midnight,  
and a being that finally  
rewards failure  
with gifts.

Through a crowd of others,  
minus any flash, she is speed.  
Her veil like a black wave  
of resistance: truth is a scab.
In Delay with Marcel Marceau

It all happens in suspension.
    A kite let loose.
I give up. I’m flying,
I give up, your hands,
the waving sirens say.

To command the invisible
imperfectly moving,
to inhale their hovering pain
like a confection to your nose:
    a thread  a knot
    a tear    a dice roll.

Inside your throat, captured
in equidistance, laughter is
    accumulating and dying.

Are you one extremity of the body
or instead like the dancer
eddying dust
from each separation?

But the ground weighs nothing but clouds
    and your face, nothing, too.

    Your arm fights off spring,
lengthens into a tightrope.
But where are the sparrows, the freed doves
that come to its perch?

You fight with yourself and the animals.
You fight with John the Baptist
at the flats of the Jordan,
fight the saints wielding their scripts,

until your mouth toothless
and mulled black.
You look   gone as a boat.
in direction of some heaven.
III.
Situation Sculpture

To know of the trapped light inside your head that leads you to enter one room after another is to chip away till its shatters the hard plaster of a culture’s ribbed mold.

To know the light that comes is to save a one-wingéd bird, not one of any blown glass or tinted porcelain but bird who isn’t repelled by thorns, bird who takes to elm sap without appellation,

thorns that live along the edges, the very edges of a leaf’s veins knows too well the wounded head.

But if the head faithfully allows the coming light, then it will find ghostly laundry swaying and without wind or proof of love or property; so you must chip away the plastered ribs.

To its killing, who comes closer? Its instinctive know-how like culling meat from marrow. Once, I saw a dotted kestrel perched staunch on a red beam, grappling a headless field mouse;

then a young woman I saw pull out flesh as if it was a captive piece from her deep and beyond the clenched doors, the perfume of starved, yellow flowers.
Eve’s Mistress

We long indulged in a cave as grass
does half-awake and shaking morning.
We let the scene unpeel us like rogues.

Only the lilies knew beyond the rogue’s
exterior that we laid out like grass
delicately silver each morning.

The mole on her leg marks a day’s morning,
but he exorcised us with his rogues,
saints they were not, inside the tall grass

their sharp spines, quivering knives of rogues.
Fall of Parched Fruit

In the body of a greyhound, 
this wind you spoke of, this wind 
of speed cut short. Only dust 
and bones held by bowstring.

People left her at a Texaco, 
dead center in a parched afternoon.

Nothing in her but bone, some string. 
I hear your voice, the dry 
winds in it. I hear your voice 
crackle, the break of ribcage 
lined in silver. Your story, 
a love story: an angel 
came then left for dead 
if there’s such a thing.

I say that greyhound must have 
shimmered like a gunnysack 
filled with silver fish bones. 
She was an angel you say 
as you teeter. Yes, a parched 
gunnysack, black moons for eyes.

Your head falls, a parched lemon 
into the lap of my hands.
Before Encountering the Guadiana River

It is an unnamed bridge like a kind,
unbearable light
that walks through walls.

Do you ever see, ever see them
those ever-impatient things
bobbing towards the flawed flame,
over and over cities
and the spout of fountains.

I want to be that kind
who can walk through a wall of fifty lives
like river, wet dirt, its wild aloe
prodding the mustard grass,
every confessions now under water.

Shadows, be not the only thing
through the strapped, barred up,
padlocked doors
of the gypsy church.

To rope, arm, thigh, silver birch,
stars, God lets me go.
Why they even come back,
these spoiled stars,
I can’t know.

I’d rather be whoever bathes
in the monsoon, knees swaying—
unequaled. Wanting allows gospel.
When We Stop Running

Tonight, we’ve been rejected from every cheap inn and room—away dark curve. Whatever happened? It has no name. Thin, these stairway walls or corridor, a minimal shelter. How they know fever and the red, sad charm of dissipation. Without a ripple of sky. Night comes overdue. And there is no rum or suave to this linen. No need for first nights or homage to them.

Tomorrow, under this humidity, your skin shall remain the same: a trapping glow, a zinging inside a dangle of light. But the manic of thighs, the same. The grasp of a jaw upon a jaw, clicking into place like a small key into a lock. The inside of our mouths bruised-pink. Tongue, a hidden forager for flesh all sizes—just the same. Over cold steps, my neck dragged and pushed. Arch and pull of what is already broken, the only forgiveness I ask. Let belief be this.

In Santiago de Cuba, I remember how it did not rain for days. But hard you drank from me as if I could make it. And I believed that corridor would burst. Each taste of silver necessary, each hard angle inside each dip and ache. Dirt uprooted by the tremor made from the apples of your knees, from whatever nature lives in this place.
This Quiet Raucous before Stars

And the train uncoils
city vertebrae in a blinking
strip of light—a postcard of an old face.

On some vista point, sorrel rooftops
and below, nightclubs in red dresses
while vaudeville busboys walk
under the lime boulevard light.
4 a.m. and no one else
to tell me otherwise, views turn
to songs in slow tempo
as long as you want me,
I’ll stay.

* 
A Chesterfield burns a slow crawl
between my knuckles.
The other hand writes a letter.

Over the colonnade, my head elevates.
*Who am I this time?* I say
to a clumsy stack of chairs, to a cat
watching from a small place of leaves.

* 
A deaf woman laughs in sign language.
Her fingers bounce on an invisible trumpet.

(morendo) *I don’t want anything else,
so come before these hands get cold,
and my torso turns to folded skin.*

* 
When I was eight, I was an unsmiling ballerina.
The yellow of my costume flared
like a mouth, tiny and celebrated.
Mother clipped a plastic goldfinch
to my hair. On the stage floor, my gloved
feet floated over a quivering
X marked in chalk.

And I wondered if grandfather could see me,
his Casanova pin-stripe suit,
elegant and debonair among the spine
of aisles, still here and left again.

*

Love, during that ungodly hour,
I want you to answer me in cadenza
like Armstrong’s West End Blues.
Like Bausch’s dancers parading
in absolute through rain or reverb
or lightning just before or like Yusef Lateef’s

“Yesterdays?” But the instructor utters,
(hard note) this is how you do it—
now walk in a straight line—
Girl Meets Girl

Eternity opens with the dark back
of a jazz pianist hunched inside himself.
Girl, with your chipped tooth, distressed shoes,
dark hair that remind me of Florence,
I speak cotton-soft to my broken heart, now
a vegetable for the dead. So I make
my move, espionage behind champagne
flutes and *clink* of cocktail glasses.
In bathrooms, I know couples moan, finger
each other, déjá vu trapped within tiled
walls. Telepathy is a dirty habit.
After all, night is the *come-what-may*
we all want to be. Night-time is kissing
to dirty movies that echo starlight.
Night means obscenities under
a freeway, without complaint,
our last far-out trip. Companionless,

your hands press upon
the black hole jukebox.
Scrim

I sit in an old Avenida theatre
called Riviera or Zarah’s Clover.
In a fully air-conditioned room
& Amalia Fuentes’ fermented velvet.

Mahogany seats loosened
into a saline lake.
And when lights dimmed
down to a gloss of chapel,
I couldn’t move, didn’t want to.

On screen, faces constellate
silver. A heiress sculpts her hair
into identical black pearls.

Behind slope of shoulders,
a man, all eyes, ridged brow. Irrevocable.
Writes with fountain pen
over crisp stationary—
   a beaming heliograph.

Is it too late now to imagine
slow undoing
of buttons? Ochre light
of afternoon sugaring onto sofa,
dapping passageways
of napping bodies?

Evacuation far from their minds,
unafraid of the beeping
sound of failure.
The film continues still.
What elegance now?

   I travel for days.
In the next seat, I inhale faint
tang of washed skin and pomade.

As if to speak my name
a figure turns. An unpolished mirror,
faceless like the dream
I’ve had again & again.
Hands cup my own
  but they embrace only foam.
Self-Portrait as a Mollusk

It feeds on bivulvia in an emergency kind of way.
Its shell snaps as two hardened fan—
Because of our likeness
I am jealous.

And their meat ribbons seals and closes.
Ancient as Phoenicia sea-silk,
transparent genitalia.

So far from a paper napkin.
A rescued tooth, its fossil scrapes the stones.

I’ve etched down the same way before.
The splitting savored
under a tongue-less mouth.

And if you want love
and your hand on something
like a ripened thigh,
you must double yourself.
And who doesn’t like that?
He Who Knows Violence is a Privilege

Assemblage/Box Construction, “L’Humeur Vagabonde,” Joseph Cornell

There’s no room for savagery here
or wild hands or glass
cutting diagonal on
an open palm.

Even seduction cornered
as bright birds in an aviary.
Ribbons and blue sand,

thread still tied to a spool.
The wet and shattered mouth
of youth, all

conserved then ordered,
bottled to silt and salt.
Through this aperture,

I want to re-enter myself.
This compartment, a wooden
door I know not big enough
for my own body.
IV.
Blues for Lover in Winter

I gnaw on dried figs like heart pills while beyond my balcony shutters, purple prows the flanks of sky. To listen to Nick Cave’s “Push Away the Sky” makes my insides shovel all the heavy lifting.

With your gaze and press, I become uncovered. So I say: Sky, you be good. Don’t you leave, even when these eyes sling low into its flesh hearth.

When tongues gouge as they please, pocket an opening, the body, both shell and flame. But now, the last thing I want is to write this, the last thing I want is to scratch out last times on drab bark, allow this blade to whistle corners and curves until the O is deep and hallow.

Wasn’t it just days ago? Your mouth, a soft scuttle on my thigh, our sundry heads sprawled, Stevie Rae Vaughn as far as the colorless hum of sleep. Still why’d you have to do me wrong?

Let this good thing throw down. Stone against stump. To think I thought the arch of your chin—superlative. You, kink of a broken radio. What can one do but leave hard?

Find ceremony in the thinning of mountains and rifled pines. If I could bulldoze you to a slither. Hammer down mud roads in an old car. Tat-tat-tat with teeth and tobacco.

Silence perches on the back ledge of your throat. And it’s December. My head gapes open. The sky is a giant full of holes.
Meditations from Sink Water

Does the secret to great art lie between devotion
and selflessness but with the radio
at Strauss’s Four Last Songs
you ask but what of sabotage
the other irrevocable
lined up and hung

why this altar of refuse décor
like a pact made from tin cans and collapsed bottles
belonging elsewhere your head soiled
stuck somewhere in the cosmos
of someone’s neck
who you’ll never see again
how you ask for more with praying hands

for a woman
for composure
serenity of islands or maybe
just settling for the melody of trains
skimming beside the Yuba
or hills lush and racing too

in the kitchen bananas
onions and sack of coffee
you wipe dirt off the table with a headscarf
and your mother’s cake
never made
the instrumental oil
the boiling raw
and wintry bread
a holding pattern multiplies
you listen all day
to its scalding
hello it’s avidity

can you remember an invocation
without milk or honey of sex
just a salvaged sun
across another juncture
Prayer for Unsatisfied Femmes

Forgive her sanity gap,
her dogged credo thrown out
bedroom windows, beyond
stony hills then casted
into rapids of some
twisty Elk River,
rupturing with silken
brawl of salmon.

Forgive her
for she is salmon,
warm, alive—
flapping Chinook
with sterling gills
pumping for salted air.
Yes, intellect turns
violent if tamed
like Tarpan horses,
banging soiled hooves
on rust and grease
of anything metal.

Forgive her complex
reach, groping depth
to the bitter root.
Her mood moves
equestrian, not to be
mistaken for epicurean.
Do not imprison
her for an ordinary
pin up show of sex
and sweat of coins.

Hands, wash in the half-
moon of her basin
and as if she was a holy
book, write her.
Advice for Tumbling out of a Racing Car

1. Give an offering of smoke to the clavicle, the double-sided arrow of the body. It will tell you which way to swerve.

2. Choose a Thunderbird for its three red eyes.

3. Attack like a hawk or guinea fowl. Your opponent: only dove.

4. Before flight, be prepared to roll the torso into an isopod.

5. Tuck chin into chest. You will not swallow dirt. Swallow yourself.

6. You’re a stuntwoman. Code name: Élastique Sauvage

7. Beauty—not an option.

8. Remember the heart is a miniature bombardier.

9. Do not mistake your legs for bayonets. Use them as catapults into oblivion.

10. You must and shall be an expert in hinging.

11. Blood will be the first and last thing you see.

12. In this game of chicken, heaven comes after collision.
Dismember

I love those dead-eyed winos, picking up empties, their laughter like fireworks.

The city’s full and nuts but I can’t hear its usual neon lullaby, thrum of its barges.

No, it’s quiet and the devil blinks, imagines small, invisible things.


Come on, cruel finger with your cruel and refusing shake.

Come to me, finger and not the bottle. Go paint the bulge on this white page. Write about hell factories and cemeteries, how they dance blurry pieces of flames.

But instead you give me the sea. My feet. You throw love out the window like an old bag.

You’re a loaded mouth grinning, a downer for dead. You’re night’s ripe drink
inching toward wreckage

See, he’s got you too.
Finger, fix it and make it right.
Like a seeing-eye dog,
the lord will see you good.
As One of Egon Schiele’s Nudes

A tuber moth disrobed, you emerge and underneath nothing but a hungry skeleton.

Wilted stockings slide from your limbs as a crumpled sheath of papyrus.

And your genitals flushed or shrunken pulp of ceremony. How you savor the sacrifice of it all, appease to swift pierces like St. Sebastian, wrists bonded towards sky. Those nimble arrows, his face flushing to ambrosia

Like him, each sum of you reclines and twists until those fingers like tributaries angle & spread from the main river.
Return

I didn’t come to reawaken my better self whole
neither puzzle how I’d turn out if I stayed.
Lets say, it is the banyan’s hollows
I did not grow up with
or feed or pray softly to,
appealing before pissing on their leaves.

Sometimes, I want them gone
as if I was a thousand feet off the ground.
The haunting of sexless ghosts
when I was child in this place

of broken bridges & metal fences,
running through them. The love of speed
and sound before hitting
the moving floor.

I came not to ask the particulars
of why I left or scold the way I came here.
What gives up to the marriage of light?

When a tree falls, its roots aim jagged
pointing in all directions
or a chapel buried by the sea.
Her cross poking out of waves
covered in nothing
but a green flesh.
Spirits Hate to be Alone

In burned sugarcane fields, the night’s ghost of a saccada farmer in his brimless hat. Swing of a stale blade against moonlight. I watch the dead.

They love long hours of blackout. They love this snuffed out match of a little city. To the dust that separates stained lace. To the poor thrum of humidity.

From the grotto of Saint Lorenzo, his palm an offering of birds turns a sky from its yellow.

On a Milo can, I hear my own mouth. Sunction on a sugar-apple— soft, white, meat, black, tough, seeds, between teeth like marbles.

Uncle, light a Flor de Isabela. In the moment of rising smoke:

crest of a mottled white horse, the lope on Gimbal’s rocky sands,

a girl recognizes the intrusive pervading like mustard’s thick oil.

It’s hunger too. The way of salt & rain eating tin.
Towards Flesh

Corroding the stone and with it too. Water. The water cutting the wreck with each intricate of downpour. And so the ground goes devoutly to mud. We muddied ships. From China to Cebu to the red beams of San Jaunico. From the sticky low tide of a shore. We want you to want to pray for us. We like the refrain. We lie down in the salt, marooned with only our mouths: only the web of wetness, what we want has been written out. Across the hulk of it all, we want the sky to want us too. And for what sky there is inside us to be devout.
A Primitive Toy

And with loneliness reaches maturity, which whatever god says so. See her name as she is known:

stout leather, oblivious with a torso too tight and a neck too loose and everything for her exists in her recumbence.

Her hair a spilled box gushing. I imagine she dreams of being elephantine and thus would raise the trunk she does not have and not come back to the ground because it meant the possibility of being mounted or of being crippled by a young bull.

With inclination to surrender so massive a body, a thing, the bulk collapsing before a water hole: a space between this living.