

The background of the cover is a painting. On the left, a woman with long dark hair, wearing a blue dress, stands with her arms raised. In the center-right, a simple wooden cross stands in a field. The foreground is filled with tall, yellow and orange grasses. The overall color palette is warm, with oranges, reds, and yellows, suggesting a sunset or sunrise.

The Girl Next Door
and Other Poems

Ralph Monday

Down in the Dirt
2014 chapbook

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Introduction

This is a book about women and myth, mythical woman and woman in transition. More importantly, the poems in this work encompass the human condition, and spans time, the universal human experience. The feminine in life, literature, and the arts, has been a subject of fascination for millennia. Hers is a distinctive voice, from the ancient goddess, to the vision of pedestaled virgin, Rosie the Riveter, the Girl Next Door, Helen Reddy's "I am Woman," to the emancipated transition of the women's rights movements in the 20th century.

Myth is also an important part for the two strongest drives of the human race are the biological and the mythical: the need for the sustained generation of the race and the need for myth to sustain people and culture. We are a story telling race, and our stories are a major part of what defines us, what gives meaning to our lives, the explanation for this miraculous universe that we inhabit, the spinning planet that we ride.

In these pages the reader will encounter the familiar and the unfamiliar, the tame and the wild, love and hate, loyalty and betrayal, oppression and emancipation, doubt and wonder, life and death, the universal woman, the mythical woman, the American woman. In all of these poems many distinct voices speak out, different narratives, but in essence they are all one voice singing one song for their brothers and sisters of the world. Please listen to them singing and enjoy.

Part I Mythical Woman



This Time

The woman who has lived her life
As an institution, never delved
Into her dark interior and found the
Sleeping shadow, is incomplete, an
Abandoned edifice half constructed,
foundations washed out and rotting.
She has been many things without being
The one thing. No matter if southern,
Northern, western, this is not the
Interior geography—wife, lover, teacher,
Nurse, mother—facades carried
Round in her life-bag. Deinstitutionalize.
Give up soft breasts, mortgaged ownership
of womb. This time will come in the blackberry
Season amid ripening apples, the call
Of migrating birds when separation from
Home, family, the false work is complete.
Then she must swim nude in the cold
Waters, sink into their dark depths and
Embrace the debris, rough sunken stones,
Smooth mud like velvet, become an eater
Of self, so that she sets the feast table.

The Witch Within and Without

Funny how some young people show
in their face how they will look when old,
almost as though the age patina exists
from birth. By wiping away the green oxidation
with imagination, the future spills out
like termites from a log, the past an imprinted
image burned into a shroud.

In the computer lab this young girl sat like a
sphinx scrying the screen for a vision of some
digital dragon come to breathe fire. So intent,
not knowing the flesh would melt away like
gears turning in cogs, the simulacra of her today,
the witch within, the appearance she would take on.

But which witch?

One staked in the dark ages like some collector's
insect? Twisted and torn on the inquisitor's rack,
human threads wrapped around a spindle?

Both witches and more.

She is and will become the hanged witches Sarah Good,
Martha Carrier, sheriffed to the noose, inert dolls
suspended by an age's filaments.

She knows none of this.

Her kind has been accused before the garden was prepared.
Her terrible loins state of being covering men's black eyes,
her breasts, buttocks, marked by moles, the stain
of Ecclesiastes.

Better that she give up her webbed spying, hobble pregnant
and bowed through the kitchen, maid to the domestic
priest. Cover her nakedness with autumn leaves, stir not
the serpent in the conjure pot.

Paint her fingers and toes with a veneer of acceptance,
wear the rituals of her sex, dress in subtleties like thin
pencil strokes erasing the witch within.
Demure eyes turned downward, a smile like smoke lifting
up all her ages, she sees the witches without.

The Seventh Seal

You first sealed up your eyes
then your mouth, ears, last
your mind. A time like dancers
pulling the skin of stones. You
tried to interpret a poisoned
pirouette through the dragon's mask.
Your batteries ran low; toys put
back in the box.

Then you ran to the sea that was
not full. Prayed to a black moon.
Your knuckles became a meditation,
love making a doll's revenge.
You would eat your own heart,
spit it back at a glacier's medulla.
Crying you would know the time
of skin is not your own.

Suicide is within us all, exhibited in the most queer forms. I have implanted suicide within my uterus, Kali-like where it has grown like geological seasons, mountains raised up, worn down.

I could argue with shadows that my sisters and I long to be Olympian goddesses. To do so is to project film clips on a screen, a movie never finished, eternally in production as it is passed from one producer to another.

Though I would like to blame men, I cannot for both male and female, in Greek tunic, medieval skirt, Victorian garb, nightgown, evening dress, mini and maxi participated in the funeral oratory where the sisters slit their own throats. Urge to thanatos that takes many forms, a coat of diverse suicide colors.

We have done this to ourselves, no longer nursing the golden calf, we would return to mountains, mate with trees, eat moss, sojourn with wild things, know that the drums we hear are the beatings of the sisters perished before us.

At century's beginning we contemplated different endings, thought that we might live, flourish. Through the century moments of emancipation arrived so that at last we believed men realized the meaning of the skirt. Removed by the 60s and 70s from the soldiers' pin-up girl poster of the 40s, 50s, we danced in celebration, gave up shaving our underarms, smooth skin of legs. No longer things, dizzy with the power of many, by century's end we relinquished all that had been conquered, returned to make-up, eyeliner, dancing as pin-ups on TV, YouTube, strutting the line in Victoria's Secret. Both subject and object, deliverance can only come from creative suicide. In order to live, wayward sisters must be burnt to ashes.

In this pew we must sit and pay heed to the sermon.

The Dying Goddess

The Girl Next Door

She is a sweet little number, demure, shy,
the kind of girl to take home to momma.
Face scrubbed and sparkling as the bottom
of an aluminum pan that she knows how
to use.

That girl.

Red cashmere sweater, modest little skirt,
books clutched to her torpedoed bra bosom,
her smile turned upward, adoringly, to the
big guy's gaze. She, of course, is the myth
that men went to war for.

That girl.

Born as propaganda in World War II,
this girl is all things American.
A homebody cooking and cleaning like
the rise and fall of the tides.
Sweet, nurturing, understands the man's
needs, and follows through like a baseball
pitcher smoking a fastball over home plate.

That girl.

Becky Thatcher is her grandmother, Emily Webb
her sister, Debbie Reynolds a distant cousin.
She is a cheerleader, perfect in her chants,
pom poms twirling like airplane propellers.
She never kisses on the first date, children and
animals love her, sings like an angel in the
church choir.

That girl.

Then the inner city guy asks *whose neighborhood?*
No white picket fences here, eternally green lawns
sprouting *My Three Sons* wholesomeness.
He sees the drug addict, railroad tracks on her arms,
stringing crazy people into and out of her apartment.

That girl.

Working Latino girls spending 100 hours a week in
the local motel to send money home, a young Santeria
priestess hiding chickens in the alley, a chick busted
5 times for burglary.

Those girls.

Nobody wants *them*, only their bodies to use for a time
like the latest hit single.
The working girl next door selling pussy to buy the next hit.

Those girls.

Three Muses Bitching

Only three of us left now,
the other six split long ago,
Paris, Rome, New York,
anyplace but Athens.

Whatever, they never write,
mail, phone, or even drop
a short text saying “hey sis,
how are ya!”

Left us with this drag, me
Calliope, Erato and Euterpe.

Can't even visit Olympus
anymore. Everybody split
to condos, mountain cabins,
tiny three room apartments.

Get all these requests from
rappers, pop music kings,
queens, and wantabes
begging for inspiration.

Hell, since Orpheus passed
on (or maybe Elvis and Dusty
Springfield), what with the
internet and music videos,
there are no more golden
voiced oracles.

Get email all the time with
stuff like “need inspiration,
just two hit songs, a poem
or two to crack the best
journals.”

Most of the time I just ignore
the pitiful requests, or laugh
with my sisters about this
pathetic lyric, this clichéd
theme. If I'm feeling *really*
wicked, I write back and
say "leave a bowl of milk
and crackers on your doorstep
at night. In the morning the bowl
will be empty except for inspiration
on folded slips of paper.
Copy right optional."

Revising the World through Pixels

A computer is not the place to find self, it is not the eye of god, but is a virtual place that entered long enough, coughs up narcissism in online searches, a social medium where the high school

sweetheart returns cooing pursed lip kisses while you dissected the frog in biology class with instruments sharp enough to pierce a witch's black heart, the blood oozing out as a

curious plume where the smell can't be sucked away by ventilators. Or Miss Lawson, the hot young typing teacher who wore tight skirts, tighter sweaters so that her breasts strained

out like zoo beasts bursting through bars, rumored to be having an affair with the principal. At least that is what the acne faced girl said, the one who wrecked the Drivers Ed car

while you read a science fiction pulp in the backseat about bug eyed monsters gobbling up young teachers in tight skirts and tight sweaters. Said this to the principal when he

picked us up to drive us back to school, and he never replied but sat with a face used at blackjack tournaments in Vegas while the girl's pimples blushed in shame.

Then there was the biology teacher, a precursor
to *Mr. Science*, who told his sixth period class
that he could predict the future. He proved it
by having us concoct gun powder pellets

in chemistry class, place them in the hall
outside the class door. When dismissal bell
rang, the students rushing like windmills,
shoes plopping on the ambush, sharp popcorn

explosions made the girls squeal and scream.
He was right. Jumping jacks leaping into the
air, the forced air pressure as they descended
blew skirts upward so that we could see
their panties. Simple physics he grinned.
None of this is true of course—except the
acne, Miss Lawson, a book never finished,
and pixels on a screen.

A Wasp Lunch

Having lunch with a WASP woman is only
A thing of the mind. They are stacked in history
Like burnt out radio schedules.
Each with a unique agenda. Over Brussels sprouts
Abigail Adams noted how women should become
Educated and acquire personal property rights.
Look at Madonna, she said. That chick is bitchin.

Betsy Ross preferred cherry pie for dessert, admitted
That she did lie about her age, but with three marriages
In her sewing basket she made Elizabeth Taylor proud.

A little lobster tail dipped in drawn butter was Lucy Stone's
Repast. Laughed that a college degree opened her up
To male rhetoric. She has been talking ever since. Just
Check out her blog on Wikipedia.

Marie Curie was just so radiant silhouetted by the flaming
Crepes suzette. Said that Miley Cyrus would definitely
Light up any show.

And of course Mary (honorary WASP Lady), no lunch
Would be complete without her immaculate reception.
A bit of a glutton, she dined on the whole world.

The garish girl reaches out one arm to embrace the impossible, a longing for self split in two by powers and principalities predated the splashed form sprawled flat across the canvas like a coat of many colors Joseph found in an Egyptian flea market on Palm Sunday.

Even in this deconstruction she is molded by Picasso, a man who spent his life surrounded by naked women. Stripped bare while clothed, sister to all before her, only the Novocain face reveals that this is not a painting—this is war.

Squares, stripes, circular curlicues, visual musical notations where the old old song, brushed onto canvas like tattooed stories, pressed into clay as early 20th century cuneiform script by the painter's deliberate stylus, conjures up as smoke breathed into broken bottles, all her wayward kin.

Staring into the mirror is Einstein's possibility, Dali's melting clocks—neuromancy of the living dead—Eve, Pandora, Helen, wayward Lilith, all comb their hair, rouge lips, touch up eye shadow, girl-talk their crippled sister.

Cut up on history's butcher block, dissected by desert rules, these are past things still ruled by Picasso priest, mirror a confessional where fragmented transgressions are the messiah's, not the sinner. She gives birth to some monstrous penis, duality of balls, while she remains in a reflected womb, sawed up by all the stories ever told.

Girl Before
a Mirror:
Unclassical
War

TWO GIRLS: A DIALOGUE

1950s Girl

most of us were virgins
we pretty much stayed married
we wore dresses and high heels
we made lovely homes
my man didn't cheat
we have love
we have husbands
we have one family
our men worked
we stayed at home
romance was in style
going steady was the thing
cooked dinner for everyone
house always immaculate
we had our children
what are you then

Modern Girl

so what most of us have had more sex with
more men than a bunch of hookers loser
marriage is for dorks more money in divorce
body piercing and tramp stamps is where it's at
baby making a statement
you had no rights we can act like drunken
sailors nobody gives a flying flip
my man cheats I use a blackjack on him
we have the pill
we have friends with benefits
we have multiple families
our men do drugs and video games
u were oppressed
hit the bars baby
what's that
i am not a stove
i am not a vacuum
i am not a womb
i don't know

The Newsgirl

Is that paragon, American virtuosity,
speaker of news tongues
 morning,
 afternoon,
 evening
uniting, or pissing off any number
Of budweiser swilling views.

sometimes

The redheaded freckled girl
 next door
others too much makeup bleached
 blonde diva
or
earthy homey brunette everybody's
 little sister
American voices metaphysical microwaves
beaming wars murders thefts collapsing
Third world weeks of history compacted
into 30 toilet paper filled moments
 smiling
 they go on bringing
the good news.

The Weather Girl

Storms across the screen wiping away
moisture, accumulated ice, clearing
minds of years of tattered weather,
like a tsunami washing clean the mind's detritus.
We cannot stop watching. We need her
to point the way, a weathervane predicting
day's journey.

Our obsession, dressed one day in red, the next
black, winter white, heels clicking like Dorothy
because there's no place like the studio, she
glides like a hawk in freefall, guide to our
seasons.

She explains the heat, our thirst for the desert,
shifting fronts, how it only takes a little pressure.
Highs and lows, snowcapped mountains like
towering breasts; a glib brunette, blonde, or
redheaded meteorological interpreter, eye of
the storm messiah, baptism found in rushing
tides, communion drinking slush, her skirts
a ritual TV robe.

Without her we are lost, headless weather people
lacking a barometer, not knowing when to barbecue,
shoes to wear, clothes to don.

The weather goddess is the great pixelated mother.
When we go to sea, interstated land, clear or stormy
skies, her Delphic microphone pronouncements, nodding,
returns us to the time of sages speaking from dark,
blind caves. We become children of moon, sun,
stars, her offspring.

When the screen is flat and blank, the spell remains
where eyelids of morning cast us into that predicted day.

All American Girl

What is she, this scrubbed clean,
wholesome thing that like a fey
haunts an American landscape
bittered by extinct values?

Anachronism, as Bell's phone,
Ford's Model T, worn out sweetness
like mothball scent in a frayed polka dot
dress from the 1950s, revived for a moment
to grace a Halloween carnival.

Is she only a dream, like Emily Webb, a blonde,
braided Becky Thatcher gracing Tom with
love as a purple pansy?

Perhaps a 1950s drive in movie princess
splashed across the screen who never kisses
on the first date, wears knee length skirts,
modest angora sweaters, attends Catholic school,
sports horn rimmed, dark glasses, destined
for marriage, church, cut and paste suburbs,
American pie, wife and motherhood fulfillment?

Certainly not Pink, Madonna, Marilyn,
more like June Cleaver or Lucy. The
All American Girl who used to live next
door, small town American sweethearts,
is as defunct as a United States that has
lost its moral and ethical center.

Now, only found in ghost tracings on
the web, old 1940s and 50s magazines,
or in black and white movies spinning
down that no one watches.

Rosie the Riveter

Rosie was reading *Mein Kampf* on her lunch break, rivet gun on her lap. She really would have liked to have a conversation with Anne Bradstreet and Emily Dickinson, but Anne was busy apologizing for her poetry and Emily, dressed in white, was trying to escape from a cathedral.

Poor girls, Rosie mused, *never made the Saturday Evening Post*, *never knew "We Can Do it!"* Took a last bite from her apple, went back to knocking in solid rivets for the boys and their B-29s. Somewhere down Rosie's line Helen Reddy was warming up.

This poem is also accepted for publication in v127 *Down in the Dirt* magazine.

Part II Woman in Transition



Translation

Your words are lost in translation. When you speak
the syllables are mute scratchings on stone
where your blank eyes translate all the empty
moments, slammed doors, lost sighs, erased texts.
They may as well be an antique tin filled with
buttons collected over the years, locked away,
musty, the hands of the living that stitched them
to cloth long departed.

Your legs are lost in translation. They no longer
pump like bicycle pedals propelling you toward
me like some desert radical seeking salvation
through the sword. Your footprints are no more
manifest than dew in afternoon sun, for where
you tread, now only smeared ink blots ending
before a closed door, swish of skirt like snare drums
preluding the crescendo.

Your ears are lost in translation. Vanished apparatus
of a Shelly, Dickinson, Bradstreet that you liked
to listen to aloud. At the end when I spoke you did
not hear—Job's tongue traced the inner sound, intonations
in your head providing truth that no judge, god or the
devil, could sustain. Calling your name was the same
as uttering a plea for the lost gods of Troy—no taking
of sides, no race around the walls.

Your eyes are lost in translation. They see no more
than stalks on a sea creature at the bottom of the
Marianas Trench. Oedipus eyes, wandering in
lost desert realms, when you gaze out upon
the world the world looks back. Shuttered orbs,
when they do see I am not in the field of vision.
My translation—your body one skin
covered hieroglyph—my memory the Rosetta.

NeoGirl NextDoor (Cento Poem)

I was never the girl next door.ⁱ
If you want to see the girl next door,
Go next door.ⁱⁱ
y'all must have a lot of weird next-door neighbours.ⁱⁱⁱ

America is confused by someone who appears to be
sexual and spiritual at the same time.^{iv}
I just have a bad streak.^v
So what is moral fiber,^{vi}
Cream on the balls?^{vii}

Do you wanna fuck me?^{viii}
When I'm good, I'm very good, but when I'm bad,
I'm better.^{ix}
An egotist is a person of low taste—
More interested in himself than me.^x
Good taste is the excuse I have given
For leading such a bad life.^{xi}

A library is a place where you can lose your virginity.^{xii}
No woman gets an orgasm from shining
The kitchen floor.^{xiii}

Figures in a Landscape

Dying, the malignant disease taught her about love,
where in life she knew often times the meaning of hate.
Her first view had come as a teenager at the drive-in,
which she articulated over a shake later at the diner.
She spoke that the fantasy of mom and pop at home
is the oldest, the deepest of all human wounds.

The unskilled incision was made in all our gardens
before we were born. Potted seed which grew like a
tattered umbrella that could not shield us from atmospheres
not of our making. A kind of prescient digital pop music
throbbing through veins, desert looming outside the garden,
thin human voices scratched out on a slowing gramophone.

Coughing she said that all of this outside the window is a needle
pushed down deep inside, welling blood, that even the most Victorian
sensibilities cannot stem, for the story is DNA stitched,
embroidered within all the songs sung of our sad tales.
Do not cry for the weak, nor pity the insane. We are all related
by the cracked marrow of dry and empty bones.

She said in sure cadences of the convinced, this now is my passion
to walk with ghosts on Calvin's landscape where the firmament
above will be the mind's cleansed and empty furnaces,
threads of all human desire realized as deeply connected filaments,
sinew and ligament burnt through by all the dying fires.
This is the place of snow and ice, of bare and distant trees.

From the beginning, with uncertain step, we have all plodded
toward this ambiguous landscape as if to ascertain
whether or not this is love's desire, hate's relinquishment, pleaded
do not make us unreal, for we have in blindness apotheosized
that uncaring dark, become squeaking clowns carnavaled
by lusts and fantasies, seeking always to be entertained.

Neither science nor savagery can guide these figures.
We dance and stumble within and without nature,
throbbing always to shape, like potter's clay, the landscape
that cannot be. Tilled with ploughs, watered with pots, the mind
is the center of all drapery feeding on futile distractions,
the land a faded road that cannot be owned.

To Mom with Love

When I was little I would pick up rocks,
imagine they were living things, warm
little puppies, kittens. No one to love them
I pocketed them like adoring birthday cards
never received from my mother. Took them home,
gave them warm soapy baths in the sink,
cut out bits of fabric, clothed them so they were safe,
made little towels and blankets and things,
tucked them in like little dolls.
Their stoney faces smiled approval but I was
overwhelmed because there were too many rocks
in the world. I would not be able to love them all.
The rocks were my only friends.
They lived in little cardboard houses,
doors and windows cut by a steak knife.
Opened up my handmade Barbie dream house that I
filled with love. I caressed them, sang lullabies to
wish them good night. They were my children needing
protection, the terrene connection I sought.
I cared for them as a mother would her offspring.
No one noticed.

My Mother's Voice

My mother's voice spoke in many languages,
crying out to me in my room, heralding me as
a sinner. She listened to the voices in her head.
Said it was god telling her what to do.

*You worthless girl, tramp in waiting, stay in
that room and pray. Ask for forgiveness, then
come here to be whipped.*

She spoke of demons flaying the skin from my
back, of eternal flames crisping flesh black, peeling
away from bone.

God loves you.

I cowered in fear of this sky being, so powerful, who would
torture me like plucking the wings from flies.

He loves you so much that he gave his only begotten son.

That god flailed, bleeding, his side pierced by the Roman
way, his soft eyes, pearly skin, all a manifestation of
this moment.

He rose from the dead for you, you undeserving slut.

Why did he die? I didn't ask him to. I do not know him.

*You must have a personal relationship, take him into
your heart.*

Only rocks have a place there.

You are eternally damned!

I am my mother, myself. The sky has fallen and bit me
like zombies eating flesh, the way to salvation.

Of Time and Love

There was a time when I thought I knew
What love is. Who knows if it was adolescent
immaturities, believing a rose was love,
chocolates for the girl, secret notes passed in
class, phone calls about nothing that went on
for hours.

Those times have long passed with
two divorces, the second wife's son who
tried to kill me, but metaphysics of
desire still remains like Sappho's yearnings.

So much written about love, numerous poems,
song after sappy song, yet it still defies definition
the way that pornography cannot be defined, but
everyone knows what it is when seen—or felt,
or touched, or heard, or thought.

Love is not a rose or forgiveness for the
unforgivable—not adolescent heat in the
backseat—or a crooned song by a 1940s
diva at Christmas.

Perhaps it is no more than self-looking into
Narcissus' forest pool, finding there the
obsessive bait, harpoon in the blood, angled
parasite from the genetic past, seeking a symbiosis
of tangled roots like the shining serpent shedding
its shadow for the final time.

Liminal Love

You are beautiful, a song, a poem, the
Dawn of beginning.

Do you ever hunger for me like I hunger
For you? I don't mean just sexual hunger
But an existential longing like the liminal
Space between two seasons.

Attraction like ancient Greek and Roman
Ghosts in the underworld who have almost
Been forgotten. The type of love where
Fingers tap on stone, leave whorls as body
Messages for others to read.

The penumbra is our position or the violet
Hour when the western sky blooms.
Liminaire lovers we speak in shadow tongues,
Amputated cadences, dripped moments like
Tongues tingled by the call of hawks in
Tight gyres, flown so high that the layers
Between air dissolve.

We exist in that space, exhalations, vapors,
Tumbled round by the cry of the cave, animal
Paintings on rock left as offerings for the totem's
Return.

Another space is also ours, in the beginning time
When animal people were symbiotic, fur, teeth,
Claw, fang, the same as a woman combing out
Her long hair.

We do not engage in idolatry nor false ardor.
The piety expressed is that of one who sees
Shadow without sight, that unsalted land where
Allegiance marries betrayal, the space between
Gravity's tides and the handfast winding round
The pole in May.

That Day

Your at first virtual affair made me
A robot. Heart began to change into a
Brass drum, internal soft flesh hardened
Like a wooden spear tip blackened by
Flame.

Cyber cheat consummated in the darkness,
Hidden by night when you opened to
A fraud that you did not know. You too
Became machine, rejected the only kindness
Known in years. What took me a year of
Respect, human interaction, patience,
You surrendered in days to a black thing,
A panting user rummaging through the
Garbage of an academic back alley, a
Creature brother to rats, father to fucking
Maggots.

Just before Christmas, smiling, you gave me a gift:
I want you to always be a part of my life.
I always want us to be friends.

Festive crumbs.

You drove away secure in your new amour,
And I became a discarded android, until
You found rejection from a thing that
Never accepted its playtoy for a night.
Its gift of the magi to you a Facebook page
Filled with women, yours just another
Photo notch. What were you thinking? Were
You so desperate for affection that you
Embraced Dr. Jekyll and ate his hide?
Then you wrote that *while I was fucking*
Him all I thought about was you.
Love does not exist in a machine, a
Friend will wait, like seeks like, not
Betrothal buried by betrayal, not
Touching an alien thing that scuttles
in darkness like a blind worm
nesting in shit.

Signs and Issues

We hit Hotrod's on her birthday, a 1950s themed nostalgic diner. Over the loaded fries, beer, a blue cheese burger, she said
you know its my promise. I asked for a sign, got it but not in exactly the order I wanted. So I asked again just to make sure I wasn't silly, in a specific order.
It happened.

I couldn't believe she was talking this nonsense again.
What did you get?
A premonition. That's why I asked for a sign.

What's going to happen to you? You gonna die?
Yes.

When?
Next month.

Look, just because you asked for mayonnaise on the burger at Hardee's and it came back with no mayo is not a sign that you are going to die.
But I want to, and its not so bad.

You need help, therapy. You need to talk to someone. I've told you this before.
I don't need to talk to anyone. I talk to the spirit.
The spirit gives me what I need.

Its your birthday. Quit all this negative crap.
You had plenty of chances to run. There were many signs.

It's not the spirit. The mind. Your mind. Weaving stuff in and out. Creating. Remember what I did with the eighteen wheelers on the interstate?

Yes. I know.

Raised in that Christian crap. Full of self-fulfilling prophecies.
That's its whole thing. We can't escape culture. We can't
escape the box we're put in when we're born and all kinds
of stuff is poured in everywhere. Follows us wherever we go.

Maybe, but it won't be so bad and you will be free.

You know not what you do. Finish your burger and lets take in
a movie.

Not yet. When I get up there boy do I have issues with my
mom! And my ex. He had better hide behind Jesus to keep
me from him.

It will just turn out to be hell, I said. They will both be after you from
day one, eternally. You will never escape them. Ever.

She wiped her mouth. Let's go watch that movie, the one called
Signs.

Of Pencils and Conversation

The girl

would know love
was not satisfied
asked why
wanted a definition
said which myth
was frustrated
wanted to know more
asked for clarification
wondered about its purpose
refused
glared at him
read them
stated broken grail
cried a road
read tattered text
said it's not enough

The man

explained that it is like a travertine ball
said that is the way with love
whispered because of the moo
described the process of myth
stated they are all the same
understood that this is the way with girls
said they always do
handed her a pencil
said to write what love is not
asked for the pencil
wrote three things
said well
responded go on
supposed that this was so
specified you are learning language
groaned it never is

The Last Time

he picked the whore
up in front of a bar

How much

That depends

Get in

instead of a motel

room a drive to

darkened woods

by the river

he took her to

dinner

eat well he told

her *it's for your*

soul between

bites her soul

remained hungry

afterwards he

took her to a

movie held her

hand in the sad

parts when she

cried

for your heart he said

her heart could

not weep

later still they

concluded with

a concert and

ballet about

Romeo, Juliet

for your eyes

she saw and

wept for the

times at the river

for your ears

she heard only

sounds that

she wished to

forget

he brushed back

her tangle of

hair kissed

her fingertips

in parting

Thank you

she said

Tell mother

that I'm sorry

Perfect Forms

The glass of wine, transparent as a dragonfly's wings, held in her hand by the stem, became a catalyst for form. She sipped but would have preferred a drink from Lethe.

Was Plato right?

Her musings centered physically on the chardonnay, a momentary meditation seeking the Sphinx's riddle.

I mean all this is shadow. We see only the illusion of the real, the form.

The perfect form of a chair, a table, wineglass, triangle in the mind? No, external to mind, to space, time, unchanging.

*Thingness in and of itself, by itself, with itself.
We but mime with the mimes.*

The dark crow in a stubbled field, the owl that spies the mouse, lover's sigh, the night train, beads, gongs, Victorian buttons, a Puritan poem, to satirize the caricatures all about, this then is the blind travesty playing the joker's song.

All perfect in their forms beyond the world's shattered glass. Is there, then, the form of the perfect divorce?

They clinked glasses.

I suppose we will find out.

Endnotes

NeoGirl Next Door

- i Bettie Page <http://bettiepage.com/bettieQuotes.html>
- ii Joan Crawford <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/j/joancrawfo388952.html>
- iii Kelly Clarkson <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/k/kellyclark436813.html>
- iv Sally Kirkland <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/s/sallykirkl223267.html>
- v Jenna Jameson <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/j/jennajames513444.html>
- vi Matthew Kidman <http://www.moviequotes.tv/browse-movie-quotes/The-Girl-Next-Door-608>
- vii Matthew Kidman http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/The_Girl_Next_Door
- viii Danielle http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/The_Girl_Next_Door#Danielle
- ix Mae West <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/sexuality>
- x Ambrose Bierce http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/a/ambrose_bierce.html
- xi Oscar Wilde <http://en.proverbia.net/citasautor.asp?autor=17720>
- xii Germaine Greer <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/sexuality>
- xiii Betty Friedan <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/sexuality>

Biography

Ralph Monday is an Associate Professor of English at Roane State Community College in Harriman, TN., where he teaches composition, literature, and creative writing courses. In fall 2013 he had poems published in *The New Plains Review*, *New Liberties Review*, *Fiction Week Literary Review*, and was represented as the featured poet with 12 poems in the December issue of *Poetry Repairs*. In winter 2014 he had poems published in *Dead Snakes*. Summer 2014 will see a poem in *Contemporary Poetry: An Anthology of Best Present Day Poems*. His work has appeared in publications such as *The Phoenix*, *Bitter Creek Review*, *Full of Crow*, *Impressions*, *Kookamonga Square*, *Deep Waters*, *Jacket Magazine*, *The New Plains Review*, *New Liberties Review*, *Crack the Spine*, *The Camel Saloon*, *Dead Snakes*, *Pyrokinecton*, and *Poetry Repairs*. Featured Poet of the week May, 2014 *Poetry Super Highway*. Forthcoming: Poems in *Blood Moon Rising* and *Down in the Dirt Magazine*. His poetry has been awarded for a Pushcart Prize and Houghton Mifflin's "Best of" Anthologies, as well as other awards. His first book, *Empty Houses and American Renditions* will be published by Hen House Press in Fall 2014.

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Ralph Monday

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the Mind of Janet Kuypers, Evolution, (tweet), Get Your Buzz On, Janet & Jean Together, po'em, Taking Poetry to the Streets, the Cona-Dixie Chi-town Union, the Written Word, Dual, Prepare Her for This, Uncorrect, Living in a Big World, Polled the Trigger, Venture to the Unknown, Janet Kuypers: Enriched, She's an Open Book, "40", Sexism and Other Stories, the Stories of Women, Prominent Pen (Kuypers edition), Elemental, the 2012 Datebook, Prominent Tongue, Chaotic Elements, Fusion, Stability Stability Stab Stab, a Picture's Worth 1,000 words (color art book and b&w art book), Life, in Color, Post-Apocalyptic, Burn Through Me, Under the Sea (photo book), Partial Nudity, Revealed, 100 Haikus, Give me the News, Let me See you Stripped, Part of my Pain, Rape Sexism Life & Death, Say Nothing, Twitterati, when you Dream tonight, Give What You Can, Down in the Dirt v084, Come Fly With Me, Clearing the Debris, Sectioned & Sequestered, Six Six Six, Skeletal Remains, Out of Her Fit, Don't Tread on Me, Lines of Intensity, Entering the Ice Age, When the World Settles, Into the White, Along the Surface, Life... from Nothing, the Line to Power, Fear the Forsaken, Down In It, Falling Into Place, Wake Up and Smell the Flowers, Unknown, Looking Beyond, Forever Bound, See the World Burn, Exploding on the Scene, America the Lost, Moving the Earth, Catch Fire in the Treetops, Wisdom in Broken Hanks, Autumn Again, Up In Smoke, Symbols Manifest, No Return, Grounded, Perfectly Imperfect, Wrapping It Up, I Pull the Strings, a link in the Chain, Shot out of a Cannon, am i really extint, Home at Last, Invisible Ink, a new era, Idols, Friction, Sea Drift, Solphur & Sawdust, Slate & Marrow, Blister & Burn, Rinse & Repeat, Survive & Thrive, (not so) Warm & Fuzzy, Torture & Triumph, Oh, the Elements, Side A/Side B, Balance, Chaos Theory, Writing to Honour & Cherish, Distinguished Writings, Breaking Silences, Unlocking the Mysteries, the Book of Scars: We The Poets, Life on the Edge, Revealing 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The Svetasvatara Upanishad, Harvest of Gems, the Little Monk, Death in Malaga, Momento Mori, In the Palace of Creation, R.J.P., Bob the Bumble Bee, Remnants and Shadows, I Saw This, the Drive, Thomas at Tea, Crashing Down Nineteenth, Blue Collar Ballet, nopeom, In Your Heart the Apostrophe's Tendrils of God, the Adventures of the Key to Believing Bear, Anais Nin: an Understanding of her Art (second printing), *Deckard Kliner / Charlie Newman*, 12 Times 12 Equals Gross, a Marble Nude Pauline Borchese with a Marble Apple in her Marble Hand, Challenge of Night and Day and Chicago Poems, Lighten Up, Not Far From Here, Watershed, You Have Finally Won, Avenue C, Suburban Rhythms, Down Syndrome, the Dark Side of Love, the pill is a man's best friend, Angel's Syllable Is Good Boss of Devil's Spine, Poems and Stories from the Blue Collar Book of the Dead, Cat People, Death of an Angel, Ghost, Science: A Curmudgeon's View, Ghost Dancers Leaping from a Tome, the 4-D Window, Open Wounds, Anime Junkie, Intersect, Gauth, Scream Cloud Island, When the World was Black and White, a Petal Under Pavement, the Holy See of CEE, Book 15 "Thailand to Volcanoes, Lost in an Echo, I Was Charles Bronson's Secret Hostage, Erasable Band, Royal Dances Death Scene 'tis of Thee, Understood, Akashic Shotgun, Champagne - Hot Water, How a Bullet Behaves, the Thing in the Lounge at WagonWheel (I Come in Avarice), Postcards from Exile, the Five Stages of Macbeth, Stay in Formation

Compact Discs: Mom's Favorite Vase the demo tapes, Kuypers the final (MFV Inclusive), Weeds and Flowers the beauty & the desolation, The Second Axing Something is Sweating, The Second Axing Live in Alaska, Pettus & Kuypers Live at Cafe Aloha, Pointless Orchestra Rough Mixes, Kuypers Seeing Things Differently, SD/SD Tick Tock, Kuypers Change Rearrange, Order From Chaos: The Entropy Project, Kuypers Six One One, Kuypers Stop., Kuypers Masterful Performances mp3 CD, Kuypers Death Comes in Threes, Kuypers Changing Gears, Kuypers Dreams, Kuypers How Do I Get There?, Kuypers Contact+Conflict+Control, the DMJ Art Connection the DMJ Art Connection, Kuypers Questions in a World Without Answers, Kuypers SIM, Kuypers WZRD Radio (2 CD set), Mom's Favorite Vase and The Second Axing These Truths, assorted artists String Theory, Oh (audio CD), Life At The Cafe (3 CD set), the DMJ Art Connection Indian Flux, the DMJ Art Connection Manic Depressive or Something, Chaotic Radio Chaotic Radio Week #1, Chaotic Radio Chaotic Radio Week #2, Chaotic Radio Chaotic Radio Week #3, Chaotic Radio Chaotic Radio Week #4, Chaotic Radio Chaotic Radio Week #5, Chaotic Radio the Chaotic Collection Collection #01-05 (5 CD set) etc. (audio CD, 2 CD set), Chaotic Elements (2 CD set), Chaos in Motion (6 CD set), SD/SD Screaching to a Halt (EP), PBBJ Two for the Price of One (EP), Kiki, Jake and Haystack An American Portrait, Kuypers/the Bastard Trio/Paul Baker/the JoAnne Powells Trio Fusion (4 CD set), podcasts the Evolution of Performance Art (13 CD set), Kuypers Live (14 CD set), the DMJ Art Connection the Things They Did to You (2 CD set), Kuypers Seeing a Psychiatrist (3 CD set), Kuypers St. Paul's (3 CD set), Kuypers the 2009 Poetry Game Show (3 CD set), Kuypers and the HAlman of South Africa Burn Through Me (2 CD set), Kuypers "40", Kuypers Sexism and Other Stories, Kuypers the Stories of Women (amazon.com release), Kuypers "Dobro VeCe" (4 CD set) Kuypers "hmm" (4 CD set), Kuypers "Letting it All Out", Kuypers "What We Need in Life" (CD single), Kuypers "Made Any Difference" (CD single), Kuypers "Hardwick "Across the Pond" (3 CD set).