



scars publications 2002

change rearrange

music by original & communique's arrangements.

Kein Mehrheit für Die Hitleid & others

janet kuypers

communication
why i'll never
get married
right there by
your heart
farmer
high roller
what do we say
holding my skin
together
against my will

written pieces changed, rearranged,
interpreted, convoluted & integrated with music

gears get caught in The Mud

I've wanted to be so much for you
I've wanted to to cook your meals
and clean your clothes
And even wanted it to surprise you
I've wanted to do things
To catch you off guard
To beat your intelligence

And once I want to start
My gears gets caught in the mud
And they start spinning
And I try to get them out
But I usually never learn
And I spin them and some more
And I get further buried in the ground
And it's like I'm digging my own grave
By spinning my own wheels
And trying so hard
To be everything to everyone,
No, wait, to you

I'm trying to be so much
And do so much
I'm trying to accomplish so much
bit I'm spinning my wheels
and I'm burying myself
And I want you to know
(At least)
That I'm trying

AFTER THE WRECKAGE

I can't leave this funeral that never seems to end
I can't leave this funeral that, in a way, never started
And all I know is that I have been doing all of the mourning

And is that the way it goes?
Is someone mourning for you for too long
And you, the deceased, didn't know anyone would care
And you, the deceased, didn't know they were dead
So

So was it just me
Do I feel this alone

Does your spirit rise after the wreckage
And you watch from above
And see how everyone reacts
And see how I cry
And see how I suffer

Is this what you're doing to me?

And now, after the funeral,
And I have to clean up the room
And I have to put away the flowers
And I have to escort the people out
Because they don't deserve to be here
Because they don't even clean up the mess

I should know by now
It's still me
It's only me
Isn't it?
Is that the way it goes?

ALL YOUR FAULT

you know i could kick your ass
for not calling
for not showing you care
for moving across the country
for leaving me

you left me, you know,
let me repeat that, you left me
and that's how i'll remember it
nothing more, nothing less
and god damnit, i wanted a future with you
i planned it all in my head

and hindsight's 20/20
i know i was a fool
but i still know it was your fault
and i won't accept any other explanation

i've got to put my foot down on something, you know

and so i left you
and i thought that would surprise you

but you have so much on your mind
to worry 'bout 'lil ol' me, don't you

i wonder if you even knew i was there

there are many things i could have told you
and never did
and i want some kind of closure
so i can put you behind me forever
so i will no longer think
that i was your only hope

ANDREW HETTINGER

I never really liked you. You never revealed yourself to me and why would you: you, who never had anyone, you, who always had the bad breaks. Everyone looked at you as different. Where would you have learned to trust. Who would you have learned it from.

I never really liked you. I met you through a friend and he explained to me that multiple sclerosis left you with a slight limp and a faint lisp. Faint, under the surface, but there, traces of something no one would ever know of you well enough to fully understand.

I never really liked you. You never revealed yourself to me and I never wanted you to; you scared me too much. You, plagued with physical ailments. You, with a limp in your walk. You, with a patch over your eye. You, who stared at me for always just a bit too long.

They told me the patch was from eye surgery with complications and now you had to cover your shame, cover someone else's mistakes, cover a wrong you didn't commit, cover a problem not of your own doing. The problems were never of your own doing, were they.

I heard these stories and I thought it was sad. I heard these stories and thought you had to be a pillar of strength. And then I saw you drink, straight from the bottle, fifteen-year-old chianti. And I saw you smash your hand into your living room wall. This is how you lived.

The house you lived in was littered with trash. Why bother to clean it up anyway. It detracted you from the holes in the wall, the broken furniture from drunken fits. This was how you reacted to life, to the world. You didn't know any better. This is how you coped.

I never really liked you. You would come home from work, tell us about a woman who was beautiful and smart that liked you, but she wasn't quite smart enough. And I thought: We believe anything if we tell ourselves enough. We weave these fantasies to get through the days.

I never really liked you. Every time you talked to me you always leaned a little too close. So I stayed away from the house, noted that those whom you called friends did the same. I asked my friend why he bothered to stay in touch. And he said to me, "But he has no friends."

This is how I thought of you. A man who was dealt a bad hand. A man who couldn't fight the demons that were handed to him. And with that I put you out of my mind, relegated you to the ranks of the inconsequential. We parted ways. You were reduced to a sliver of my youth.

I received a letter recently, a letter from someone who knew you, someone who wanted me to tell my friend that they read in the newspaper that you hanged yourself. Your brother died in an electrical accident, and after the funeral you went to the train station,

and instead of leaving this town you went to a small room off to the side and you left us forever. Strangers had to find you. The police had to search through records to identify your body. The newspaper described you as having "health problems." But you knew it was more than that.

And I was asked to be the messenger to my friend. The funeral had already passed. You were already in the ground. There was no way he could say goodbye. I shouldn't have been the one to tell him this. No one deserved to tell him. He was the only one who tried to care.

I never really liked you. No one did. But when I had to tell my friend, I knew his pain. I knew he wanted to be better. I knew he thought you were too young to die. I knew he felt guilty for not calling you. He knew it shouldn't have been this way. We all knew it.

I never really liked you. But now I can't get you out of my mind; you haunt me for all the people we've forgotten in our lives. I don't like what you've done. I don't like you quitting. I don't like you dying, not giving us the chance to love you, or hate you, or even ignore you more.

My friend still doesn't know where your grave is. I'd like to find it for him, and take him to you. Let you know you did have a friend out there. Bring you a drink, maybe, a fitting nightcap to mark your departure, to commemorate a life filled with liquor, violence, pain and death.

I never really liked you, but maybe we could get together in some old cemetery, sit on your grave stone, share a drink with the dead, laugh at the injustices of life when we're surrounded by death. Maybe then we'd understand your pain for one brief moment, and remember the moments we'll always regret.

expecting The STONING

I

you know how
you want a popsicle
and you want it for the longest time
and you don't even know what it's going to taste like when you get it
and then you finally get it
and it tastes oh so good
and you have some if it
and you want to save it so you can have it later
and then you realize
that in order to keep the popsicle from disappearing
it has to stay in the freezer
to avoid melting
and becoming just a liquid pile of remains
instead of what you wanted

that it had to stay in the freezer in order to survive
and you couldn't stay there with it
that it was meant to be cold forever
or consumed

it was either one or the other
they taught you that fact when you were little
you can't have it both ways

you can try
and it might be fun at first
but everyone knows it will hurt later on

and it will

II

I think what I liked the most about us
was the theory of romance

no, wait, it wasn't that
it was the fact that it was forbidden

that you were a friend of a friend
and this wasn't quote unquote supposed
to be happening

but I liked the idea of being with you
I would travel across the country to see you
the thought of you and the times we had behind everyone's backs
those times were like poems to me
and maybe looking back we weren't technically together
when we couldn't even tell anyone that we we ever together in the first
place
but it was still nice for me to fantasize

and what did it get me

III

maybe my problem was that it was all in my head
and maybe I didn't realize
the novelty would wear off for you
that you were like the average American
and after twenty seconds of watching a television show
you'd want to change the channel with the remote on the arm of your chair

I didn't know you were a popsicle that would melt
when you were exposed to ANY sunlight or ANY heat at ANY time

I didn't know you had problems. don't we all.
we all don't go to psychiatrists and stay on medications
maybe I didn't know how bad your problems were

I didn't know you were a snowman
that I made in the backyard at my house in the winter when I was little
a snowman that was fully equipped with
a carrot nose, like pinocchio, no, wait, like you, with
no hair, like you, with
black rocks for eyes, like you

and yeah, that snowman melted with spring, like you
and maybe I should have learned my lesson
from that damned snowman

I guess there was a lot about you I didn't know
because in so many ways I didn't know you

IV

I remember how little kids would want to build snowmen
in the winter
they didn't seem to mind the snowman eventually going away

I hated the cold, so I didn't play in the snow as much

maybe in playing those little games
everyone else learned their lesson, maybe they learned something
that I should have learned

V

I should expect the stonings that I am bound to receive
for telling you that I know what you have done
and that I want the rest of the world to know it too
I will expect the stonings
with time, I have been getting used to the punishments
for telling the truth, even when people don't want to hear it
and I don't want to be your savior
and I don't want to be your prophet

I don't want to be that for anyone

I think I am too cocky to be a good leader, anyway

so, thank you for getting my hopes up and then blowing them away
with one breath from your lips
like anyone would do to a pile of sand

or table salt spilled on the counter

because I think I needed to learn that lesson
and in a way, for now,
I only have you to thank for it

Will be JUST FINE

there's a pot on my window sill
terra-cotta, i think
and it used to have a spider plant in it
once
now there's just a pile of dirt
shaped like a terra cotta pot
with a few dried stems
coming out of the top

i could never take care
of anything, you know

and i wonder what i've done
to you

could I find you again
hold you in my arms
rock you like a baby
stroke your hair
and tell you everything
will be just fine

being god

I'm tired of dying for your sins
over and over again and why is it that
I am the one that's doing the dying
when you are the one that's doing the sinning
I don't think you're learning your lesson

I'm tired of taking this knife to my hands
over and over again giving myself the stigmata
the blood gets all over my clothes
and I can never get the stains out
and for what, for you to see how I suffer

I'm tired of being humble when I'm
supposed to be the one with the power
over and over again I become your servant
and never are you bowing to me
I don't even get a thank you

I'm tired of preaching to the converted
when the converted aren't even really listening
they're snoring in the back rows while I
deliver my sermon and there's not even air
conditioning in here and I'm sweating

I'm tired of coming to you and healing the sick
taking away the problems, over and over again
giving you something to look forward to
and all I have is an eternity of waiting for
someone to take my place and tend to my wounds

I'm tired of giving the earth up to you
watching the devil's work be done, and you know,
he's just sitting down there looking at me
and laughing, over and over again because it's
so easy for him when he doesn't have to work

I'm tired of being your salvation
over and over again you turn to me
and I have no one to turn to but myself
it's a bitch, you know, being your own god
since no one can save me from me

I'm tired of being your teacher, handing you
what you need on a silver platter and waiting
for that damn collection plate and someone
is always stealing out of it from the back row
I know who you are, you who leave me nothing

I'm tired of wearing this crown of thorns
over and over again the needles prick my skin
and even gods bleed, at least this one does
and when I ask you to wipe the blood
out of my eyes, well, I can't see you anywhere

I'm tired of being something for everybody
when everyone is nothing for me
maybe the devil has the right idea, you know
maybe I'll sit back and wait for you miss me
as you wonder who's your messiah now

FARMER

And just north of his corn field
there is a college, the university
has bought up the property

right to the edge of his land. And
at that university there is a man
studying plant biology, he wants to

do research in food genetics, create
the perfect ear of corn. And the farmer
knows this.

All he wanted
was to be able to make a
living, maybe save up enough
so his kid could walk over to campus

every morning, maybe meet some new
kids. The government assistance has
run out, the state wants to push the

school south an extra mile, put up
a research lab, another dormitory. The
drought has done nothing good for his

field anyway. And the doctors say the
lump under his shoulder is from the sun.
All of these years

he would wake up early Sundays
to work, and he would find tire tracks
from souped up cars digging in his

property edge. Kids leaving beer cans,
junk food wrappers, condoms. And he
would pick up what he could.

In the upcoming years, would his
little boy do this to someone else?
And this was his labor:

he had sewn the seeds; the plants
running, hurdling the rolling hills,
sprinters uniform in a marathon.

And all the way to the street at the
edge of his property, the green sign
reading "1800 S", all the way to the

end is his life, his little earth,
in straight rows, like the peas
on his son's plate when he plays

with his food. And now the rows of
corn are less straight, as if in recent
years he didn't care. This year it's the

worst yet, he didn't bother with the
right chemicals, and there are weeds
in between the rows. The grass next to

his house is almost up to his waist.
And he's awake now, it's four
in the morning, and he's wandering out

in it all, and he's almost crazy. The grass
waves, almost staggers, like him. And he
thinks:

let the weeds grow.

COMMUNICATION

I

now that we have the information superhighway
we can throw out into the open
our screams
our cries for help
so much faster than we could before

our pleas become computer blips
tiny bits of energy
travelling through razor thin wires
travelling through space

to be left for someone to decipher
when they find the time

II

got into work the other day
and got my messages out of voice mail:
mike trisko left me his pager number
and told me to contact him with some information
mike wright told me to call him at the office
between ten thirty and noon
lorelei jones told me to check my email
because she sent me a message i had to read

so i first returned mike wright's phone call
but he wasn't in, so i left a message with a coworker
and then i dialed the number for mike trisko's pager
listened to a beep, then dialed in my own phone number
then i got online, checked my email
read a note from ben ohmart, emptied out the junk mail

realizing i didn't actually get a hold of anybody
i tried to call my friend sheri
but i got her answering machine
so i said,
"hi - it's me, janet -
haven't talked to you in a while - "
at which point i realized
there was nothing left to say -
"so,
give me a call, we should really
get together and talk"

III

sara and i were late for carol's wedding rehearsal
which was a bad thing, because we were both
standing up in the wedding
and we were stuck in traffic, and i asked,
"sara, you have a cel phone, don't you?"
and she said "yes"
and i asked, "well, do you know carol's
cel phone number, cause if you do, we can
call her and tell her we'll be late -"
and she said, "no - do you know it?"
and i said "no"

IV

I was out at a bar with Dave, and I was explaining to him
why I hadn't talked to my friend Aaron in a while:
"You see, we usually email each other,
and when we do, we just hit 'reply.'
when you get an email from someone,
instead of having to start a new letter
and get their email address, you can
just hit the 'reply' button on the email message,
and it will make a letter addressed
to the person who wrote you the letter originally.
so one of us sent the other a letter, and
it had a question at the end,
so i hit 'reply' and sent a response,

with another question at the end of my letter.
so we kept having to answer questions for each other,
and we just kept replying to each other,
sending a letter with the same title back and
forth to each other. well, once i got an email
from him and there was no question at the end,
and so i didn't have to send him a response.
so i didn't. and we never thought
to start a new email to one another.
so we just lost touch."

and then it occurred to me, how difficult it had become
to type an extra line of text, because that's why
i lost touch with him

and then it occurred to me, no matter how many different
forms of communication we have,
we'll still find a way
to lose touch with each other

V

now that we have the information superhighway
we can throw out into the open
our screams
our cries for help
so much faster than we could before

but what if we don't want to communicate
or forget how
too busy leaving messages, voice mails,
emails, pager numbers
forgetting to call back

what if we forget
how to communicate

VI

i wanted to purchase tickets for a concert
 but i was shopping with my sister
 and wasn't near a ticket outlet
 but my sister said, "i have a portable phone,
 you can call them if you'd like"
 so she gave me the phone, and i looked
 at all these extra buttons, and she said,
 "just press the 'power' button, but hold it down
 for at least four seconds, until the panel lights up,
 then dial the number, but use the area code, because
 this phone is a 630 area code, then press 'send'.
 when you're done with the call, just press 'end', and
 make sure the light turns off."

so i turned it on, dialed the number,
 pressed 'send', pressed my head
 against the tiny phone

and the line was busy
 and i couldn't get through

VII

i wanted to get in touch
 with an old friend of mine from high school,
 vince, and the last i heard was that he went to
 marquette university. well, that was five years ago, he
 could be anywhere. i talked to a friend or two that
 knew him, but they lost touch with him, too.
 so i searched on the internet, to see
 if his name was on a website or if
 he had an email address. he didn't.
 so i figured i probably wouldn't find him.
 and all this time, i knew his parents lived
 in the same house they always did, i could just
 look up his parent's phone number in the phone book,
 and call them, say i'm an old high school friend
 of vince's, but i never did. and then i realized why.

you see, i could search the internet for hours
and no one would know that i was looking for someone.
but now, with a single phone call, i'd make it known
to his family that i wanted to see him enough to call,
after all these years. and i didnt want
him to know that. so i never called.

VIII

now that we have the information superhighway
we can throw out into the open
our screams
our cries for help
so much faster than we could before

but then the question begs itself:
who
is there
to listen

high ROLLER

I long to see you sitting again
cigarette in hand
walkman on the table

I want to be able to walk up behind you
rest my hands on your shoulders
lean my head next to your face

I long to have my cheek near yours
not touching
but so close
that I could still feel your warmth
your desire

our skin wouldn't touch
but I would still feel the rush
from your presence

holding my skin together

is life pre-ordained?
i've been trying to remember
all the little details
that i'm supposed to take care of
and i know i'm not even getting
half of them done
and i wonder if you feel what i feel
is it just me
is the stuffing falling out
of my insides
through the stretched seams
holding my skin together
because i keep finding
bits of stuffing fallen out
and i try to put it back in
but damnit, i don't see the holes
and i just have to work faster
so that maybe
i'll have a better chance
of not losing my insides

is it just me?
probably
but i'll keep frantically trying
to hold myself together
so i can be a bit more normal,
no, wait,
so i can be a bit more like myself
and i won't have to be pre-ordained

i don't want to

I don't want to make a million bucks
I don't want to worry about beauty first
I don't want to do everything myself
I don't want to let everyone do things for me
I don't want to help the poor
I don't want to give up what I have earned

But I don't think I earned this
And I don't think I'm being punished
For a deed I did not committ

Who am I supposed to apologize to
Who am I supposed to accountable
Who am I supposed to forgive

I don't want to think about the bad stuff
but the bad stuff keeps coming back
To haunt me
And I don't like it

I don't want to live this way, and
I don't want to keep paying for someone else's sins

people tell me I'm being pessimistic
when I say I don't want to
But at least it proves, at least,
That I am angry, and
That I live
And I do

LOST IN THE BREEZE

I have only seen you through my rose-colored glasses
I know you thought of me
On the most important day of my life
And well, wouldn't you think of me anyway
We've had enough of a track record together to earn it

I know you thought of me
you did things for me
But a part of me ask for you there
Because I knew it would matter to you

I know you thought of me
you worked for me
But the minute you're our obligations were met
Well, my name flew away like a feather on the breeze
Caught up in the wind
And then muffled noise
That was my night
And was my life
Was forgotten

I know you were doing me a favor
And I am grateful for that
And all that I afraid I will carry with me
Is that you did what you felt you had to do
And then
Like my name, a muffle sound lost in the breeze
I left you
In you went on your way

Medication

I

I set my alarm for 4:30 instead of 5:30 so I could roll over, take a pill, and fall back asleep. I'd leave two pills on the night stand with a glass of water every night. I could feel the pain in my leg, my hand, when I reached over to take the drugs. I'd feel it in my back, too. And sometimes in my shoulder. The water always tasted warm and dusty. It hurt to hold the pills in my right hand.

I closed my eyes at 4:32. I hated that damn alarm clock. And taking the pills early still wouldn't make the pain go away before I woke up. I knew that. But I took them anyway. And I tried to fall back asleep. And I dreaded 5:30, when I'd have to move.

5:40, I couldn't wait any longer, I couldn't be late, we couldn't have that, so I'd finally swing my legs to the floor. I'd put on my robe and limp into the kitchen. The trip to the kitchen lasted for hours. And picking up the milk carton from the refrigerator hurt like hell. This wasn't supposed to be happening, not to me. Just pour the damn milk. I'd wipe the tears from my chin and sit down for breakfast.

II

The doctor doubled the dosage, and he was amazed that I needed this much. He told me to follow the directions strictly, STRICTLY. "You can't take these in the morning the way you have been," he'd say. "You have to take them with food." That doesn't help when I'm crying from the pain in the morning. But I could get an ulcer, he'd say. And I wouldn't want that. Of course not. I just wanted the pain to go away.

Take one tablet three times daily, with meals.
Do not drink alcohol while on medication.
Take with food or milk. Do not skip medication.
Do not take aspirin while using this product.
Do not operate heavy machinery. May cause ulcers.

III

All I had to do was get through the mornings. The mornings were the hardest part. Just take a little more pain, and by the afternoon it will all be fine. Just fine.

An hour after the pills, and I'd start to feel dizzy. I'd stare at a computer screen and it would move, in circles, back and forth. I wanted to grab the screen and make it stay in place. But I'd look at my fingers and they would go in and out of focus. I'd feel my head rocking forward and backward; I couldn't hold myself still. I'd sit at my desk and my eyes would open and close, open and close. Before I knew it, ten minutes passed and I remembered nothing. I could have been screaming for ten minutes straight and I wouldn't have known it. Or crying. Or sleeping. Or laughing. Or dying. I had just lost ten minutes of my life, they were just taken away from me, ripped away from me, and I could never get them back.

And I could still feel traces of the pain, lingering in my bones.

IV

I'd sit up at night and just stare at the bottle. It was a big bottle, as if the doctors knew I'd take these drugs forever. Hadn't it been forever already? I'd open a bottle, look at a pill. They looked big too. Pink and white. What pretty colors.

And then I'd think: If one tablet, fifty milligrams, could put me to sleep in the morning, could make me dizzy, could take a part of my life from me, then think about what the other thirty-six could do. 1800 milligrams. It could kill me. I wouldn't want that. Of course not. But just think, the bottle isn't even full.

May cause ulcers. May cause dizziness. Side effects may vary for each patient. May cause weight gain. May cause weight loss. May cause drowsiness. May cause irritability. Medication may have to be taken consistently for weeks before expected results. If effects become severe, consult physician immediately.

V

I began to count. In the mornings I took eight pills: one multivitamin, one calcium pill, one niacin pill, one fish oil capsule, one garlic oil pill, and one pink-and-white pain killer that I was special to have, because you need a doctor's permission to take those. Then I took diet pills: one starch blocker, one that was called a "fat magnet." As if the diet pills worked anyway. But I still took them.

And then I had to watch the clock, take a pink-and-white at one in the afternoon, a different pill at five o'clock, another pink-and-white at six o'clock, and there was also usually sinus medication that I had to take every six hours in there, too. Or was it eight hours? I started to watch the clock all the time, I bought a pill container for my purse so that I would always have my medication with me.

When I'd feel my body start to ache again, I'd look at the clock. It would be fifteen minutes before I had to take another pill.

CIVIL WAR

I

the confederates are winning the battle
but I know the north will win the war
and all they'll get is a ravaged battlefield

II

a civil war is raging inside me
but I'm tired of fighting from within
when all I want is a revolution

MOST ACCURATE METAPHORS

*rape is one of the most savage
one of the most accurate
metaphors for how men
relate to women in this society*

*it is a political crime
committed by men
as a class
against women
as a class*

*rape is an attempt by men
to keep all women in line*

Bob Lamm, 1976

now there's two ways
this can happen, little girl
you can keep fighting me,
and if that's the case, i'll
have to keep my hand
over your mouth and
this knife at your neck,
or you can relax, enjoy
yourself, make this easier
on the both of us

you know you want this
so stop fighting it

i saw the way you were
looking at me earlier,
the way you stared at me
the way you were dressed
i know what you were thinking
so don't say a word

did you think those drinks
were free

how long did you think
i could wait
it's my turn now
you owe it to me

just do as i say
and no one gets hurt

MY dead daughter

I keep getting this image in my head
 of a little girl, and she has long straight dark hair
 and she is quiet and she comes to me and asks me questions
 and I am working, but I turn around to answer her
 and she sounds really intelligent
 and I treat her that way and I answer her like an adult
 and then I wonder if I'm not spending enough time with her
 so while I'm answering I turn off my computer
 and I turn around to her and I continue to look at her
 I make a point to make eye contact when I communicate with her
 and I get up so we can walk to the library
 as I finish answering her question
 and we get to the library and I ask her
 is there is anything else she wants to know
 because I want to be the one to tell her the truth
 and she says no
 she says she doesn't need anything
 and underlyingly she makes me feel as if she doesn't need me
 and I think,
 I gave birth to that girl, she has to need something from me

and maybe she's a smart girl
 and maybe she's learned to do things on her own
 maybe she does all the things I have had to do in my life
 maybe she understands more than I ever did

but these are my memories
 these are the memories of something that has never happened
 and will it ever? I always imagined a girl
 maybe that's the maternal side of me,
 being a mom and knowing women
 but I never knew who the father was
 and I never got her name, whenever I would have these memories

maybe she never had one

ONCE WANTED YOU AS MY FRIEND

I should laugh about this. I know
that people will probably hear your stories
and think I was a bad and evil girl.

I don't care. I didn't want to be
a part of your life any more.

I wanted you as my friend
after I was falling apart
and I thought I had no one
and I wanted my life back
and because I believed you.

You told people I was your best friend
and you are a liar, plainly put.

I didn't know you'd fuck
your best friend's date. Hell,
fuck the guy for a month until
your neurotic ego can't take it.

I don't give a shit
about a year and a half
recovery from that
evil spell of yours
but I should never have forgiven you.

Maybe you need attention
from every penis you can get it from,
maybe you're more of an attention whore
than I could ever be,
than anyone I know could ever be,
by my neurotic tendencies
didn't keep me in my parent's house
while I studied for another job
because I didn't know what the Hell I wanted
and maybe my tendencies didn't make me
lose my friends
or go through men like hand rags
or give me sexually transmitted diseases

and didn't leave me fucking someone else
while I was engaged

 "I've never orgasmed
 while having sex with him," you'd say
well, I don't know what to tell you.

All I can think

is that you've made this bad
 out of straw and fabric scraps
 and I don't care if it rained yesterday
 and your precious bed smells like shit
 and you've got nothing clean to grab on to

well, you've made that bed
and now you have to lie in it.

so
so have a good night's sleep
while you try to make sense
of what you think is insane

 God, the only insane thing
 is that your man still puts up with you
 or how much of your story
 haven't you told him?

So yes, I should be laughing
because you're the one filled
with so many questions. Please,
for your own benefit,
for OUR own benefit,
get them figured out.

I wanted to cut off ties from you sooner
but I would have had to lose one of my
closest friends in the process
and we couldn't have that (of course not).
But I'm glad your warped mentality
misconstrued what I said

 and that is exactly what you did
 nothing more, nothing less
but you at least got the idea
because no, I don't want to be a part
of your life any longer
and I don't want to openly condone

what you've done to your man
and what you're doing to your man
and I want to walk away from this unscathed

so I think I will.

TIMING IS EVERYTHING

timing is everything, you know
just when you say you've had enough
just when you're ready to wave that white flag
and step out of the ring and stop playing the game
and stop feeling the pain because you're numb

that's when for a brief moment something
wonderful happens and reminds you why you live
and reminds you of what hope and joy and
even love is

and suddenly breathing is no longer a chore
and suddenly nothing is a chore and suddenly
there is no pain and suddenly you remember
what it's like to be alive and you start to like it

well, that's when they pull they rug out from
under you, right at that moment, so that
you can fall to the floor and then the biting
sting of pain hurts that much more

timing is everything, you know, they do it
that way on purpose because they can't let you
go on feeling hope and not feeling pain
this is their key, it's all in the timing

PRAYING TO IDOLS

every once in a while
i question whether or not there is a god
but i changed my mind
i thought i have found him

he had dark hair
almost black
just like a god should
and he had these blue eyes
not just blue
almost white
so light
they look like glass
and you could almost see right through them

and could i see right through you
if you gave me the chance?

i'd clasp my rosary necklace
and pray to the right gods
and wouldn't they be you
and i'd let the necklace drape over my shoulders
around my neck
and i'd let the rosary fall between my breasts
and you would forgive me that much more for my sins

how many hail marys
would you want me to say
i'd ask

i cannot believe i have seen you
and i have talked to you
and does everyone get to see their god like this
and does everyone remember

why do you have to be my god
why did i have to see you
and talk to you
and realize how young you are
and realize how inexperienced you are
 i mean, you're supposed to be the god
 you're supposed to be teaching ME

is this what people think
when their gods let them down
 did you let me down
 or did i just never know
 what i was looking for?
is this what people think
when they realize
they are only praying to idols
what then?

RIGHT THERE, BY YOUR HEART

I

i had a dream the other night that i was in a bathroom, sitting on the toilet seat, i think it was the one in florida, but it could have been anywhere. it was a small bathroom. i was stretched over this seat, and i think the lid was up. i was naked. there was a wall right next to me, and i felt cramped, like i couldn't move. and then kurt was there, with me, in the bathroom, naked, standing over me, screwing me. i was sitting on a toilet seat and he was fucking me, and in the entire dream i couldn't get comfortable, i felt very awkward, it felt like he was pressing on my chest, i couldn't breathe, it felt like there was a rock in my stomach that would stay there forever, but the entire time i didn't complain.

II

have you ever had that feeling before, you know, the one when someone is telling you something you don't want to hear, like if someone was about to tell you that someone died and you knew what they were going to say and you still didn't want to hear it, or if someone did something to you you didn't like, like when you were little and the kids at the bus stop shot pebbles and spit balls at you every day because you were smart and you still had to go to the bus stop every morning and just try to ignore them? and when that happens it feels like a medium sized rock just fell into the bottom of your stomach, and you don't want to move because you're afraid that the rock will hurt the inside of your stomach and so you just have to sit there and hope

the rock goes away? or else you get the feeling in your chest, right between your lungs, it feels like someone is pressing against the bone there, right there by your heart, and you've got to breathe, you're not going to be able to take that pressure, that force any longer?

III

it had already been a long day, sitting in the back of someone else's car for two and a half hours, knowing that if elaine's dad wasn't such a slow driver it would have taken less than two hours. I was trying to get home so i could make it on time for the christmas party but still have enough time to pack for my early flight the next morning. airports have become a second home to me. so i walked in through the melon doors only three hours late, those melon doors that scream of the perfect fifties home, of the perfect fifties family that everyone believed we were. i walked through the doors, sarah hugged me, and dad walked into the hallway from the kitchen. wait a minute. he was supposed to be on the other side of the country... well, don't ask questions, just act happy to see him. so i smiled and laughed, until he hugged me. then the rock settled in. he didn't have to say a word. my mind started going through the checklist: okay, what would have brought him back here? who was the one who had died? i said 'grandma' before he did. i cried for fifteen minutes, wiped the tears from my neck, my ears, and i got ready for the party, trying not to move too quickly, so not to disturb the rock.

IV

i got the mail, like i do any other day, and by then i had almost forgotten about waiting for the test results. i was just getting the mail, like normal. when i saw the letter from the hospital that day in that little metal box the pressure on my chest came rushing back like wind when it rushes around the side of a building and

it takes you entirely by surprise and you lose your breath trying to live through it. what if the test results said i was sick, and i wasn't going to get any better? i had too many symptoms, the results had to show something. something, damnit. maybe if i never opened the letter, i'd never have to deal with illness. maybe then i'd live forever. but i opened the letter. it said the doctors still know nothing. i just wanted to know what was wrong with me. why i wasn't perfect. the pressure on my chest didn't go away when i threw the envelope on the ground by the mailbox. i walked upstairs.

V

i needed to talk to someone, so i threw my bathrobe on the floor, pulled on some sweats, and walked over to his apartment. steve was supposed to be coming home from work soon, and i needed to talk to somebody, i couldn't keep everything bottled in. i must have looked like an idiot standing on his stairs looking like i was about to cry. i felt like an idiot there, too, not knowing why the rock in my stomach wasn't going away. i wanted to ask him if he ever felt that rock, felt that pressure, even if there didn't seem to be a reason for it at all except for maybe life itself, which everyone was supposed to manage through anyway, i mean, everyone has stress, what's your problem if you can't take it? i wanted to figure it out, whatever the hell it was that was bothering me, i really wanted to. this panic was driving me crazy, and i couldn't even explain why i was panicked in the first place. i didn't tell him i wanted to light a candle and some incense and just curl up in the corner of my bed, holding one of my pillows, probably the black one, and cry for a very long time. i sat there in his apartment when he got home, but i didn't speak. what could i say? that the rock in my stomach wasn't going away?

VI

i don't know how many times the idea of seeing him went through my mind. at least once a week i'd imagine a scene where he'd confront me, and i'd somehow be able to fight him back, to show him that he didn't bother me any more, to show him that the rock wasn't there any more. to somehow be able to prove that i wasn't a victim any more. i was a survivor. that's what they call it now, you see, survivor, because victim sounds too trying for someone who has been raped. so i keep saying i'm over it but i keep imagining mark all over again, not raping me, but following me on the street, coming to my door with flowers, or sending me a valentine. but once, when i saw him walking out of a record store as i was walking in, the rock fell so hard that i thought i was going to be sick right there by the cash register, right there by those metal things at the doorway that beep when you try to take merchandise out of the store, you know what those things are, i just can't think of what they're called. but if i did that, then he'd know he was still winning, to this day. how many years has it been? how many years since he did that to me? how many years since i've been wanting to fight him, since i've been feeling that rock in my god-damned stomach? i managed to hide my face from him in the store so he didn't see me as he walked out. when i saw he was gone, i wondered why i still felt the pressure in my chest. i thought the pressure was going to turn my body inside-out. i reached for my heart, grabbed at my shirt. maybe the pain was always there, right there, by my heart, but i try not to think of it until i go through times like those.

TWO MINUTES WITH AYN RAND

I don't believe in things that aren't proven,
that we have no evidence of, but sometimes,
sometimes, I still think about what I would do
if I had two minutes to talk to you

when someone asked me what I'd say
I said I'd rather hear you speak
I'm sure the words you would part unto me
would mean infinitely more
than what I could say to you

and if I could talk to you
I wouldn't know what to say

But I know I'd have to tell you
like so many of your fans in the past
that I thank you
for showing me
that there are logical people in the world
that man can live by reason
that reason is a virtue
that selfishness is a virtue
that I have a right to what I earn
to what I create
to what I know to be true

I would have been still searching blindly
for philosophical answers
to the meaning of life
if you never told me
that I am worth something
that I am my own end

and it's nice to know
that even when I'm surrounded by these
unthinking masses

that there are people who hold their minds
as the highest value
out there somewhere in the world

and the fact that they exist
helps me through my days

but you knew that
you wrote about these heroes
over the years
and how could you manage to write
gripping, thousand-page novels
about heroes that a rational mind
can't help but love
and did you really find that hero in real life?

because I'm still looking.

You've created these heroes
but are they just created
does anyone else understand
these values as I do?

Yes, thank you
for giving me the answers
I've been looking for,
but tell me that someone else out there
found the answers too

so maybe, if those who posed
this unreasonable illogical ethical question
in the first place, if they could give me
another two minutes
so you could do some talking
maybe then you could explain to me
how to get through the days
when no one understands you
how to accept less than perfection
when you've seen the purity and the clarity
of the thinking mind

WHAT do we say

What do we tell our youth
when we let them out on probation
for violent crimes
because there's no room in our jails

What does it say of us
when a painting of a clown
by John Wayne Gasey
sells for millions

What does it say of our self-esteem
when hundreds of women write letters
to Charles Manson
asking for his hand in marriage

What does it say of our media
when it glorifies these
dark heroes

Dear
Hero
I want to know how your mind works
I want to know why you did it
I want to know how you feel about politics
and love
and marriage
I hope you're not suffering too much
I love you

What rights do we really take away
from those who take our rights from us?

I hope you're not suffering too much

Richard Speck, convicted of killing
eight nurses, was videotaped in his
prison cell by cell mates with his
male lover, counting hundred
dollar bills, snorting mounds of
cocaine,
showing off his hormonally-
induced shapely breasts

When a member of society commits a crime
they relinquish the rights
they have taken from others

in theory

One man in prison filed a lawsuit
against the state
for serving peas to him too many
days in a row

One man in prison filed a lawsuit
against Ann Landers

because she published his letter
where he wrote he killed his wife

One man in prison filed lawsuit
after lawsuit against the state
solely because he felt a great joy
in uselessly spending
the taxpayers' money

What do we say to all of this
What do we say?

AGAINST MY WILL

There have been so many times
Where I have been raped

Not that some man
Some quote unquote man
Had physically held me down
Has forced himself inside me
Against my will

That way is just too obvious

Not the “someone tried
To beat me up” thing
Because that is old news

If you have done the research I have
If you have gone through what I have
If you have lived the life that I have

Because
You know
I should be above this
I should be a feminist
With a capital fucking F

I guess with that in mind
I should not mind the cat calls
Or the whistles

Or the fact that the word “woman”
Is the word “man”
With a couple of letters tacked on
Like how “she is “he” with an “s”

Like we’re an extension of them

Or the fact that men
First look at me
By looking at my breasts
And not my eyes

I should be aware
That a woman with power
Instills fear
And a woman with power in a company
Can still be demoted outside of the company
Where she can still be down-played

I can handle the jokes
About being a blond
Or being dumb
Or being both
I can hear the line
Always said insultingly
That we HAVE to be irrational
Because we are so damn emotional

I mean
How can you trust something
That bleeds for five days every month
And doesn't die?

Fine
If they want to brush off
Everything that makes us strong
Fine
If they say we can not hold a job
Fine
We will just depend on you for money
And work on our OWN jobs
On our OWN time
And stash enough away for our OWN little nest-egg

And how much money
are you boys going to have
when it comes to the end of your family line?
How much of a life
are you boys going to have
when it comes to the end of your family line?
How much happiness?

* Note that "Feminist with a capital F" is from a poem by Joanna Marshall. Also note that "End of your family line" is is reference to "The End of The Family Line" by Steven Morrissey.

WHY I'LL NEVER GET MARRIED

at work we've been looking
for a new employee
we've sifted through resumes
we've interviewed a few

and some were good
some were very good
and we took some time to decide
and then we called our #1 choice

and they said they wanted
more money than we offered
so we said our goodbyes
and we called our second choice

and they said they couldn't work
at such a small place
so someone at work said
we should interview some more

and that's when i knew
at the rate we were going
we'd never find anyone
and no one would want us

Why do you

Why do you make us wait for you to come back?

Why do you allow suffering?

Why do you aim all hurricanes at mobile home parks?

Why do you let us destroy ourselves?

Why do you obstruct people from gaining knowledge?

Why do no major Hollywood film companies collapse in one of your earthquakes?

Why do you let innocent people die for crimes they didn't commit?

Why do you let the guilty go free?

Why do you fight against progress and technology?

Why do you fill this earth with so much pain?

Why do you not come down here, right now, and show us your face?

Why is it that the less intelligent people are, the more religious they are?

Why do you treat women in the Bible as possessions?

Why do you allow pro-wrestling?

Why do you insist we have faith in you and make us denounce our brains?

Why do you think we'd think you exist?

FANTASTIC CAR CRASH

and our life is one big road trip now
and we set the cruise control
and make our way down the expressway.

and most of the time we're just moving
in a straight line, and the scenery
blurs. there's nothing to see

but I know what's inside you and I
know what you're made of. I know
there's no such thing as a calm with you

you are a fantastic car crash. you stop
traffic in both directions as the gapers gawk and
the delay grows and they slow down and stare

everything shatters with you, you know.
it's a spectacular explosion. I try
to duck and cover as metal flies

through the air. and every time you leave
the scene of the accident
I am left picking up the shards of glass

from the windows. you know, the glass breaks
into such tiny little pieces. they look like
ice. it takes so long to pick up the pieces

even though I'm careful
I'm still picking up the pieces
and I'm still on my knees

and the glass cuts into my hands
and the blood drips down to the street.
think of it as my contribution

to this fantastic car crash
that is you, that is me, that is us
as I pull the glass from my hands

and I wave my hand to the line of traffic:
go ahead, keep driving, this happens
all the time, there's nothing to see here

change/Rearrange

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