



Port-foliage(13)

For Peter,

Who may ask,

“Where are all the drafts?”

“What drafts? I get everything right on the first try”

Intimate

Our words are mirrors of each other
though our bodies are much different

I am a coat
whose sleeves are too short
for your long arms

White lipstick

Histogram equalization

crystal cataracts spread evenly over
the ocular fundus photographed in four dimensions
Illusions of unknown intensity
in three separate channels that will not overlay
the image remains gray

understanding remains inadequate

language falls short of communication
hyperspectral imaging within the electromagnetic spectrum
falls short of preventing occlusion

Anopsia may be inevitable

in this circumstance of sight
Arteries can only flow so far
before the river fails to fight
the adipose and atherosclerosis

the brain gathering infinite data
that the mind never apprehends
Our maps are simply indicators
of why our fate is visible
and vision incognizable

An ode to Octavia

Waking up to second story
thick fog against the windows
that the sun melts into cheese
seeping through the grated window screen
filled with holes and hanging earrings
I pillow talk to the crack in the ceiling

I ask him, Did you happen to notice?
that red sky, that the weather channel denies
against the silhouette of the oak tree tower?
divided into twenty eight glass frames

He's interrupted by the kittens beneath the door
clacking the hook and eye holding it shut
they squeeze behind my mattress
tile floor, never swept

They're stay is as short as everyone elses
each ember of the house, is
Inflected with language, by the remnants,
of strangers thoughts,
stacked photos in fishing boxes

the house's a swinger yet
no one, belongs to anyone but her

huddled around the empty hearth,
passed between bodies
even the bottle remembers her space

Prepared

When my mother lost her legs
I ordered myself an extra pair
Just incase it was genetic
turns out it was the nail polish
Since I never paint my toes
I lost my arms instead.

Mother,

hope is for the birds
says the daughter
to the crow

it's best not to watch
catastrophes
I tried to tell her.

Daughter,

Will you let me live with you when I'm old and gray?
Will you change my diapers the way I changed yours
When you were a child?
Will you make me tea when my belly aches?

She asked little me,
whose hands lay folded quietly
in the passenger seat of the suburbs

No mamma,
I wanna go to college
wanna get married
have my own life outside of yours

Foot lurching into the gas pedal she asked,
Don't you love me?

Little me sat quietly waiting for the moment to be over
Little me closed her eyes

as the two of us swerved into
another metal box
Where the air vents were not stuffed with tissues
to keep out the cold

Then Big me stood over the hospital bed
reassured her that the building was not on fire
no one was trying to poison her

little me was afraid of touching her wrinkling skin
little me didn't want to change her diaper

She asked, If she would ever get better
neither me knew what to tell her

Nerves

He swallowed a rock
She pulled it out
with a fishing rod

like a loose tooth
tied to a doorknob

He meant to say
something other than
the obvious bit

but his tongue stayed
tied around the rock

She pushed her
hands down his throat
and managed to fall

through the tunnel
of his cigarette

Dirty Harry,

you skunk haired icon
sitting there
on the inner door

staring back from your
permanent pop up
era as if to ask

sexual symposiums
of demanding eyes
acknowledging that

they know you
how could they not
know your image

before this
they'd never seen
the creature

behind that face
body around that
glass heart you

let leak through
the shutters of
our memory

engrained crisper
than lovers
echoing from the

shadows of
that pin-holed eye
of deepest penetration

The Benevolent Society Elections

"You wear the hat of king!"
"we drink to you!"
the surrounding crowd lifted
Little above a sea of bicycles that road beneath
her in her red satin throne

into the night, through the thick limbed trees
where twigs were stacked as teepees into flames
that were fed larger and larger branches

The worshipers chanted the names of the new leaders:
"The man with the most hats! The Little! The naive follower!"

The previous cabinet of elders
held sausages over the fire
until they were roasted and fed to those closest in proximity

Then the ageless ritual began
where the fire danced on chains and clubs
tamed into a timid tango, that only bit
the most careless opponents

running off into the thick brown mississippi mud
To have their shoes devoured
by the brown beast that could only be conquered
by laying down within his arms

Trippery

Textual forests of symbiotic weaves
braided between olive colored branches

arms reaching upward and outward
moss hanging forever lazy, hazy
unwound absurd and somehow
alive, unnatural and sublime

the muted parades of birds above the
body outstretched between tree roots
listening to the muffled shuffle
in the forest of collective minds

receiving FM signals from
neighboring towers of noiseless steel
strangers in a similar skin
not yet traced with our tongues

Dilated eyes say you know
Wavelengths weaving us together

Forbidden Fruit for the Taken

(Lust for an ex-lover)

She's into taxidermy

that turns me on

says she's got a rabbit

in the freezer

and some rats

calls me kitten cause

I threw my mama cat

out on the street

I'm an irresponsible child

filled with lust

in that box she left

I saved her a dead bee

and a butterfly

at the bar

still so beautiful

we're both cold hearted

she's just more confident

short haired fox

I'll never catch

she'll pocket

your chain

or heart

Whichever

worth more

her snake

eats mice

tail first

a mouse

in snakes skin

dress

him

however

you'd like

I. Minimum Wage

We called Tristan, Triscuit
because he was high in fiber
He told us he wasn't black
he was from Trinidad
When I smiled real wide
He'd tell me 'stop cheesin'
When I stuck out my tongue
He'd tell me 'Put that that thing back in your mouth'
When he made me pancakes in the morning
from Aunt Jemima's that in came in an orange juice jug
I kissed him, "You're American as they come."

II. First Generation

They paint Easter eggs all year long
Celebrate your birthday on a Saint's day
knit your presents months before
No surprises
I never knew them young
she doesn't know how old she is
No need to learn the language
The house don't clean itself
My dinner is always waiting

III. Last time I drove

Mother told me not to hang out with their kind
Just turned 18, so I said I was at a friends
After Aunt Jemima's pancakes
I kept dreaming of the boy
through a red light
Hit a minivan, full of mexicans
Pulled into the driveway surrounded by police cars
who told me I left my license plate at the scene
Mother said that's what happens
when you don't listen
Father said, if you weren't white you'd be in jail.

Octavia Castle

(and the kittens who went through there)

Lauren.

footsteps by my door
shuffling, bike clicking
sloppy stair climbing
she's running late
I watch her carry her bike
Over the porch
From my window

Still glued to my bed

I envy her
In her white dress
With her sweet caramel voice
That will soon blast over the radio
Between carefully chosen 45s
Everything good in my life comes from you, I tell her

Nathan.

Harmonica, whistling

The same tune over again
It's too early for this!
I pull the pillow over my head
And wait until I hear
That tune drip down the stairs

Danny.

I roll off my bed, into the kitchen
Do you want half my espresso?
he pours half from his cup into mine
dripping brown off the edge of the mug
into a puddle between the array of papers on the table
You almost got it that time.

I assure him.

Watch as he begins to neatly glue
individual mardi-gras beads to his canvas

April.

She's feeding her snake
wrapped around her arm like a bracelet
I got you a cat!
she tells me, as it nuzzles my leg
you said you always wanted one
I did, but I was afraid.

Ruby.

I think your cat is pregnant!
She loves more than usual

I think I'm also pregnant,
You are more than usual
I think I'm going to keep it.

Andi.

I'm scared when it happens
She tells me to boil a pot of water
While the cat is giving birth
I watch it lap up the placenta
Bringing each of the six to life
the box of mardi-gras beads
in the fireplace
becomes their litter box

Mickey.

He's in his boxers playing x-box
At two in the afternoon
Drinking warm beer
From the night before
I fall in love
with that lazy kindness
Through the maze of beer cans
Forgetting myself
In the house that is not yet my own

April.

hand holding on her bed we watch the sunrise
leaning out the window to ash our cigarettes
tells me about her pet duck and
silent brother in the Poconos
Leaves me her shoes for home

Nathan.

Would you like a hit?
he asks, each day around noon
and offers tupperware for free food events
reads the bible and the buddha out loud
Jazz cat bicycle shop in his bedroom
who needs a bed, when you've got a hammock?
a table upside down with custom shelves for the cats
until he falls in love
and runs off

Emma.

moves in with Nathan
When she tells me she's in love
I tell her, *he ate sixteen of my eggs in one morning*
he put a pizza in that omlette
she doesn't seem to mind
his curious nature
I miss her inflectionless voice

Victoria, Kora, Kowboy, Knight, Kpeanut, TobyWon, Poco, Tootsie, Nelly:
Meow

Danny.

Tells me, *sex is like cold pizza*
it's never bad.

he kisses me the night before he leaves
Artists make more in california, he says.

Collin.

Yells at me for
leaving the door unlocked
Failing to clean the kitty litter
Inscription on his door reads:
Love Warrior
I call him Dad sometimes.
When he was really drunk
We chased dad around the house
Tackled him and gave him
a temporary tattoo

Niko.

She takes my room
So I don't have to take down
Any of those tiny bits of paper
I so carefully arranged along the walls

She gives me back my pictures
Of that mutual friend we both lost
because there wasn't room
in the house for just one more

She gives me back my letters
From people she did not know
and fills in the inbetween spaces
With her own life

This house with many lovers
might never settle down

