

A VOLUPTUOUS DREAM DURING AN ECLIPSE

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# EVERYTHING FEELS IMPORTANT TO A TINY PERSON

When my car got towed you  
lent me the money but were  
kind of an asshole

we waited in the  
impound lot

I stuck the toe  
of my sneaker into a puddle

it was the color of fish  
Tonight I rubbed cream on your  
ass

it felt  
worthwhile though not exactly  
great

you told me a  
story about New Jersey

I had many different  
thoughts & they were all great I  
guess what I am saying is

If I baked you a pie  
you would sweat  
while you ate it  
with your perfect lips

# WILD AT HEART

If I could be anything other than the dinner table I would be the kitchen rag. I say & I look at your face & the side of your face. You would never keep me warm. I just know. The plastic bag of your neck, you don't love me, & even though I have thighs that could slap the shit out of a leather couch you don't think that I am funny. Listen, I'm not political, I am distracted. When I think about you. & our kid & the litter. & our fucked up parents & our promising careers. When I look at you. When I am cutting your hair in my mind.

# THE MYTH OF THE FEMALE ORGASM

Winter runs into rubbery  
toothpaste  
winter    rubs  
on how we stand there  
no one honest ever cared

We couldn't stand each other &  
we didn't want to give up

From    in    between  
our thighs streamed fertile  
shattering desires of  
anyone whose cares we  
couldn't stand

No one honest  
sticks against our bank of chest

& when we talked about it  
our lips touched  
& we were faking it

**I SO BADLY LOVE TO  
CLASP IT FURTHER  
BOTHERED DAMNED  
TO BOTHER HOW SHE  
STANDS THERE ANYONE  
COULD CARE I SLICED  
HER BLACK ESCAPED  
OR SEEPING LAUGH  
OUR MOTHER HIPS WE  
TALK WITH OUR FACES  
TOUCHING DUMB WITH  
LOVE THE FAKE**

The way she stands there  
no one honest ever bothered



# I KNOW I AM NOT AN EASY WOMAN

I have seen a million  
pictures of my face  
& still  
I have no idea

# MEASURES

I saw winter spread.

The space between two headlights.

What I cannot love

if I cannot open my mouth.

My little baby eyes

sleep in a chain.

Like a French confessional

I am nothing

like a stream.

# BE A FRIEND

Fortune faked you  
snuck you from the dinner table  
silent as a fold  
how red your face  
is raw meat red

Your carved-in Appalachian Becky voice  
& Becky, I have never talked in mine

You are still  
eleven, Becky  
two hot bruises  
when you shake  
your hair  
has never been more sure  
& you are nearly old

You think beauty  
is a good thing  
to forgive

Just because  
your parents had you, Becky  
had to so you wouldn't have to  
have you, with your shirt pulled up  
your thumb print pressed  
the tv red if you are  
lucky, Becky I will make you  
feel like you are lucky

Your smile like a finger

What is pleasing to me  
is what I cannot mind

# GOOSE

In the woods with one hand.  
Last year not now not spotless.  
Glands. Splendid circle they  
leak. Stare & foam & sheep-  
sweat. Love selves on the body.  
Sleeves & bend. Growing old is  
the fanciest. Off. Comes deep.  
Never like a minute. The calf.  
Cowling a minute comes. Deep  
cover. Salt beds. You are one  
of those women. Mashed. A  
sonnet. Speak plainly of things  
pubic. It is beautiful. It is the  
square of beautiful. Contrite &  
metal. Figurine.

Grade school wore you duct tape hard so much in common last year  
I'm bored stumble homeblind masturbation. Sycophant, I press the  
pus from your nipple.

Red wax lips cover your lips & between your teeth you shake in the  
bath even kill what you had meant to trap.

Earth of pupils iris the ground.  
Children run towards waves.  
Nice as a different kind of rude.  
You have lost your hands. The  
pupil of the earth. Tongue  
& whine & teeth fall out  
atbanquet fortune bows. The  
tourniquet. To alabaster.

To desire is to be unquiet  
but my desire's to be silent

# THE WAY THEY ACT THE WAY THEY DRESS

Steeple blond  
your mask askew & stapled  
at the temple

What a pair  
to blubber in the mirror

What a pair  
to rattle on your chest

Love's delivery  
is a temporary gentle  
underwhelming as a sleeping pill

Your full eyes slack  
their poodly plastic clap  
roll bedroom high

They sky the sky  
the high high high

# THE LAMPSHADE IS SITTING BADLY ON ITS LAMP

But: you again, you  
—I mean outside me  
you are not drunk  
& I am not alone



# LET IT ALL GO WITHOUT ME

You think beauty  
is a good thing  
to forgive

Smile like a finger

What is pleasing to me  
is what I cannot mind

# BY THE TIME I ARRIVED

He spent hours mouthing  
as he chewed his hands  
smelled like ketchup I  
wanted to wipe them on  
the clean braid of the  
beautiful woman who had  
sat beside us

Mouthing as he opened up  
the packet nursing folds to  
tiny noses he is waiting  
for a call  
but I  
will fuck  
the face  
of any man  
who looks  
away

Glove eyes leave you  
nothing special

A painting of a tongue  
covered in sand  
needs no explanation  
I will run  
my fingers through  
your dark, fermenting hair

This is a blank spot  
a black fricative slowly repeating  
& I do work and he does nothing

# IT TAKES A REAL MAN TO BE A LITTLE GIRL

F O R C O C O M O O R E

In the middle of the night  
in an eclipse  
in that cereal box of darkness  
I stand, a man who hates men  
& almost all women

Instead of having a body  
I would like a t-shirt of a body  
a big, sensual t-shirt  
luscious jersey knit  
& very quiet

But you, love  
you are lovely as a tube of lip gloss  
chin barged out like a beer gut  
your embryonic wheeze  
a glow stick in a tree  
when all the lunch girls screamed  
you screamed the softest

There is so much I don't understand  
even more I do not want to know  
but you, love, when you hold me  
when you lay me fast asleep  
so plush & fathered in your couch  
any fool can die

& the whole world stares  
how the world does stare

# GLUTTON THE SESTINA

F O R H A Y L E Y K A H N

We gluttonous with sound, depress the line  
to lively stand its silky trousered fit  
whence piggly, schoolyard fuck with awkward speed  
great tallow horse's eye to fallowed quit

Good horse eye, grader, backward to be shucked  
an oily shove retainer's tired fit  
fluke ragamuffin, warp to ply her top  
yarn yellow bowl to book & just don't quit

Dear scarecrow hair, your scar & fat, dear flim  
your fair faced hair is looped with slimy grit  
lisps manic in reflexive song of mine  
his horse eye loved to have a mom so fit

Must vest our selves so finely pig lives past her prime or horse will  
guillotine poor piglet's gut for twine.

Listen miss

this world could be

your livery dove

your glov-ed pigeon

dripping *le bon* air

# ALL NATURAL

A F T E R   H A N N A H   W I L K E

It goes in  
with a shape of its own  
& comes out  
as real garbage

Bloodsucker  
off the night  
Homer of your bod

I have water up my nose



What gives you to me:

Your ballet slipper, pink  
your brain your bubble  
pink your junk  
it works its mouths  
all natural

If we are the plastic  
so we are the bug

That eats the puzzle  
that has the disease  
that doesn't watch

Question:

What makes shit nature?

Answer:

Nature shits.

Does nature warm the earth?

I care

to dig your natural warmth

your natural highs

& love the shit you make

with your mind/body shit

Your body:

A story the mind tells itself.

Your mind:

Made out of body.

Plastic body  
body body blah  
blah blah

Oh baby, baby  
even maggots must be cute  
to a maggot lady

# IN LIFE WE ARE THE STORIES THAT WE TELL ABOUT OURSELVES

Say a field trip summer roller rink & Annie ugly so was I the bleachers cotton pink a wilted pink a tear of snot across my bag the smell of crawl her forehead smell of Annie's pad her chest hair worms I lied the plastic water Annie she says thrumming Annie talks the screen door porch & in the glass I lied the van the floor she moved it kind of pink & jealous even pictures have a kid still slowly pricking Annie in the bathroom stall a brick a wall a crying bottle I have scrubbed my legs my marker badness little boys who swimming pool the lungs I have a feeling Annie told me scrubbed my legs say field trip summer roller rink & Annie so the bleachers pink a cotton pink a tear of snot her head smell crawl of Annie's pad her chest hair thrumming on the tub the van the floor the Sunday park whose reckless move in boys in even pictures say a bottle up to swim to swim with marker legs still pricking Annie in a stall to heave my chin my water brains & scrubs when what was left of sponges summer brain & I do not remember sidelong eaves I say a field trip summer roller rink with Annie ugly so the bleachers cotton pink a tear of snot a wilted pink the smell of Annie's pad her head smell bleachers marker legs her pricking water reckless sponge of summer brains a field trip summer crawl of bleachers pink & wilted tear my bag my smell my forehead smell the crawl of Annie's pad her chest hair in a stall my chin to heave to pink & sick against the cotton jealous I & smell the summer crawl of field trip chest hair love my pricking legs

I do not remember  
what was left  
or what the summer banged against

# CLOWN, GRIMACER, FLOORMAT, YES-MAN, ENTERTAINER

Oh you swimming public  
be a friend  
swish that public  
slide again  
your public dorsal white things  
on the muggy  
sedan floor

Trash is power  
trash is open  
is my field is I feel  
dirty in your eyes  
yet indivisible our fat

Saying you are good  
is not the same  
as being good

But is it proof that I don't love you?

All you men of no good feeling  
be forewarned  
your animals resent you

They clench their jaws  
& call their moms  
so many times a day



# IMP, IMP

In a house filled with machines  
in the deep flit of your eyes  
boldly rolling, high as a fruit pallet

Your voice, your voicely voice  
how many Elsas fit in one dark box?

My little enemy  
this is a serious Tuesday  
I'm as healthy as a boy for you

# ALL OUR PERFECT THINGS ARE FLOATING IN THE WATER

Annie leads the floe & I am jealous, typical.  
Her hair, the unruly thatch of someone else's hair.

Fat holiday eyes. Her looking into.  
I shake my lashes into a field of black umbrellas.

I am not a man  
and what I lack is confidence

Water, lightness, puberty. Tiredness. Shut.

# ZOOM SEQUENCE

Time is a mouth  
a toothy orifice  
stretched light across the hung on  
summer blown glass bawd of  
bulb dark twinning sweeps & seepfalls  
licked into an ear

Repeating spirals interrupted  
flesh of radial music  
made flesh reduced to flood  
of parallel twirl the toad it was  
a mouth breeder  
beams to cumshine bright  
pennies on the city street

# IN BED, WITHOUT ELSA, *STRUM*

Light-pour warms my guts  
so pleasingly chromatic  
sun dilates your face  
piss soft into the shower

Is it bad that I'm not interested in  
"what life means," etc.  
you'll find out when you get there  
that's what I say

The peach-of-the-temple-of-your-throat-your  
breath is how many dollars  
Elsa, come  
does it always have to be  
about "the process"

No one likes to sound abandoned, Elsa  
love my guts as I do yours  
divine yet inexpensive  
fortune is soft bodied

It is best not to transform  
rather: irritate & signal

Elsa, I may sleep in trash  
but in my dreams  
your tongue is in my mouth  
is swollen as a toe, courageous  
Elsa of my dreams

# LOVE MOM

A word meaning nothing  
like what it sounds  
crepuscular has to do with dim  
light or things  
at twilight  
like animals that are active at those times  
bunnies are  
crepuscular feeders  
strange word

# IRISH EYES

I like to eat the same foods all the time  
& imagine all the other foods are made of plastic

When the whole world is made of plastic  
the whole world is smiling with you

# GOD WAS THE WAY IT WAS

Was born a dog-girl  
an instant hit turned hot  
fucking a candle in the bathroom  
a body falling out of itself

Was born a red sweater face  
a dog, a girl, a girl-girl  
it happens on you  
Dad says you could be in playboy

To be covered  
to draw the lambent on you



# LIKE THE SHADOW OF A BOAT

Like the shadow of a boat

I am a huge girl

You won't degrade me

with your pesky notes of enervation

I put my hair down

over my eyes

until I'm dumb

We look nothing alike

I put my wet hair

in front of my wet

eye, whisper, you feel good

I drag my big, wet hand

across my big, heavy body

If I have one thing to confess

then it is all I meant

In Marseille  
I am cutting myself  
out of a piece of paper

The font swims at me  
a serif font  
a dozen peaches bobbing in the sink

Solitude  
stillness & solitude

Though faint of public heart  
I can see the refuse  
in your eyes

As you fan the public showcase with your sleeve  
when you are not here

# JACK & DIANE

Only the hind-parts & plastic  
eyes on your rabbit face  
I am the wife I long to punch  
to sully your marvel with a thin con  
I am the King of Jokes  
doubled-over with triumph

Husband, swelter has nutrition  
& I the normal wife  
of your punctured eyes  
fawn over the toilet

Ask a normal question  
your dirty jokes aren't miracles  
in my opinion  
no desire is benign

Yet, in the pill-out spell of night  
when what I think of is the pills  
in all the pockets  
in all the trench coats in the world  
I will sway like a swinging babe  
& you will think it was the pills  
& I will go to sleep

# TO MOUTH THE MOUTH

Irradiant, irradiating circlet  
a chilly heave, the thorough current  
of an antithetical Mute Swan  
lengthening the Arabian Crawl to her doorstep  
then disappeared inside a branch

She squawks & panders, lisps  
the already-of-her-night clings to its furnace  
giantly plumaged in rivulets of sweat  
& three opal stars

# A VOLUPTUOUS DREAM DURING AN ECLIPSE

Rotten, he says, motherly  
how could you miss that

Like a ragamuffin with no eyes  
his body has a dark spot

Like doing laundry all day long  
he is being nowhere

Cottage cheese runs out his mouth

Another one & another one  
that doll can crawl  
his insides like an awning

Motherly if mother  
mother as if spread

If I could break  
the hymen of his ear with  
I can't stand you

I won't say a thing & I won't notice  
god you are  
the softest  
kind of jerk  
& yesterday is gone  
& I had nothing to do with it

# YESTERDAY IS GONE AND I HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH IT

I squat  
like a frog  
in a warm peel of light  
spider veins & teeth  
golden  
presidential teeth

I think  
about taking  
a vacation

Mostly, things are dull  
and summer drops  
in fertile blades

ELAINE  
A VOLU  
DREAM  
AN FC



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PTIOUS

DURING

ELIPSE

E L A I N E K A H N

is a graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop and California College of the Arts. She is the author of *Customer* (Ecstatic Peace! Library, 2010) and *Radiant Bottle Caps* (Glasseye, 2008). She performs music under the name Horsebladder and is the assistant editor of *Flowers & Cream Press*.

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BY ELAINE KAHN

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