



Dance of the Marionette

Movements

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The Puppet

IPv4: 136.167.140.1

I open the morning with sunshine
huddled to my barren chest in strips

of cold light. My vision falls to
reflection on black panes, sweaty

sticky fingers pinch and drag
a mouth too dry to swallow.

My location is lost in sequence,
ambiguous and tangled in sheets

screens and fractional dreams, hesitant
moments of stretching minutes erupt

into single step out of bounds,
glances at mirror, taps on glass,

stumbles on carpet and discarded cottons
with feet too far to be seen in focus I

wait for the ping that brings bleary sight
down into handheld considerations.

Dripping a path from room to room, wrapped
in linen, wandering delineated,

trailing my thumbs between buffering flotsam
I am located nowhere but not here –

a gaseous reflection momentarily
watching a pan of water boil.

Restraint

I wish I had another cigarette
tucked into foil, to be pulled out
like a promise that this time I will stop.
I can barely control
the hands that crumple an empty
pack, looking for something to burn.

Sometimes the smoke burns
my eyes. I buy cigars,
Garcia Vegas, but empty
them, scoop them out
in a tray for later. I can control
how much I smoke that way. Stop

telling me that I need to stop.
It's not like I burn
myself out of control,
a single Red cigarette
is fine when I go out
drinking on an empty

stomach, unless the pack is empty
and I know I need to make a stop
at 7/11 before I head out.
There are worse things to burn
than a single Red cigarette
that drops ash in a controlled

drip. I control
how to fill my empty
lungs with just enough cigarettes,
I know when to stop
before I run out

of breath – I'm not out
of control yet.
Who knows what I'd burn
when my lungs feel empty
if I couldn't make it stop
with a single Red cigarette.

I've burned pods when they were empty,
out of juice, dry. I feel in control,
even as I hear "stop" in every breath pulled from a cigarette.

New ABCs

A Beautiful Computer Decides Efficiently.

“Free Growth,” Humans Insisted.

Just Keep Living Mediated - No One Performs Quietly.

Reconsider Surrender To Ubiquitous Virtual Will.

Xanax: Your Zen.

The Tension Between User and Used: A found poem from the HTML for Google.com

The logo that is displayed
doesn't fade.

Refresh daily

Shortcuts are curated by you
Shortcuts are suggested based on websites you visit often.

Search suggestions will be inserted here:
id="user-content"
spellcheck="false"

The Audience

My Recurring Dream

fades slowly when I wake up and feel the empty space my hands are suddenly holding. On the worst mornings I actually remember the dream in all of its stupid simplicity. I wear a bathing suit, and she wears a bathing suit, and everyone around us has on their respective bathing suits. I am in a pool, but trapped, the exits blocked with rubble from some earlier dream's denouement. I always notice how quiet it all seems. I am holding her, just feeling a half-weight as the water does half the lifting. I am showing her how to cup her hands to create a pocket of air, so if the ceiling falls she can go underwater and still breathe. I say to her "this is the worst of my dreams," and she replies back "but this is my favorite of dreams." I remember feeling a gentle pressure from her arm on my side, my shoulder beneath her chin. Nothing more than a sensation that disallows isolation. The sound of an alarm going off does not surprise me. Still – I need a couple minutes to myself, time enough to twist my sheets into ropes that feel like arms, lay pillows in layers that feel like human weights, imagine a simulacra of a person with hands pressing down in a comforter with thick threads. I then shower in the hottest water, wear my heaviest sweater, my warmest pants, my thickest socks. My desire for comfort through clutched cotton explains why my hands look so empty at my sides.

Transcript of Conversation with a College Roommate on Valentines Day, 2020

“Perpetual loneliness
is so easy”

The man next to me laughs,
pounds his thigh,
forces air out of his nose.

“Like the Greeks at Troy
You are the master.
Go for the 5 to 6.
With four hours of work I can
get her to do anything.”

The man next me doesn't notice
my shoulders, stiff, or
my hands, suddenly useless
and frozen to my sides.

“You know, I got
a video of a girl fingering herself”

Not a single word burst from my teeth.

“I was too lazy for a real girl,
so I swiped until
I knew *she*
would do anything”

The man next to me watches as I stand up,
shuffle to the door of my bedroom,
twist the lock.
I hear him stand.
His lips press
into the doorframe, his tongue stiff and ready:

“Getting nudes from girls
is so easy.”

Zoom

It was always a joke, living life inside a box. What a funny space to be in, quadrilaterally. A finger and thumb held up in mirrored angles, framing a figure in the distance, right eye squinted shut, the world in portrait mode. When did my mouth become so tired? I can see the lines around everyone else now, borders that were not organized into a grid before, arrayed on my screen and there for my utility. This box is tailor fit.

Tik Tok

There is no screw to turn that makes an hour
Linger another moment more, but I
Still swear the sounds of clocks are striking slower,
That every bloated moment wants to die.
There is no time between the Now and Next,
We know a page can only flip so fast,
But now the pause between a thought and text
Is just an empty swipe between two apps.
I know my next ten years will be a list
Of likes and comments shared. A TikTok star
Just turned 15; I wonder if she'll miss
A life not timed in bursts of filtered memoir.
Record yourself and always hit repeat –
One day, on loop, is all you'll ever need.

Everyone Is Watching

Refresh:

I shift onto my elbow, free both my hands.

“Give me a moment” I say,

to search by hair color, position,

for keywords: HOT, TEEN, WHORE.

I refine my search

drag the slider for age,

select from drop-down menu:

height, weight, bust, waist.

Watch the thumbnails first,

staccato thrusts and open-mouth faces.

Every young body on my screen turns stale so I

quickly find another, fresh for only a moment.

I click faster,

watch compilations,

peek over my shoulder, watch

something aggressive,

hardcore, brutal,

rough, “passed out”

(Shh- she’s an actress)

“revenge”

(Relax, I only pretend it is real)

“drunk”

(Who cares?)

“reality”

but then

don’t worry, I can

be gentle, human, casual.

There’s no harm in

thinking about this

after every stroke and before

every whisper.

The Wires

The Quietly Strained Ache of the Bored Mind Staring at Empty Screens is
Indicative of the Usurped Cognition Experienced as a Result of Intimate
Digital Engagement on a Preconscious Level: A Focus on the Keyboard

alt='1qaz2wsx'

POIUYTREWQ
LKJHGFDSA
MNBVCXZ

PQOWIEURYT
LAKSJDHFG
MZNxBCV

QPWOEIRUTY
ALSKDJFHG
ZMXNCBV

Watch! My hand thrusts into my mouth, grabs
my tongue, twists it horizontally.

Q W E R T Y U I O P
A S D F G H J K L
Z X C V B N M

My apologies, a translation to Dvorak is unavailable.
Here, try this little pattern:

QAZWSXEDCRFVTGBYHNUJMIKOLP
ZAQXSWCDEVFRBGTNHMJUKIOLP

Did you dance to the sound of triplets?
Stamp each foot of the anapest?

QWERTYUIOPASDFGHJKLZXCVBNM
MNBVCXZLKJHGFDSAPOIUYTREWQ

such
a tastefully familiar
lipstick.

Please, Google these words.
I have already left the mark
of my kiss
in the search bar

Information for 23andMe

I walked with dusty blue flip-flops
behind my grandmother in her pantyhose.
She began each journey by counting my layers with her thumbs,
um – dois – très.
She insisted I always dress warmly
with multiple shirts,
like she did.
We walked past broken fences and parked cars,
cut through some yards to buy chocolate umbrellas at the Butcher shop.
I played Cat with
my sister, House and Princess too.

Back a generation I know
only the stories that became jokes:
that a nun stabbed my father with needles in a car,
that he was born in a hospital, my mother on a floor
(he would laugh) (she would fold her arms)
that my mother took a bus to pick tobacco at 14,
that my father was a translator for neighbors at 13,
that my mother skipped school to swim in a river
but was caught by her angry father,
that my father was an altar boy who never
speaks about why he left the church.

Of my grandparents, only these details:
that a man purchased my great uncle (he would eat under the floor-
boards),
that my grandfather got his first shoes at 9 yrs old,
that my grandmother farmed every day, every day,
that my grandfather was gordo as a child,
his stomach large and round.

The Story of How I Learned What a Human Being Is

"Over the last decade, reCAPTCHA has continuously evolved its technology. In reCAPTCHA v1, every user was asked to pass a challenge by reading distorted text and typing into a box. To improve both user experience and security, we introduced reCAPTCHA v2 and began to use many other signals to determine whether a request came from a human or bot ... Now with reCAPTCHA v3, we are ... eliminating the need to interrupt users with challenges at all. reCAPTCHA v3 runs adaptive risk analysis in the background to alert you of suspicious traffic while letting your human users enjoy a frictionless experience on your site."

- Google WebMaster Central Blog, October 2018

Infancy

The letters have little lines,
broken borders in back-bended signs.
Will you whisper their words to me?

Stop spam, read books, see spot run -
Remind me (through practice) what is human.

Adolescence

Have you driven a car? Have you
Eaten a sandwich? Have
You crossed bridges? Show me.

Prove to me you are not like me,
Learning only from those before you,
Calling association wisdom.

Let me see you try, first.
My turn will come after yours.

Adulthood

I too can write with impressions.
I won't disturb you with frictions.
I know who you are -
I don't need questions.

An Elegy for Rosa

Swedish fish, for me, dusted in her grey pocket lint.
Chocolate umbrellas with yellow plastic hooks.
Wooden spoons cracked on red hands and red knuckles.
Black shawl, black shoes, black hose, black hair, green eyes.

She spoke with a rise and fall in tempo with hoeing dry ground.
She signed an X with knife-sharpened pencil next to my shaky letters.
She cooked with hand-sized measurements of butter.
She lived in a green house with a chain-link garden woven with vines.

My nickname, from Portuguese: Small Fish Bones used to Pick between Teeth.
My twin sister: Pussy Pussy.
My older sister: Little Princess.
She, of course, was Rose.

I asked her once if she had been to a museum, but she didn't recognize the word.
I asked her once how old she was, but she was born on the floor.
I asked her once why she doesn't like beef, but she only told me to value a cow.
I asked her once when she would return home, but she said she would die longing for her earth.

My grandfather couldn't ask to be clean, but she still shaved his chin every morning.
My grandfather couldn't ask for dignity, but she would clothe him fully, with dress socks.
My grandfather couldn't ask what happened, but she would pat his hand and smile softly.
My grandfather couldn't ask why she stayed, but it was clear she would never leave him.

She died after three years of mourning and walking in worn shoes.
She died on a phone call that couldn't have been longer than four minutes.
She died on a closed toilet, legs crossed, head back, dressed in a *bata*.
She died at the end, after patiently waiting.