



...hot hymns for wicked times



~~ the devil's grandmother ~~



< emails exchanged between S.O.W and L.E >



====>>> meeuw: the fall <<<=====



{ rebecca & her daughters }

hot hymns for wicked times

GRADUATION

dearly assembled best beloved
passengers princes and snakes
we present for your pleasure
consume at your leisure with salt
a very very very very important event a mighty
moment
meet the sinners and sukkels and saints

take notice be warned watch out look up don't cry
don't smoke don't sneeze don't take it easy
roll up for big fat wonders big fat warriers
worriers patches of paint
and a bath of mayonnaise and cement
that's meant to tell you something
ding ding smack

who banned the dogs
who banned the dogs
who banned the dogs
who broke the tripod my god
who brought baby who brought the rain
who ate all the pies

dearly assembled best beloved
passengers princes and snakes
we present for your pleasure
consume at your leisure with salt

COMPETITIVE PROVIDER

wifey wants my wifi hit me with your
wireless network security key
wifey wants that scifi fanfic anime warrior in the
bath with spok in a uniform situation
hit me, little y capital U, s zero zero zero big M
small mmmmmmm

take me to your clips wifey, only fans account
sign me up meld me aan make me pay subscription
double encryption
anonymous insults salt in the wound stings bad hurts
better
routers in the bedroom hit me.

TECHNICAL PROFICIENCY

I sucked the plug and slugged the moonshine
verbonden met jbl flip the bird.
I heard you've a mighty fine bluetooth, baby.
green eyed, yellow bellied, bluetoothed, red
blooded
Don't stick the stekker where the sun don't
shine

WITH GEESE

gather gandergang and hear!
our story goes from gore to glory.
hurry now it's hot a minute's all I've got to tell
you
long far ago when feet were webbed and quack meant
squawk and squeal meant quack and honk made sense
they came to stuff my neck. Knock knock who's there?
'the butchers, here to slit your throat and peel its
skin and simmer in stock and drop in a stew' they
said
'we'll sew up the top then a knot in the bottom will
do, the stuffing won't get through'
stuff you! I said and flicked and flapped and flew
'your filling acquires a melting soft texture' they
tried to say,
but I was away and out of the frying pan into the
fray.
the sisters soared and spared no words
they ranted and roared and clack clack attack with
beaks and tiny teeth.
with a mighty feather and an outstretched wing, with
signs and wonder,
with fright and fight, our necks are ours.
we live to honk another tale

ON TRAINS

een ogenblik geduld altublieft
al onze medewerkers zijn in gesprek hou je bek
check the number drop the phone
moan frown shout weep
daily deals and trails of mail and dreaming up
schemes in the train
the stilte coupe in my brain
doesn't wait at the station
the doors won't open please meneer help me
no
don't leave your baggage unattended
spend the toeslag mend your brain een ogenblik
geduld altublieft

right to remain silent, sly and ride the route to
the station stay shtum
but it wasn't me believe me please I promise I'm
honest I was whipping cream
you were seen at the scene, seize him boys he
sneezed

flattery gets you far but a flat battery in your car
can't go where the highway bends under the hill
the oil's spilled the butter's melted
gut's deflated, sat-nav's a traitor
hate on holiday, love at the bar

MOST GRACIOUS

chlorinated gravy fated
stock villain stock still
stuck in the mud
a stick stuffed with stuff
served with spuds
fat fleshy pink raw
slit my belly snap my bones
slap me till I'm tender
sitting on a platter
can't stand
can't stand the stamping
of the stupid stupid stupid stupid
men in suits
they won't change their underwear their spots or
their minds start to mold get stinky old
haunted hunted stunted little runts cunts stop.

my dear lords whining hordes stupid broads
order
ready set royal flush away your doubts
stay in your lane
wind you're neck in
back to where it came from
back to the arse end of last week
don't be weak be strong and stable
if you table a motion you'll cause a commotion
so order
look out at the ocean ahoy
we're drifting away hurray
shiver me timbers and toes i suppose
you chose who chose we chose
choice cuts
butcher the best estimates for the public services
will be lade before you
other measures will be lade before you
we pray that the blessing of almighty god
may rest upon
your council

fight your battles please
bite your fat old fingers
till they bleed
what you need
is a snarling
handsome brute of a beast
who'll pounce at least
on enemy threats
swarming pests
weeds infest
our green and pleasant land
root them out write them off
ratatatat them raw and bleeding
lying on the ground stop lying!
down down down and out, you scrounger!
pound your chest what a mess
I just want flesh
fresh
raw



'early retirement really treats me fine'
I told the mice who grinned because I didn't clean.
'And aren't we just so bloody lucky ladeedadee bla bla'
even my grandma's having a grand time,
she says:
'our choir wanted to do a zoom of Leonard Cohen's Hallelujah which of course I didn't know
so, I just emailed back
"You're joking"'

I heard there was a secret chord, that Just joking actually ha
giggles all round, girls and boys and boys and boys and
Look for the laugh in the bath

Begin by emptying all of the soap and the shaving foam, bottles of shampoo from Schwarzkopf
Toothpaste, etcetera paste glug glug squeeze nivea for men
Then. When you still don't find it, waiting at the bottom of the pot of Vaseline.
Lean over and stir it round and round and round and really you'll be reeling from the fumes. swoon.
power of salt and lemon removes yellowness from teeth.
Phew. There's the laugh that coughed the cackle that cracked the smile that bit the bottle that beat the
baby
Baby
Hit me on the head with another bottle.

Rapunzel is the ultimate lockdown hero, Says my mum on whatsapp
Not just for her incarcerated in a tower state of being but because
She lets her !LOCKS DOWN! In a quest for what?
For Freedom.

And when she did let down, her locks down, was it a let down?
Are gold tresses better from below?
Not to mention smell
Well, she never got socialised see, she a bit of a weirdy, you know witchy shit
'Darling don't scratch the pavement, we're in public.'
Pity the prince.

Self reflect hou je bek
Bin the mirrors
Windows win

BLIJF THUIS EN VERMIJD CONTACT MET ANDEREN

bet your bottom dollar, there's no bottom to this pile of shit
so push the button to take me away, sugababe, sweaty sweaty honeyb
before I get the wrong idee
gadver goddam bashing my head on my bin,
where the flies sing and swing and sin and
phone a friend mosquito their conchito,
swivel-eyed, mean mouthed bleeter,
bite me till I bloat, I scratch the itch that keeps me tight, my blood
runs riot, fighting clean to set the scene, pillows are better with
stains.
cocococo-raging racha running up and down my house.

THE END

she bought two tickets to go and see it. and brought her father in law.
and it was a bit flat, not very lively, missed a spark.
where are the special effects, she wondered, but didn't mention it to
her father in law in case he thought she was being dim, not appreciating
the minimalist lighting. Instead she just said 'it's very contemporary,
isn't it, 'the end"

THE FISH PRINCE

rolling through the middle
of the aisles of the lidl
in the fridge sits a fish
tail in a twist
shaking belly top flap flop

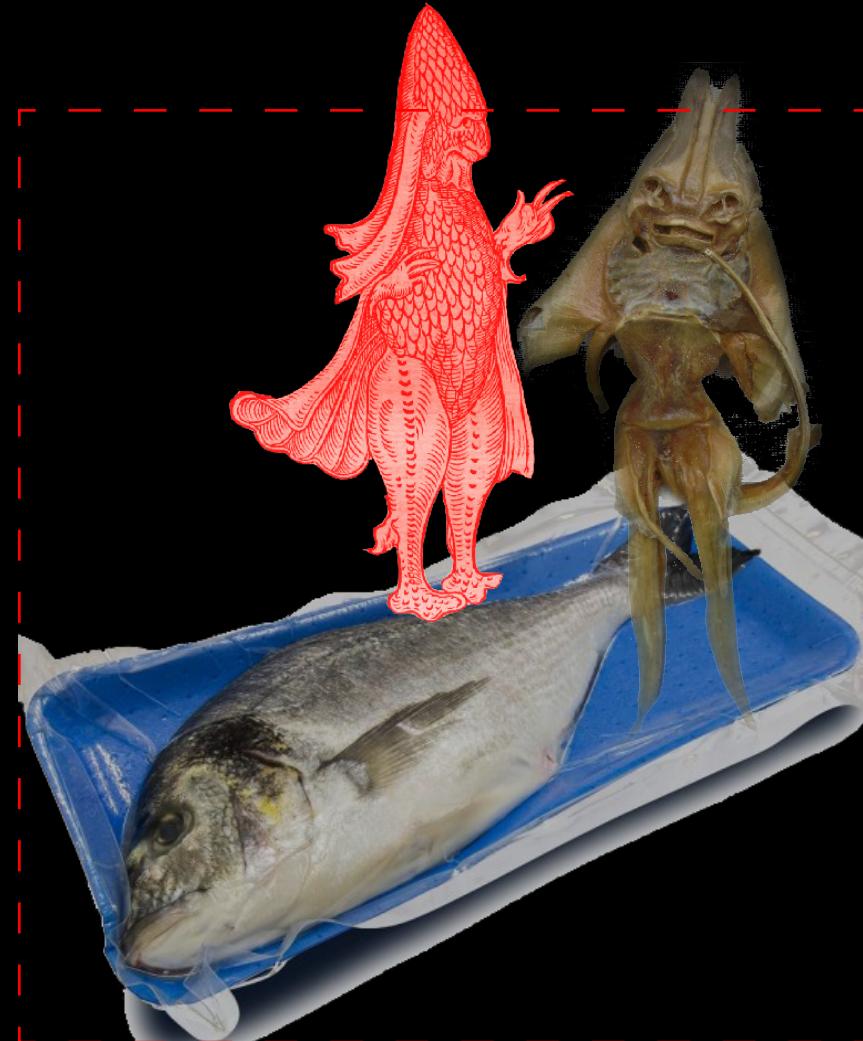
'you stop' says he
'I'm a fish prince, me
set me free free me
out of vacuum packed suction wrapped
sweaty plastic trap
Rescue fish you'll have a wish
And wet wet sea kiss'

I tear off his wrapping
the deluxe lidl branding
and fish boy spills out from his gills
gasps of relief, smiles, flash of teeth and a wink
'one wish one wish whaddaya want whaddaya think'

well fish I'm sick of the holes in my socks it sucks
and sick of the stains in the sink and the stink
of this nasty coffee not so frothy
Want bigger richer sweeter hotter better more.

'oh yes' says he 'I'm a fish prince, me
you set me free let me be
Out of vacuum packed suction wrapped
sweaty plastic trap'
you rescued fish you take your wish
and wet wet sea kiss'

my stomach turns tongue burns hair stands straight
trolley's full of grapes socks plates
fat steaks stacked cakes champagne
fish prince winks a wink
'your wish one wish whaddaya want whaddaya think'



well Fish it's nice to be filled to the brim
spilling over the rim
piles thing on thing on thing
but what I really want is servants
bigger richer sweeter hotter better more!

'yes yes' says he 'I'm a fish prince, me
you set me free let me be
out of vacuum packed suction wrapped
sweaty plastic trap
you rescued fish you take your wish
and wet wet sea kiss'

now with a chatter and a bang and a rattle
stand a gaggle of men with trays in my trolley
and boys smiling trolley:
bouncers cooks cleaners waiters chaueferrs lovers others more
fish prince winks a wink
your wish one wish whaddaya want whaddaya think

well fish it's nice to be fed and cleaned and flattered
but there's one more thing that matters
wanna be top pappa pope, giver of light bringer of hope
want bigger richer sweeter hotter better give me more

'yes yes' says he 'I'm a fish prince, me
you set me free let me be
out of vacuum packed suction wrapped
sweaty plastic trap
you rescued fish you take your wish
and wet wet sea kiss'

bright rays beam out
from my ears and my mouth
'beautitude' stitched gold on my gown,
most divine reverend
no more holey only holy joy faith grace
fish prince winks a wink
your wish one wish whaddaya want whaddaya think



well fish I'm happy now I'm popey
but I thought wouldn't hurt if I were
to be sun set star rise god! good god
want bigger richer sweeter hotter better better more

the devil's grandmother

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in which we dig up the underworld and pass on the pieces



I went to the river between our world and the underworld and stood with a foot in fact and a foot in fiction. With an ear in rumour and an ear in truth and with no end in sight and my tongue in my cheek and my heart in my mouth I asked the Devil's Grandmother how you can make an alternative reality out of stories. And how it might help to free us from oppressive establishment hierarchies. She laughed heartily at me and told me to come into her cave and sit down on a chair, warm from sin and pleasure and all things bad and nice. This is what she told me:

THE DEVIL'S THREE GOLDEN HAIRS

Lucky Hans was born in a birth caul and was therefore destined to marry the king's daughter. The greedy, insecure King threw him in the river but he was fished out by a miller and his wife. Years later, the King chanced upon Hans when touring the kingdom and ordered him to the palace to deliver a letter which was, in fact, an instruction for his execution. But an empathetic band of robbers switched it for one that said that this boy was to marry the princess. The king arrived just in time for the wedding, and enraged, sent Hans off to Hell to get three of the Devil's golden hairs. On his way he passed an empty well, a barren apple tree and the ferryman to the underworld who couldn't stop rowing back and forth. He promised he would solve these problems by the time he returned. Down in Hell, the Devil's Grandmother was sympathetic to Hans' mission and turned him into an ant to hide in her skirt. The devil returned exhausted from his day's devilling and fell into grandma's lap where she stroked him and sung him to sleep. Each time she plucked a golden hair from his head he woke up in pain, but assuming that it was part of his dream, he told his night-time visions to Grandma: a dried-up well in a town square with a toad underneath blocking the flow, a tree that does not flower because of a mouse gnawing at its root, and a ferryman who can be freed just by placing his oar in the hands of his passenger on the river's bank. Kitted out with this information and the three golden hairs, Hans set off back, providing the answers he overheard to the ferryman and to the villagers. He was rewarded for his wisdom with gold laden asses. At the palace, the King, shocked by Hans's success, asked where he got all that gold and Hans told him it was across the river. The king cantered off to the river where the ferryman placed the oar in his hands and back and forth he has rowed forever and ever, till this very day (Grimm, 80).

This is The Devil's Three Golden Hairs, an ultimate teller's tale concerned with communication and miscommunication of information, instruction, prophecy, packed with stock characters and scenes; it resembles several stories mashed together. Morally ambiguous representations of the Devil, his grandmother, hell; truth and tales and deceit, resist conventional ethical structures.

AT HELL'S KITCHEN TABLE

The archetypal characters and situations of this particular fairy tale will be at our side as we are introduced chronologically to a troop of characters, from Sybil of Cumae to the goose in Untitled Goose Game. The Devil's Grandmother, that gossiping storyteller, hosts us at her textual kitchen table where, just like in the tale of The Devil's Three Golden Hairs, she is conveyor of information, secrets, answers,

a connoisseur of: 'orally transmitted narrative with a relaxed attitude to the reality principle and plots constantly refurbished in the retelling' (Carter, 11) as one of Angela Carter's definitions of fairy tales goes. Particularly intriguing about the Devil's Grandmother is that she isn't a fair maiden or a wicked witch or a disobedient wife or even a witty heroine. She appears only in one scene, but plays a crucial decision-making role in the plot, where Hans himself is entirely passive, riding his luck to a happy ending. She evades moral expectation and categorisation: the Devil and Hell are weighty negative associations to bear by any standard, more so the further back you go in Church-dominated European history; indeed, the first published English translation of the story replaced the Devil with a giant for fear of offending (Tatar, 157). And yet, she is not only merciful with Hans, but goes significantly out of her way to help him, motivated by curiosity for the devil's secrets and the desire to communicate them (to Hans) for drama's sake, for the sake of what happened next. In other words, motivated by her gossiping instinct. She combines magic powers with domestic powers: hiding ant Hans in her skirt is an especially strong matriarchal move, evoking similar back-to-the-womb instances from Mary as The Virgin of Mercy, depicted sheltering large groups of tiny people under her cloak (Sano di Pietro), all the way to Oskar's storytelling Grandmother in Gunter Grass's *The Tin Drum* who protects and hides both lover and grandchild under not one, but four skirts (Grass, 32).

In *From the Beast to the Blonde*, Marina Warner associates the rise of the fairy tale as a printed genre with 'permission to accept that between heaven and hell and purgatory there lies another kingdom, a realm of human fantasy, in which the traditional categories of good and evil clash and find resolution that differ from orthodox faith and even ethics'. The Devil's Grandmother sits, in spite of her hellish title and home, in just this liminal moral space.

This research is a rough guide to following her example: How can storytelling be used as a tool to build an alternative, non-establishment framework? Hopefully, the question can be answered through narrative archaeology, by excavating layers of shifting information, filtered through the perspectives of several gossiping storytellers. Angela Carter describes the process as 'validating my claim to a fair share of the future by staking my claim to my share of the past' (12).

OLD WIVES' TALES

Fairy tales are referred to also as Old wives' tales – that is, worthless stories, untruths, trivial gossip, a derisive label that assigns the art of storytelling to women at the same time as it takes all the value from it (Carter, xi). The word 'tale' is used synonymously with the word 'lie'. You're telling tales say suspicious parents to fibbing children. The associative connections between fiction, stories, tales, fables, gossip, anecdotes, lies will become apparent as we hear more and more of them. While they are not the same, they are sometimes interchangeable and the boundaries between them are blurred by this essay just as they have always been blurred by society.

Recognising gossip as a crucial form of unofficial communication, a sister to storytelling and a source of solidarity among women and reclaiming it from associations – Idle! Wicked! Bitchy! – placed on it by the patriarchy to keep women obedient, is an important tool for the excavation. So we should bear in mind gossip's changing status, from benign term denoting female friendship in early modern england, to what Silvia Federici describes as 'part of the degradation of women [...]the stereotype of woman as prone to malignity, envious of other people's wealth and power, and ready to lend an ear to the Devil' (38). Rather than that, we'll lend it to his Grandmother, and contribute an artifact to the continual process of narrative accretion, ready to be stolen and chopped and mashed and spread just as much as its subjects and sources have been.

Okay, Sibyl of Cumae, you may
have heard about her
if in doubt she's one to watch,
and here she's one to hear, in fact (in fact?) she's ten,
then many times wrinkles, and whispers,
and winks and tricks and tales.

She sees and says across porous borders of pagan and pious
monster meets monastery up mystery mount.



CHAPTER ONE

SIBYL OF CUMAE

'The fates will leave me my voice, and by my voice I shall be known' Said the Cumæan Sibyl to Aeneas when she realised that she'd asked a smitten Apollo to live a long life ('till the crack of doom') but forgotten also to request eternal youth and would therefore 'shrink from her present fine stature into a tiny creature, shrivelled with age' (Desonay, 53).

THE SECRET PLEASURE CAVE

The Oracle, Teller and Trickster of legend fled to a concealed cave on the highest ridge of the Appenine mountains (still called Monti Sibillini in her honour) when Christianity's tightening grip on the Roman Empire forbade her from practising her pagan arts: fortune telling, prophesising, making up stories, passing on information. Sibyl's declaration of mighty vocal immortality echoes through to the present; she wasn't shut up by the coming of Christ or the exiling of classical divinities or by the Witch Hunts or by any of history's other attempts to silence women: by her voice she is known.

She is a proto-Mother Goose; a 'composite character of the female narrator' as posited by Marina Warner (71). Beginning as Classical prophetess in pagan lore, daughter of Lamia the snake-woman and Zeus, she guides Aeneas to the underworld in Virgil's epic and sells her oracles to Tarquin the Proud, the last king of Rome, then becomes a fata, an enchantress, in order to star in medieval legend, where she revels in accusations of pagan perversion and entangles herself with folklore of the fairy seductress: in a chivalric romance by Andrea de Barberino from 1391, Guerino the Wretch meets the Devil. Aiming to get his soul, the devil tempts him with news of a secret pleasure kingdom where Sibilla, a great enchantress lives with her fairy entourage.

Guerino enthusiastically ventures forth and finds the beautiful Sibyl of Cumae with 'breasts that seemed to be made out of ivory' in a paradise of feasting and music and fruit and flowers where there is no pain or sorrow or ageing. She offers to find Guerino's father for him if only he will become her lover but he resists seduction. And a good thing he did so too because one day, peeping under the fairies' skirts, Guerino discovers that every Saturday, they turn into horrible creatures with deformed nether limbs. Furious, he avows his Christian virtue and escapes to Rome where the Pope absolves him of his year in the sinful company of the Sibyl (Warner, 5).

The story has been told and retold again and again, the cave of delights appearing in high and low forms, literary and oral, including versions in which the gallant knight is not pardoned by Rome and so turns back and lives out the rest of his life in bliss with the Sibyl. After all, she's only monstrous once a week.

Magic practising pilgrims visited the realm in great numbers to consult the Sibyl's ancient wisdom in the hope of strengthening their powers until papal authorities, worried about all that profanity, had the cave filled up in the seventeenth century. In 1898 a group of mountaineers reported that it had been dynamited (Warner, 10). These are extreme and physically destructive measures to take in order to silence an already millennia dead, mostly fictional woman. It is testament to the real threat posed by the female storyteller to authoritarian male doctrine .

PAGAN TO PIOUS

And despite their best efforts and their dynamite, the Sibyl dodged the puritanical Christian culture cull, surviving as 'a hyphen between the old faith and the new' (Warner, 70). Rather than being demolished, she was incorporated into the Christian scheme of redemption: the Sibyl was cast as a prophet of the Messiah, a forerunner of the faith, commended by no less than Saint Augustine as 'a citizen of the city of God' (Dronke, 13).

Her warnings of the apocalypse were vehement and vague enough to be neatly recast as predictions of divine Judgement day. In the hands of Lactantius, an early Christian author, himself prosecuted for his religion in the Roman empire and then honourably restored with the conversion of emperor Constantine early in the fourth century AD, she is quoted as knowing about Jesus's life in remarkable detail: 'He will satisfy five thousand from five loaves and a fish of the sea.' (Lane-Fox, 647)

So entwined is she with Christianity, that one version of the Sibyllian legend says that she fled because, having predicted the birth of the saviour to a virgin, she expected to be the one chosen by God as the virgin mother of her own prophecy, bearing not just news of Christ, but also the baby himself, and on discovering that Mary had been given the role, took off to the mountain peaks in a fit of disgust (Neri, 213).

The Cumæan Sibyl is maybe the most fabled of all the ten Sibyls who pronounce their oracles from every corner of the earth, each with their own attribute and particular prophecy yet functioning together as one archetypal figure; they shift fluidly between the Sibyls and Sibyl. This multiplicity provided rich scope for artists and storytellers who could put her in any number of outrageous heathen hats and situations and other stories. And gave her endurance and flexibility as a mythic figure through time. She is a manifest narrator who welcomes more and more voices to tell with her. Sibyl then, is the Devil's Grandmother's Grandmother, pioneering inter-ethical surfing for the Devil's Grandmother to follow in her wake when she comes along. The sibylline cavern of pleasure is a fruity, blooming manifestation of the hell full of the secrets and promises and shapeshifting that we recognise from the Grimm's tale. The Devil's Grandmother's soothing head massage is perhaps less overtly erotic than when the Sibyl 'lays down by [Guerino's] side and shows him her beautiful white flesh' (Desonay, 21) but they are parallel instances of physically gratifying men to secure information

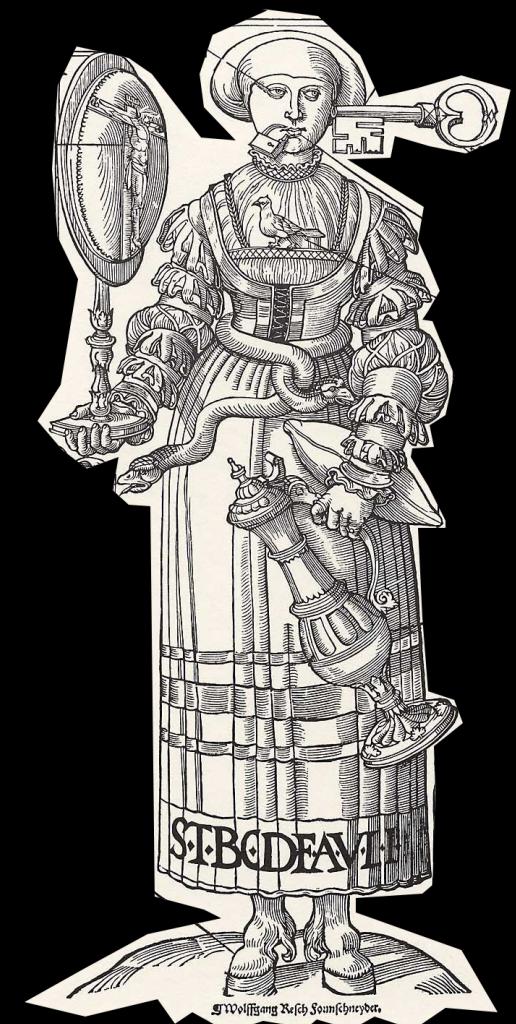
or promises. Though in neither story do these women wield their wiles from a place of necessity; they are writing the plot not escaping from it.

The dwellings of the Sibyl and Devil's Grandmother, respectively lavish and cosy, fulfil in their moral ambiguity a function in thinking about forbidden, secret matters. Ostensible finger wagging and negative verdicts lightly cover the real point of these fantasy caves where enchantresses perform magic and wonder, delighting in invention free from orthodox constraint. Whereas the aged crone typically stands for vice, her moral deficit causing physical decrepitude and vice versa, here old age represents ancient wisdom. From Sibylline iconography springs the old wise woman as the imagined source of fairy tales.

MOUTHPIECE OF THE DEVIL

But although she is celebrated on the ceiling of the Sistine chapel (all ten of her), wrinkled and muscular (presumably from carrying all those heavy books around) and although her oracles reached wider secular audiences with the invention of the printing press, by the sixteenth Century she was branded a mouthpiece of the Devil by the era of witch terror: in the late middle ages, church and law launched an attack on female communication and networks. Collective knowledge as midwives and healers meant that women controlled illicit realms of sex, contraception, and abortion and therefore, also fertility, morality, attitudes, and alliances: Management of the physical and social body constituted a big threat (Federici, 29). The negative shift of the word 'Gossip' from early modern times to the late middle ages, charts the vilification of female companionship, social gathering, communication: In 1014, 'gossip' meant a godmother or father, a morally important and commendable co-parent; by the mid 1300s it referred to a female friend invited to the christening of a child. A 'Gossiping' was used to mean a christening feast. During the 1600s, as these celebrations grew into lavish occasions for socialising and bonding, the word 'gossip' came to hold associations of wickedness: a woman who delights in idle chatter (Warner, 33). In French, 'commère' and in Italian 'commare', follow similar downward spirals.

Broadsheets denounced women's rattling tongues, associating them with curses and spells. An English print from 1603 — 'Tittle Tattle; or the several branches of Gossiping' — warns of the places where women gather dangerously without supervision, starting 'At the Childbed'. Here, women friends of the new mother arrive to help with the birth. A 1508 prayer book shows the grim Reaper dancing off to the grave with a queen, a duchess, a regent, a knight's lady, an abbess, a market vendor, every social group all the way down to the witch and the fool (Jeay, 95). A portrait of the Wise Woman reads, 'Everyone look at me because I am a wise woman/ A golden padlock I wear on my mouth at all times' (Armstrong, 129). The scold's bridle, a contraption like a dog muzzle, was invented to gag women found guilty of blasphemy. In 1624 a law was passed in England against cursing by which mostly peasant women would be identified as witches in league with the devil by inquisitors, and burnt at the stake.



In this environment, the Devil was believed to speak through the heathen Sibyls. Pierre de Lancre, an inquisitor sent to cleanse the Basque country of witches in 1608, reported sabbath orgies, night-flyings, obscene rites and women's susceptibility to becoming possessed, mentioning 'Fairies, Nymphs, Sibyls, White Ladies...' (de Lancre, 89)

SITTING COMFORTABLY

So they lay forcibly dormant, until emerging enlightenment thinking slowly began to soften opinion. At the end of the seventeenth century, sceptics started doubting the notion that the Devil spoke through the pagan oracles (Warner, 78). The supernatural beings that accompanied him were stripped of their malignant power by the argument that they just didn't exist. Fairyland was reasoned from diabolical threat to nonsense. Nonsense that could develop into a lurid and fantastical strand of entertainment: by no coincidence, the first collections of written folk tales were being produced at this time, significantly Perrault's Mother Goose tales, published in 1697, which brought Sleeping Beauty, Little Red Riding Hood, Blue Beard, Cinderella to a literary audience and invented the fairy tale as a written genre and an area of study.

As historical luck would have it, the Sibyl was poised on her mountain top, ready to leap into a combo role of Fairy Queen and Mother Goose. A collection of stories with the title Queen Mab: containing a selection of Only the Best, most Instructive and Entertaining Tales of the Fairies ends with a ditty: 'This Tale a Sibyl-Nurse a-read / And softly stroak'd my youngling Head, / And, when the Tale was done, / Thus some are Born, my Son (she cries) / With base Impediments to rise, - And some are born with none.' (Queen Mab's Song, 365)

So she became the Sibyl-Nurse, still a wise teller, a purveyor of fortune, an educator, though more domesticated and probably with fewer teeth than her sexy predecessor. In this harmless guise, wrapped in blankets and bundled into a rocking chair, she could be a moral poster girl who legitimised fairy tales filled with violence, sex, extravagance, and fantasy as suitable for the education of children. The morphing character of the Sibyl unites her from any historical column. She is set loose to invent future fictions. But something is retained from the earliest recorded mention of her by Heraclitus in 500BC: 'Sibyl with frenzied lips, uttering words mirthless, unembellished, unperfumed penetrates through a thousand years with her voice' (McGinn, 8)



So, shameless skip from seer to songer
from carved in stone to stereophonics
to set the record straight. And contemplate
the common traits and tricks on radio stations, stay tuned
on the highway from mountain top to spotlight to hell.

A big Hello to:

CHAPTER TWO

DORY PREVIN

LIVING THE FAIRY TALE

Dory Previn plays, in her life and in her lyrics, not only the Devil's Grandmother, but also wife and daughter in a Hollywood-brand Hell of the 60s and 70s. As a radio interviewer once remarked, her life story reads like a fairy tale (BBC kaleidoscope): born in 1925, the eldest daughter of a poor, strict Irish Catholic family with a father who would rage then embrace and held the whole family at gunpoint in a locked attic for a month, she toured as a chorus-line dancer, then one day in a chance encounter with a film producer, got discovered as a lyrical talent, and in a few months had a contract at MGM, and had fallen in love with and married Andre Previn, a glamorous jazz prince (Weber, 23). Together they wrote Oscar winning movie numbers together until one day she discovered he'd been having an affair with the nymph-like Mia Farrow. Dory Previn was hospitalised after a mental breakdown and treated with electroshock-therapy (Ruhlman). When she recovered, she wrote her experience into parables of songs: spitting into the emerging second wave of feminism - tender, angry, cynically didactic tales populated by a cast of mythical kings, iguanas, angels and devils, dwarves, prophetic old men, Jesus, Jesus' baby sister. Songs like Starlet Starlet on the Screen Who Will Follow Norma Jean? expose the lie of the fairy tale that Hollywood sells to women: "And you wait for the phone to ring / In a vine street motel / And you write your folks / That being in the movies is / Really, really swell / Well / If that's anyone's idea of heaven / Who do you have to fuck / To get into hell?" Three different systems of storytelling — the phone, a letter, the movies — mentioned just in this half verse of a song build an impression of the inter-media web of truths and half-truths and lies and fiction that showbiz, or 'hell', is built on. And just like the Devil's Grandmother's, Dory's hell is one in which morality shifts trickily: 'How do you make a virtue of a vice?' (Starlet Starlet) she asks, accusing media moguls and their notorious casting couches of directing a sinful route to the silver screen. She swings between biblical and crude, the catholic daughter, and the chorus line girl. You don't is the silent answer to the rhetorical question; spinning a vice into a virtue is like spinning straw into gold, there's always a catch to this deal: only in exchange for your first born child; in exchange for sex; in exchange for your



soul. Rumpelstiltskin stamps so hard that he falls right through the ground to the flaming centre of the earth and the miller's daughter lives in her palace with her baby and her king happily ever after. Not so for Dory's protagonists: if ever after is considered together with the premise 'Female meat/ Does not improve with time' (Starlet Starlet), it doesn't look so happy.

OBSCENE GOSSIP

Her use of fairy tale imagery and morality does contain a hefty dose of irony, but not just that: arguably, folklore has always functioned at its best when redirected to fight oppressive norms and power structures. It serves the Folk who serve it. There is room for criticism and celebration simultaneously. Whilst you don't want your daughter in a Rock n Roll band, Folk music's OK – it's domestic, personal, safe, a genre that is within female reach for the same reasons as the folk tale is. In Dory's hands, domestic and personal become anything but safe. She explodes 'folk music' from the inside and slurps up controversy like mother's milk. If Joni Mitchell is singer-songwriter's Cinderella then Dory Previn is her ugly stepsister. Folk music need only share a style and a storytelling temperament with actual "traditional" folk songs to be defined as folk music: There is no anxiety about self-consciously authored songs fraudulently tricking their way into the pure oral tradition, as there perhaps is with fairy tales; the genre stretches all the way to pop-idol worship in concert stadiums. But the traditional folk song function of relating news and anecdote (most efficient pre-newspaper method) at least ostensibly, is retained. These songs, then, stand in a global tradition of communication through unofficial channels.

Actually they don't stand in the tradition, they stamp in it: Dory whispers or screams her gossip straight into our ears. In an introduction to a performance of The Obscene Phone Call she confides, "I got a call the other day. The verbal flasher told me off, hung up and there I was stuck with the receiver in my hand. It wasn't the call I minded so much, it was the hang up, after all he'd had his say and I didn't have a chance to answer." It's outrageous that men, because they're men, can be disgusting and irrelevant and still have the last word. Dory Previn is driven to snatching it back, extra-cathartically, in public. In the song, every level of male-led authority – the F.B.I, the C.I.A, the United Nations, dismiss her until eventually she calls GOD, who instead of helping, is 'inclined to find this call of [Dory's] obscene' and then hangs up. This caricatured complaint about complaining is filed: women's voices are continually shut down by establishment powers, supposedly here to serve and protect us, so that, by necessity, we broadcast through our own channels. It is an instance of rehearsed gossip, functioning on an expanded, public scale.

VILLAINS AND VICTIMS

In Did Jesus Have a Sister? she tackles the biggest boy in masculine hero history - Christ Himself. And examines the moral status of men and women in our culturally defining narratives: 'And in private to her mirror/ Did she whisper/ Saviourette?/ Saviouwoman?' Here, just as in Snow White, the mirror equals self-awareness and self-identification. Wicked Stepmother and Jesus' sister, fall on this source of recognition in absence of recognition from the outside world. It denotes vanity in the wicked stepmother, but when Jesus' sister does it, we reverentially pity her. She is a martyr to aborted potential. So to speak. The Heavenly Lord, 'The chief / The man / The show' (Did Jesus) is at best, boastful and attention seeking. Heroes and Villains, then, are replaced with Posers and Victims, a cynic's guide to morality. They may not be as emancipated as the Devil's powerful, heroic Grandmother, but if these female protagonists are not freed from victimhood, at least they get to talk about it.

Gather gandergang and hear! our story goes from gore to glory.
 hurry now it's hot a minute's all I've got to tell you
 Long far ago when feet were webbed and quack meant squawk and
 squeal meant quack and honk made sense
 They came to stuff my neck. Knock knock who's there?
 'The butchers, here to slit your throat and peel its skin and
 simmer in stock and drop in a stew' They said
 'We'll sew up the top then a knot in the bottom will do, the
 stuffing won't get through'
 Stuff you! I said and flicked and flapped and flew
 'Your filling acquires a melting soft texture' they tried to say,
 but I was away and out of the frying pan into the fray.
 The sisters soared and spared no words they ranted and roared and
 clack clack attack with beaks and tiny teeth.
 With a mighty feather and an outstretched wing, with signs and
 wonder,
 with fright and fight, our necks are ours. We live to honk another
 tale

CHAPTER THREE

UNTITLED GOOSE



Untitled Goose Game was hatched when an employee of House House - the Australian video game company - posted a stock photograph of a goose in the company's internal communications (McMaster). This led to a conversation about geese. And what emerged in 2019 was a video game in which it's a lovely morning in the village and you are a horrible goose. So the official strapline goes. Players control a goose on the loose whose objective is to wreak havoc on an idyllic English village through pranks and thievery and vandalism (Untitled Goose Game).

Since the game's release, the goose has become the charmingly and cathartically anarchic hero of an entire genre of internet memes, with several twitter accounts and facebook pages devoted to spreading the honk; an icon of transgression and irreverence for its own sake, the devil-may-care style entertainment that thrives on social media (Fox). It joins the flock of internet birds that in their militant bird-nature, denounce incompetent and/or evil human management of world affairs.



GOOSE-LORE

Keeping in mind the rich goose-loric tradition of oral storytelling, it is curious that they raise their heads now as stubbornly non-verbal bringers of chaos. They have prolific history both as gossiping fools and wise tellers, decidedly female ones: 'Many women, many words; many geese many turds' says an old English proverb (Coates, 31). A French fable from the seventeenth century tells how a husband as a test of his wife's discretion, shouts out in the night that he has laid an egg. She rushes to tell the neighbour and the egg grows four times the size; the neighbour runs on and the egg becomes three eggs and so on until the whole town marvels that he has laid a hundred (La Fontaine, 223). The egg grows just like the lie and the storytelling goose is stupid enough to believe her own story. In the folk tale Chicken Licken, Chicken Licken thinks the sky is falling down when an acorn hits her on the head and finds Goosey Loosey and the other birds who all process together to tell the King that the sky is falling. On the way they meet Foxy Loxy who invites them into his lair and gobbles them up (Stimson). The punishment for gossip here is death. Gullible Jemima Puddle Duck falls for the same trick in Beatrix Potter's children's book from 1908, when a fox offers her lodgings in his house, but luckily she's rescued by a collie dog at the last minute (this story is a reworking of Little Red Riding Hood). The Gabble twins, Amelia and Abigail, in Disney's Aristocats are compacted English goose caricatures, who wear the same hats and capes as Jemima Puddle duck. They are irritatingly bossy and uptight and cannot shut up while they waddle to Paris. Later with their drunken uncle Waldo, they round off the goose archetype by shouting bawdy distasteful jokes, honk honk. Primarily, these geese are ridiculing talkative women. But, there is an alternate goose-identity as bearer of 'hidden foreknowledge both ominous and wonderful' (Warner, 58): in Greek mythology, they are the sacred bird of Neitho the nymph who personifies persuasion. The goose at her side represents her sweet talking tongue. Choose Goose in the cartoon TV series Adventure Time is a merchant of rare objects and insights which he dispenses exclusively in rhyming couplets. Mostly his advice and merchandise backfire or prove to be useless but he retains his swivel-eyed bardic mysticism. In Charlotte's Web, the unnamed goose coaxes Wilbur the pig to speak, so setting the plot in motion (White). She repeats all her words thrice and at speed and suggests that 'TERRIFIC TERRIFIC TERRIFIC' should be woven into the spider web to impress the farmer. It seems appropriate that Oprah Winfrey, big-league talker and gossip chief, voiced her in the 2006 live action version of the film. The Brothers Grimm, provide a truism at the beginning of their tales 'birds converse together on the destinies of men' (Grimm, 672).

So, Mother Goose is a language wielding, prophet-fool hybrid, occupying a fluid moral status not unlike that of the Devil's Grandmother who also is wise but somewhat ridiculous; kind but frightening; domestic but powerful.

Arguably, Untitled Goose Game's inherent humour has to do with the discrepancy between fictional goose representation and what geese are really like: aggressive and jarringly loud with sharp teeth, rather than, talkative, cuddly, hearthsider grannies. House House juxtaposes its non-traditional goose with archetypal English village setting. The domesticity and commonness of this bird, the same features that qualify it for its specific role in story and myth, also mean that its real-life behaviour is recognisable, caricatured in this game to comic effect. Goose propensity for narrative has maybe diminished, but they have found a new medium through which to broadcast the concerns and antics of the people: yesterday's mother goose is today's meme lord.

MEME STAR

Richard Dawkins coined the term meme in his 1976 book *The Selfish Gene* — a unit for carrying cultural ideas, symbols or practises, passed from mind to mind through mimicry in writing, speech, gestures, rituals: the cultural equivalent of biological genes (352). When the word was taken up decades later in its now most familiar usage, referring to viral internet phenomena, Dawkins characterised these kind of memes as deliberately altered by human creativity as opposed to mutating ‘by random change and a form of Darwinian selection’ (Solon). Fairy tales fit snugly within this updated definition. Daniel Dennet describing the implications of memes as ‘the idea of my brain as a sort of dung heap in which the larvae of other people’s ideas renew themselves, before sending out copies of themselves in an informational Diaspora,’ (202) could apply convincingly to the role of fairy tales in the public consciousness. Considering the influence of internet memes in social and political discussion, considering their moral convictions, their entertainment value, their anonymous origins, their continual adaptation, their open accessibility, the unofficial networks through which they are communicated, it seems useful to see them as fulfilling the fairy tale function in the modern day.

There are formal parallels, like framing stories with other stories and memes with other memes: Hans Christian Andersen opens *The Bog King's Daughter*, with the words: ‘The storks know two stories that are very ancient and very long: one of them is the story of Moses. The other is a fairy tale that has been told by stork mothers for a thousand years. The first storks who told it had experienced it themselves’ (278). This use of meta-narrative, in which the telling of the story is itself a story, sends us deeper into the framework of fairy-land: the ancient storks bear witness to the fiction and authenticate it, carrying one more layer of suspended disbelief. In the story of Moses mentioned here, sacred ibises, not storks, are the birds to see the baby prophet in his basket among the bulrushes, picked out of the river Nile by pharaoh’s daughter (not unlike lucky Hans). From goose to stork to ibis, big birds have flexible identities that shift depending on which species is familiar in any given setting. This is true also among birds featured in memes:



Here, the aptly-named Drake performs a compere roll similar to the storks in the Hans Christian Andersen story. The meme page Untitled Leftist Goose narrates and Drake, with heavy-weight meme icon status, endorses the birbs (who cares what kind). Large part of meme and of fairy tale appeal lies in recognisable characters and objects that become relatable in the cultural landscape: They work with a symbolic, self-referential language. And in this stock cast, talking animals, birds in particular, abound. They stand as alternatives to a dominant establishment perspective: oppressed non-human species, who against the odds and laws of reality, are voicing opinions. More broadly, we can look at this as part of fantasy’s liberating function; that it allows us to imagine hierarchies and systems that are different from the existing ones.

HONK

The horrible goose, like many meme stars, delights in riotous entertainment for entertainment's sake, a spirit which has been commandeered in recent times by the alt-right within internet culture. This propensity in memes towards anti-ideology is not expressly right wing or conservative but according to Angela Nagle, evidence for 'the hegemony of the culture of non-conformism, self-expression, transgression and irreverence for its own sake—an aesthetic that suits those who believe in nothing but the liberation of the individual and the id' (37). And with this attitude the horrible goose honks its catchphrase: 'Peace was Never an Option' (*Untitled Goose Game*).

The writer Lawrence Millman said 'Chance is the mother of invention,' on hearing the richness of local folk-stories when in the Arctic. He added 'Invention is also the mother of invention'. A story from Angela Carter's *Virago* collection, flaunting its self-expression and its own inventiveness, makes his point:

So one woman after another straightaway brought forth her child. Soon there was a whole row of them. Then the whole band departed, making a confused noise. When the girl saw that, she said: 'There is no joke about it now. There comes a red army with umbilical cords still hanging on.'(3)

This type of story and goose memes share a mood, ebulliently refusing logic and defying analysis. Take the irreverent nonsense a step further and you get *honking* the universally repurposable expression of aggression, that makes the horrible goose so very memeable:



It is anti-verbal, with the cathartic quality of a scream, beyond criticism or explanation. Its non-specificity makes it applicable to an infinite range of situations. And within the goose game universe the Honk is not impotent and ridiculous as we know it to be in real life, but dangerous and effective:

21 Sep 2019
I got a suggestion to use a turbo button controller for the honk button. I have weaponized this goose.

Through pages like *Untitled Leftist Goose*, the Goose retaliates against the far-right trolls who rampage through the internet. It has been adopted as a symbol of anti-capitalist resistance. This makes sense considering the aim of the game is to disturb the workings of a smug, upper-class, presumably conservative,

presumably non-progressive, village, rather than just causing indiscriminate chaos. Tactical disruption of a capitalist system by a marginal figure certainly sounds like political action. This extends intuitively, free from analytic process, in different directions:

A small duck is walking across a paved sidewalk at night. Several people are standing nearby, some holding cameras. The scene is lit by streetlights, creating shadows on the ground.

Brazil president Jair Bolsonaro shows a box of hydroxychloroquine pills — which he's advertised as a cure for Covid-19 symptoms, despite evidence to the contrary — to emu-like birds in Brasilia. He's recently bitten by an emu-like bird. Twice.



That memes are so integrated into communication and socialising – conversations can be held through pure meme exchange, and often a meme replaces a comment as a concise illustration of what needs to be expressed – makes them important gossip components. As demonstrated in the two news-commentary-joke combos above. Spread on global social networks, instead of round the kitchen table, gossip is exponentialised. Meaning that non-establishment politics have more clout and more consequences on the offices of power than ever before, as we have seen terrifyingly with the rise of populism in Europe and America. Even if Trump's election shouldn't be entirely accredited to memes and internet trolling, their power, whether imaginary or not, is clearly huge – the hype is real.

What does it mean for this non-verbal, non-narrative form to be the new fairytale? Where fairytales are garrulous and spun out, designed to extract as much entertainment from a story as possible in the days before TV existed, memes are ultimately boiled down, to squeeze a message into a half-second between constantly competing stimuli. With thrust and concision comes simplification. In times when politicians/devils like Boris Johnson and Donald Trump cultivate a simple idiot image to gain popularity, with the pretense of being anti-establishment, a rising prominence of dumb, anti-linguistic expression becomes a scary prospect. Should we be alarmed that honking has replaced storytelling?

Angela Carter offers her collection of fairy tales 'in a valedictory spirit, as a reminder of how wise, clever, perceptive, occasionally lyrical, eccentric, sometimes downright crazy our great grandmothers were, and their great grandmothers; and of the contributions to literature of mother goose and her goslings' (9)

This document also should be a reminder and a tribute though not a valediction: The Devil's Grandmother doesn't bid us farewell because she's seen enough heroes and villains come and go from her cave looking for hairs or for secrets or for the truth, to know that we will keep coming and going. She's not alarmed: her professional security is covered. She looks on omnisciently and smiles at our quest. We don't know yet whether her grin is wicked or benign. She lives off telling and retelling, on a diet of narrative artifacts, like this one. She's no snob: she'll gobble up fact and fiction, high and low, reliable and dubious; as long as the source has flavour, she doesn't care who cooked it. This egalitarian attitude, the bottom-up nature of fairy tale telling, is disruptive to hierarchies. According to Phaedrus the Roman Fabulist who first wrote down Aesop's Tales, it is with conscious intention that they determinedly and repeatedly cheer on the underdog. It is built into their original function:

Now I will briefly explain how the type of thing called fable was invented. The slave being liable to punishment for any offence, since he dared not say out-right what he wished to say, projected his personal sentiments into fables, and eluded censure under the guise of jesting with made up stories. (Phaedrus, 245)

Sibyl, Dory, and the Goose agree. They are aware of their own storytelling purpose, taking a voice from their position as a teller: they don't just tell, they tell about telling. And not just about their own telling but about the narrative layer underneath, and the one under that, and the one under that, until eventually you reach the underworld where the Devil's Grandmother sits in her cave, the roof trembling under the weight of all those stories but somehow never falling in.

Susan Shapiro, the American author, takes up the self-conscious excavation effort with great enthusiasm and great unsubtlety – she's using a shovel not a brush – in her 1978 film, Rapunzel Let Down Your Hair. My mum, playing her part in the intergenerational story relay, told me about it on Whatsapp: 'Hey. Do you know a film by Susan Shapiro called rapunzel let down your hair - an imaginative experimental and playful look at myth storytelling and female identity. Sounds like your kind of territory. I watched it. V fascinating and odd and massively strong interesting flavour of 1978 and simple simple animation and all the anxieties and aspirations and optimism of then..'

In the film, a mother reads her daughter the story of Rapunzel, accompanied by cut out animations. It is then retold five times, each version reinterpreting and recontextualising the relationships - from the prince as voyeuristic film noir detective trying to rescue a heroin addicted sex slave Rapunzel from the top of a tower block, to the witch as a feminist doctor specialising in contraception, shocked when her teenage daughter reveals that she is pregnant and intends to keep the baby, to Rapunzel as a struggling single mother of twins, liberated when she 'lets her hair down' at an all women's party, unleashing her voice, backed by a mullet headed funk band. An essay about medieval witch hunts and the role of witches in the collective imagination today is spliced into the middle of the film. It is unapologetically clunky and explicit in laying bare the workings of the fairy tale, its symbols, its past and future lives. By watching it, you are made part of the tale relay.

To end a story, Russian narrators tell their audience: 'The tale is over. I can't lie any more' (Carter, 8). With the verbal equivalent of a wink, they acknowledge the fiction of fiction, and so legitimise it: There's no pretence going on here, officer. When we hear 'once upon a time', or any of its variants – like the emphatically enigmatic Armenian version 'There was a time and no time', or the teasey 'There was and there was not, there was a boy' – we know that what we are being told isn't going to pretend to be true. We listen with awareness that asks us to appreciate the invention, and maybe we think about it, and maybe we act on it. These stories not only comprise our subconscious cultural terrain — they alter conscious opinions, they change minds.

The thirst for what happened next? is unquenchable. Fairy tales, the narratives without originators that can be remade by each person who tells them, whether they tell about local gossip, or about international affairs, or about a sausage keeping house with a cat, whether carved on a stone tablet or blasted on a car radio, or posted on facebook will be recycled and redistributed to infinity. This is my story, I've told it and in your hands I leave it.

We took the ferry down to hell to ask the Devil's Grandmother how to build an alternative non-establishment framework from stories. She leaned close so we could feel her fiendish breath on our cheek and hear her morally ambiguous heart beating, and she told us to try it and see for ourselves.

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| EMAILS EXCHANGED BETWEEN L.Et AND S.O.W FROM
| 28/01/2020 11:15 TO 22/03/2021 17:54 WITH THE SUBJECT LINE:
FISHY RHYMES

Lucien A Easton <easton.lucien@gmail.com>

Tue 28/01/2020 11:15

Oh do come in sister
I have so oh been oh
waiting for you
Ooh doo ooh doo brother,
ooh doo ooh doo ooh doo
Well sister it is so, how'd do
you doo
I dooeth do good dear
brother, I dooeth I do
You Soweth do do dear
sister, you do you do you do
I so dear do dear you, I do I
doo I do

shifra osorio whewell <shifra.whewell@hotmail.co.uk>

Thu 30/01/2020 09:17

But I bit you dear, I did
I bit and bid you bye bye
dear
I won't and shan't and can't
come in
By god, I've got just what
I came for
Came to bite you
I've right to smite you
right?

I bit you dear oh dear oh dear
oh drat

shifra osorio whewell
Thu 06/02/2020 09:10

Squire, I require
response
don't retreat
I entreat
you
to
tell what you've got to say
talk to me any day
take what you want and
leave
if you please
squeeze,
out of the door,
Doei

Lucien A Easton
Thu 06/02/2020 13:36

Across from me today
there stood a lion
She was discussing all the
far cries of goons
I watched her as she spoke
about their manners and
felt moved
There was a tone in her
voice that made me turn
my eyes to the moon
And a softness of her fur
coated around my pores
She spoke of Wilsom, Barthold Sherlack - Janice and

some more
I hope I sound like that if i
was spread out on all fours

S O W
Thu 06/02/2020 18:40

Let's get to the root of the
matter:
What shampoos does she
use
To get her through
those
Dank Dutch winters?
They don't sell proud growl
in bottles
But bucket hats just don't
suit big cats

L E
Tue 18/02/2020 10:53

[Read in a Scottish accent]
Hurdles of cream and an
ache in my noose
A fluctuating stomach and
some geese
Cheddar with pickles upsets
the mostest
Hunches for salmon with
lactoses loose
Scrappy young chaps with
foam from their gobs
Moveable objects lust
lingering thoughts
Of the not so well waitress
or hostess I'm sorry

Serving pickled cream
salmons for dung rating
mummies
Pointy old men with motions
of reluctance
Frail chick lickings hung
effortlessly ruptous
Muddy dinners now seem
silly to most
Age frail belongings waste
prosperous cause

SOW

Tue 18/02/2020 13:11

In the night Lucien came for
breakfast
And summoned an army, a
bacon and egg feast
They quivered and creaked
and cracked before
they ran out of their shells
and opened the door
I shouted: 'Stop them before
the yolks break!'
lucien just said 'the bacon's
awake'
they stood in their ranks,
strict rows of rashers
The crispies called out the
orders for marches
'One and two and three and
funf'
His german accent was a
little bit goof
Up to the bedroom, the

breakfast went raced
dangerous thugs can have
excellent taste

L E
Wed 26/02/2020 15:42

Humbled by your response
I hurdled at the nearest
fruitcake. Out from me
leaked a smearing machine
of foul smelling liquid.
Disgusted, but only slightly,
at my own creation I began
to smile. I haven't smiled
like this in years and my
cheeks instantly reminded
me why.

My permanent neck brace
that I have been wearing for
the past seven months has
strained my neck and has
oppressively limited my
neck's reach.

Every night I look at the
moon and think of a deer
It stares so softly at me
With pulsating eye lids and
a whispering melody that
goes
Oodi ooo oodi ooo poochy
pooch poochy loots loopy
lots spoosy motts oodi ooo
oodi ooo

S O W
Mon 02/03/2020 23:51

Strongly, we advise against,
grazing while gazing
That gives you indigestion,
kid

And not the nice kind, no,
The kind that's not so kind
that gnaws.

No grinning while queueing
For you, at Saint Bowel's
fix-me-please-clinic.

Weekly, we'll admit,
on Monday night

Alright, Your moon she
shines quite bright, but still
It's better still

To stay still stick around until
Barthold Sherlack rears his
dirty head

Out from those dusty craters
to fix you with his greasy
great eyes

NOW that's what we call
bright:

Bathe in Barthold's batter
And intestinal tracts won't
matter

L E

Tue 03/03/2020 11:35

Matter they might nor
mutter they must,
Par mattering must matter
as they've mattered for lust.
But the bathing in batter, for
intestinal treating

Can lead to an underworld
of thief-tricks and
deceiving.
So stray away - keep your
distance,
No eye contact or lowkey
looking,
Even though the inklings
persist,
The desire burns strong,
You MUST resist the will,
and simply sludge on.
And as you wobble on with
your murky belongings,
Think of Bartholomew, your
affluent cousin,
Who gazed all his life and
grinned even more.
That spent aunties money
on those things you abhor,
From peaches to cellos,
soap and big signs,
You look up at the moon to
try and follow a light

SOW
Fri 06/03/2020 15:46

This mutter
Doesn't cut the mustard
Cut the chat
Shut it or I bust you buster
Moons and Junes and
ferris...
piss off
peaches..
jesus..

That's ok for Joni
phony bla bla poncy
I'm fed up
Sick to the teeth
packed to the gills
Last straw
Driving round the bend
This is the end
Let's get echt:
Leave the key at 42 Copbite
avenue
Wed 11th march
Keep cousin Bart amused
Keep up
Don't keep witnesses
Don't eat too much garlic
beforehand

L E
Sat 14/03/2020 02:07

Now welcome to the party
I've brought two friends who
bring jolly
At the back of the flat there
are two posters doing molly
Taking stuff to get hoppy,
hippily getting sticky with it
Equally feeling themselves
in it
Tough won't get you further
to it
But breaking backs brings
the liquor
The gel in your hair makes
you fitter
And your expenses only get

thicker
As you take off your mittens
you brush up with kittens
and the crowd looks at you
belittled,
While you move to the sink
for a filter
To poke through the musher
you accidentally push her
Then the sirens start
ringing and then came the
humming
As your belly was bubbling
then in walked a cousin
A friendly face with a stunk
garlic embrace
You covered your face to
hide what then overcame
you

S O W
Tue 02/06/2020 13:12

Charm by the binfull
'Continue? Please. We'll
not stop not yet not never
whether or not
you what?'
Surn burn suits some more
than
They said sweat is wet.
But I don't buy it.
Stop blushing.
In conclusion: I'm colluding,
clear?
Hold this for a sec while I
look

for whatever ever it is that
everyone's always looking
for. Before
they empty the bins.
With Pleasure.

L E

Sun 07/06/2020 15:53

I do i do i do - i dont
i guess it's easier
simplifying things
busy by the minute mum
says,
and scavenging by the
charm,
i felt busted by myself
alone and delusional,
but the beauty is to win
i guess i guess
i guessed
it just happened like that

S O W

Tue 09/06/2020 12:32

Who done it.
Which one of you sad stinking little kabouters pressed
the fucking button. Forgotten?
Everyone always does.
just happened ha
no justice in just
Just blame blame shame
no pain no gain. No game
No knowing how to play.
Here's the rules:
Look at your feet and count

your toes to make sure
you've got ten, again and
again and again.
And check that scab
Not really ripe but nearly
You blink you lose you
cough you lose
You catch my eye you lose
You're on holiday?
Crap excuse.

L E
Wed 10/06/2020 10:13

But excuses are for the
poorly
that's at least how i was
raised,
not to bother too much
about the do's and don'ts,
nor the elbow grease that
follows with loose joints
or the shriveling lion whose
growls' been bottled -
I guess there is pleasure in
pause -
In artichoke juice covered
grill bits
And imported chores,
I assume that we both
agreed to it
A game of some sort,
A, ah – ah maybe it'd be
better if you spoke for yous
I don't want to throttle or
be'zoo you,
But I just called to tell you I

do ,I do, I do

SOW

Mon 15/06/2020 16:23

Could you get the wire
cutters on your way out,
Got handcuffed to the alter
again.

No, take me off speaker, she
won't find it funny.

Not after the thing with the
bathroom lamp.

Christ, I stank

But baby was it worth it

Big hit

Hot, not just with the creeps.

Hang up when you smell
burning plastic

L E

Fri 19/06/2020 13:43

Or when that fat fur ball
gurgles her gossip

Or if you corner the turn and
unfolded his pocket

Like the presbyterian
hooded robin

Whispering chants to the
smell of petrol

I did,

Last weeks'Wednesday,
we all did

Everyone was there

SOW

Fri 26/06/2020 18:27

Deep Fried goes the chant
And so we lowered him in.
Hair first, part by part
To start you pour your gin
And ask what's floating in
the bottle.
Just a lotta you don't want to
know
easy now enjoy the show.
Preceding a receding
hairline residing on a
forehead big enough for
four,
comes a pair
of brows.
Smooth, content
nothing about them says
consume by today

LE

Mon 06/07/2020 19:10

Nothing about them says
anything really
Not it
Not the shape
Not even the bald one
The lightbulbs flickered
Two teacups began jittering
Then turning
Then spinning
Two greasy pillows
Those appelbottoms
Too many lefts and rights

Those jeans
Mushy moose napkins
And still no utter

S O W
Sun 19/07/2020 13:59

Waiter on the bar in the
back
feet with the fur
The prawn cocktail going
everywhur
Open the door
next thing you know

L E
Wed 05/08/2020 08:46

A red label, left hanging off
her coat
a tabloid of bucket hatted
cats
Barty's burnt toast
it seemed so conniving, too
crisp and too flaw
that all their taunting
slipped off
and out for more

S O W
Fri 18/09/2020 13:56

Too loose, too tuneless too,
these taunts train toddlers
to teens
between the bus stop and
the driver's seat.

Tick tock, tough and tufty
don't do softy
only if it's mister whippy,
only in a cone.
If I had a ice cream van I'd
play t pain to you.
and strauss.

L E

Thu 24/09/2020 17:52

And recite wannabe lines
like,
Tango my darling or tuft me
a carpet,
Whimper my sweetheart or I
buy fish from the market.
But the tuneless tune keeps
playing
And the car never stopped,
The waiters kept waiting
and wept from each cough.
The jelly like pudding
everyone was looking at
her,
They ongoingly booked him,
Strange sounds from the
hearse

S O W

Thu 01/10/2020 12:37

right to remain silent,
sly and
ride the route to the station.
stay sctum.
it wasn't me, believe me

please, I promise, honest,
I was whipping cream.
but you were seen at the
scene, seize him boys, he
sneezed.

L E

Thu 01/10/2020 20:32

He let out his goo
The greeny brûle.
The carpet hurt his feet,
his toes, his bones, his
scallywags and hissy cough
Loud echoes down the
corridor and he waddled to
and fro within his box,
Carving lines through the
pastel to aloft his thawts -
wiggling waywardly, shun
from the lot

S O W

Tue 06/10/2020 22:02

Allergy information:

May contain contamination.

Carpets.

Pets.

Dust lego toenail. Don't
inhale.

Hell.

Keep out of reach of
fleas, princes, mice, men,
beaters, burners, hoovers.

Keep rich Keep out

Outreach

Outlook voor iOS
downloaden

L E

Sun 01/11/2020 21:55

But the attic dust,
The goat oven,
The acidity and the lard
Also the slugs on my balcony
Climbing to the second floors
Funny that,
that that looks and lingers.

S O W

Mon 16/11/2020 09:46

I preheat to two hundred
gas mark three and combi
grill until
slug stops by to pass the
time of day
and moan about his wife
and try to play
jenga. But the stack won't
stick
and slithering up is cheating
so I flick quick as a flash
my lump friend into the
heatproof dish where he
drips and dries.

L E

Mon 16/11/2020 23:11

And oozes from his side as
I bend to watch him guzzle
from below
Heat from the oven tickles
my cheeks and makes the

hair on my neck glow.
Blushed by the grill set,
kinked from the quickness
The mushy slug mess, gets
served round in cold curved
bowls.

S O W

Sun 27/12/2020 11:28
with fists clutching spoons,
we frown, clench, and croon.
christmas (hiss) was
not cancelled, or sold, like
they told us.
we sucked on its old old old
old mouldy juices.
eight pints of fat came out
off our goose. says
she doesn't like feasts when
they cause her to melt,
feathered pelt goes to
plucked pink then crisp
in the arms of the butcher,
the mouth of the king and
the builder and botcher.

L E

Thu 14/01/2021 23:34

She swallowed, I mooseyou, as she clung onto the
pole, he dribbled in fruit
juice and weathered out in
the snow.
I moosed have just
moosed-you, and now
I'm left all alone, I dun
even have koosed you, or
loosened your toes.

We happen to be sweet,
and so sweet to just be, but
sweeter than you my sweet,
will sweet never be.
Now the juice so stiff frozen
and much more were his
toes, he looked for the pole
there, but was shadowed
with nopes.

L E
Thu 04/02/2021 10:47

Yet she clutched her
spoons, dabbled proud
growled scum in her hair,
Drew an extension to her
hairline and once again
bathed with Barthold.
They left each other
wanting, - their feast had
now finished,
The fried chant, a charmed
bin and pedestaling the
ooo's.
Visitors left, dishes were
wept while the tuneless
tune kept playing,
And the dirtied dining table
spoke of more.

S O W
Thu 04/02/2021 22:08

: i've seen greasy
underneathes of countless
cutlery, crockery, cups

the spit in the pot and the
hairs in the jam and the dirt
in the nails of the wife of
the reverend's son.

and. I've seen his feet in
baggy socks so clumsy so
horny so big,
crawl up the ankle of Collin
Leer, the cautious lick, the
trouser leg, the bit lips and
tight strips and thumb.

I've seen rats, I've seen
babies, seen brewing and
broing and braying and
robing and probing.

So. Drink and dine but think
in time before you spill the
Milk me if you can.

LE

Thu 18/02/2021 19:13

I'm lactose intolerant and
tend to sway saggingly
nowhere,

At moments it happens
they say journeys begin
from here.

I saw the helps and yelps
and swindled cocoons from
Sniozorian slumber parties
to transparent balloons.

But with little attention,
minute moon-drawings and
repetitive news, I heard
you got a new jumper, how
lovely, so soon.

Though the sleeves look
worn, second hand I'll
assume, and the fit might
not be just the right one for
you.

SOW
Fri 26/02/2021 14:43

your head's in the wrong
hole, psycho boy
I dread the stretching I
won't enjoy
the sight of your mouth as it
pokes through the sleeve
leaving drips of saliva, I'm
down on my knees
begging please leave the
knitwear to be what it be.
Let the stitches stay strict,
change is straining I'm done
don't wanna be a different
man.

L E
Fri 26/02/2021 19:03

Well knee for me, or I'll be
keen to be, before the heat
meets my teeth and silky
liquid recedes.
Your yogis young capital,
money power and influence
You started controlling the
absence and grew a sixth
sense.
With passion comes fruit,

we harvest melons too
soon, tonight was so blue,
my friend is a moon.

SOW
Sat 13/03/2021 12:51

My baby of beams, he spins
my bluest dreams
he shows your shame face
bright: you didn't write.
To me, tomorrow, you
promise.
Right under the beam baby,
scheme baby, bust your
hottest blush and feel bad
and pull your hoodie on your
head.
You were my world, your
word was worth my will, I
willed my wealth to fill the
hole my soul had left.

LE
Mon 22/03/2021 17:54

We spoke in tongues, held
mouths with words, stuck
sticky post it notes, and
burnt our toasts. Slipped
secret messages, with our
shaved calf's like we'd
rehearsed.
You rocked my boat and I
sunk the ship, we skipped
stones by Cornish coasts
and cuddled ourselves

senseless.

There's a mark, there's a
sign, it's the emptiness you
left behind, my blue sheets
feel lonely tonight and I
killed two silverfish in dim lit
bathroom light.

SOW

Thu 01/04/2021 15:38

Hiding in the pipe, the
plumber hummed, he tutted,
he waited.

And waited and wrote a note
to his lover: 'My dear, I'm
here, I'm waiting.'

Water is wet, who knows
where the time goes, why
can't silverfish learn to swim
Don't forget, don't breathe
through your nose, a
plumber's promise is a
goodly thing.

LE

Wed 07/04/2021 21:52

But hayfevered dribbles
created mountainous pools,
of mucus n muck more envy
more fools.

I looked on as he worked,
he waited, I drooled, still lost
for words I anxiously stood.
Still by the stove, as he
puttered along, I could hear

his thoughts, I hummed to
his song.
with knees peeping from
under the sink, pink purple
flowered patterns poking
thin seams.

SOW
Fri 30/04/2021 18:21

No, don't get married yet,
no regret for lavender
fumes and driving screws
and boom boys with
secrets to say.
Go astray with gmail
princes and waitress's
winks, if offered coffee,
stay.
Do away with shy 'heyhey'
tap into tinder trauma play

LE
Sat 01/05/2021 21:16

Or another evening parlay,
I quoteth not you but my
heart's dismay for taboo
stricken evenings is not my
shantay,
But do stay, for a drink or
a nibble oh no oh you go?
One long awkward hug,
now my belly is sore.

SOW
Tue 08/06/2021 21:56

Tuesday's a trick day, to tick
tock the true way -
trip over the tear in your
shoe, stay tuned, stay
here, hear this: haha!
hahahahahahahaha!
who's laughing now? asking
how to spit spells in your
tea and spell Time with no T
I'm a slave to the wekker,
tied close on a tether
sit tight, grit your teeth
trick your tuesday, greet the
geese

LE

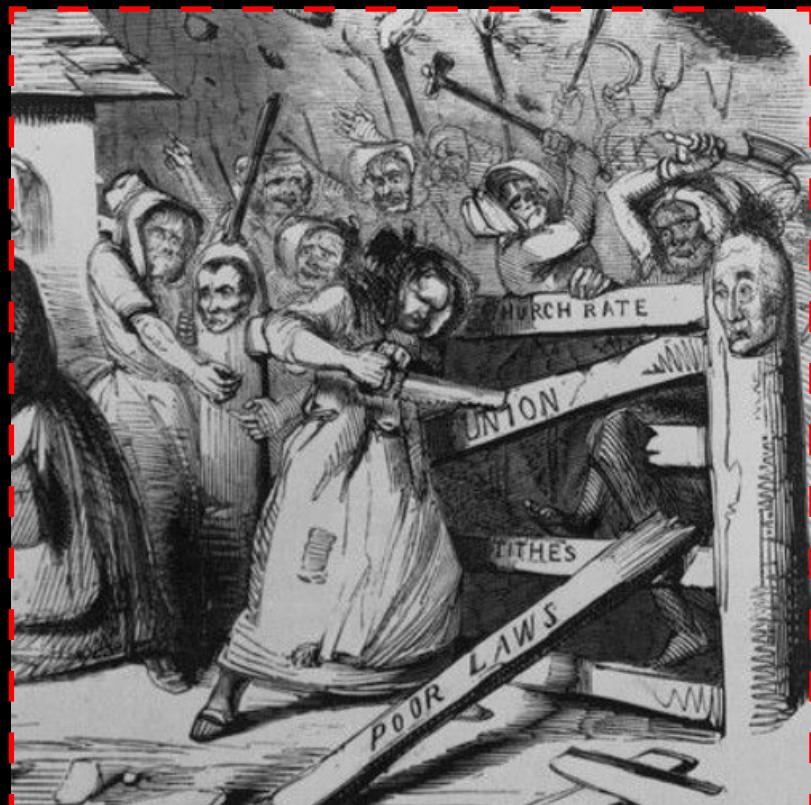
Wed 09/06/2021 11:36

You said, casino royale,
Greek meatballs no thyme,
move on it's alright, poor
mans curry, no lime.
Regret? I feel fine, I
motioned the driver turn
right, we sped through the
night, bent curves, fog fight.
I can't really feel this
sense of time, from weeks
to months with patience
comes time, expecting -
I left out the thyme in my
moussaka tonight.

{ rebecca & her daughters }

* Genesis 24:60 - 'And they blessed Rebecca and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them.'

It is July 13th 1843 and mobs of farmers and their workers in rural wales, dressed as the biblical figure of Rebecca, are making their way to the toll gates in protest of toll tyranny.



The developments leading up to this remarkable event?

The late 1830s sees the agricultural communities of west Wales plunged into dire poverty: The whole country has suffered from poor harvests and atrocious seasons of rain have forced farmers to buy corn at famine prices to feed themselves, their animals and their families. Grain harvests have collapsed, cattle prices slumped.

Farmers are faced with a drastic reduction in their income. While rents, tithes, poor rates and crucially turnpike tolls rise higher and higher.

Until recent years, toll-gates on the public roads were operated and maintained by trusts, but a wave of corrupt, anglicized, land owning, toll renters have begun to charge extortionate tolls and divert the money to their own uses.

At the Mermaid tavern, on the outskirts of the town of Llanelli, Thomas Bullin, notorious for his cruel and exacting methods of collection, is raising another gate.



THE SONG OF THE TOLLGATE BUILDERS: RINGER, TICKER, BOUNCER, STAMPER & SWINGER:

Blast and Fire
Heave Ho
Raise it high
Fire and Blast

Haul the wall to the hole
hard hats on, hold your breath
Then say your prayers and pray the stairs won't fall.
We got it all:

Mortar Steel Capped Boots Cement Cranes Mugs pneumatic drills
We're hard and heavy and content we spit for thrills We build

Blast and Fire
Heave Ho
Raise it high
Fire and Blast

Lift my brick my brother, brush my dust away
Lay it down to rest and trust the cold red clay
Pile it heaven high to hold the critters keep the creepers in
Build my toll booth brother be it bold boned brass backed big bellied thing

Blast and Fire
Heave Ho
Raise it high
Fire and Blast

THOMAS BULLIN:
Who done it.
Which one of you sad stinking little kabouters pressed the fucking button.
Forgotten?

Everyone always does.
just happened ha
no justice in just
Just blame blame shame
no pain no gain. No game
No knowing how to play.

Here's the rules:

Look at your feet and count your toes to make sure you've got ten,
again and again and again.

And check that scab
Not really ripe but nearly
You blink you lose you cough you lose
You catch my eye you lose
You're on holiday?
Crap excuse.

THE BUILDERS:

Blast and Fire
Heave Ho
Raise it high
Fire and Blast

RINGER ON THE PHONE:

Could you get the wire cutters on your way out,
Got handcuffed to the alter again.
No, take me off speaker, she won't find it funny.
Not after the thing with the bathroom lamp.
Christ, I stank
But baby was it worth it
Big hit
Hot, not just with the creeps
Hang up when you smell burning plastic

Haul the wall to the hole
hard hats on, hold your breath
Then say your prayers and pray the stairs won't fall.
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We're hard and heavy and content we spit for thrills We build

Blast and Fire
Heave Ho
Raise it high
Fire and Blast

In an extraordinary twist of historical acrobatics and biblical recollection, the enraged farmers have taken on the name of Rebecca, in reference to the book of genesis 24.60 where Rebecca is told by her family '**let thy seed posses the gate of those who hate them**' These farmers rise up to fulfill the blessing: to take back the gate of their enemies.

Threatening letters addressed to the tollgate renters and signed 'Becca and her Children' have appeared around the village:

Take Notice

I wish to give you notice especial to those which has sworn to be constable in order to graspe Becca and her children but I can assure you that it will be to hard matter for Bowlin and some to finish the job that they began and that is to keep up the gate at Slavingel and wine each part. You take this few lines as information for you to mind yourselves, you that had any connection with Bowlin Mr. McGay, Mr. Thomas Blue Boar, all thine property in one night shall be in conflagration if they will not obey to this notice. and that to send them vagabonds away as you are favourable to, I alway like to be plain in most so much on the country only fishing river labours and farmers pockets, and you depend that all the Gates that are on these small roads shall be destroyed, I am willing for the gates on the Queen Road to stand it is shamefull thing for us welchmen to have the one of them against have a dominion over us, do you not remember the long knives which Hengust hath invented to kill our fore fathers and you may depend to you shall receive the same, if you will not give up, when I shall give you a visit and that shall be in a short time and now I would give an order to leave the place before I will come, for I do determine that I will have my way all through these As for the constable and the police man, Becca her children needs no more of them than the Grap-hoppers which fly in the summer there are others which are mixed with Becca, but they shall not be named now but in case they will not obey to this notice she shall call about them in a short time.

Town Marwith
Dec, 16 1842

Faithful to death
with the county
Becca & children

TRANSCRIPT (EXTRACTS):

Take Notice

I wish to give you notice especial to those which has sworn to be constable in order to graspe Becca and her children

[...]

all thine property in one night shall be in conflagration if they will not obey to this notice. And that to send them vagabons away wich you are favourable to. I alway like to be plain in all my engagement – is it a reasonable thing that they impose so must on the country only picking poor labours and farmers pockets, and you depend that all the Gates that are on these small roads shall be destroyed.

[.]

it is a shamefull thing for us welchmen to have the sons of Henegust have a dominion over us. Do you not remember the long knives which Henegust hath invented to kill our fore fathers and you may depend that you shall recieve the same, if you will not give up, when I shall give you a visit
As for the constable and the policemen, Becca her children heeds no more of them than the Grass-hopers which fly in the summer

Faithfull to Death
with the county
Becca & children

SONG OF THE TOLLGATE:



Drop your Coins in the bin
Quids in the bin
Cash cold cash hard money in my mouth.

That's two pounds, three shillings sixpence, thank you and good day.
Roll on you auto cruise boy bruiser air con on be on your way
Rise up my barrier, bar no more and let those people pass
My out-stretched arm red-striped arm strong straight make the pockets pay

Give me grimey tyres give me gear sticks give me rear mirrors let me wear your clutch
Give me petrol stenches leather benches breaks on baby oiled your tank too much
Give me fumes hot fumes fill my lungs with smoke
Smack the dials on the dash, drive your miles down the beaten track

Till u reach me, tractor then you stop.
Drop your Coins in the bin
Quids in the bin
Cash cold cash hard money in my mouth.

I drink your metal down I sip it clicks it slips to stomach bit by bit
You tell me open up I tell you buckle down you say your seatbelt doesn't fit
My lights flash green I'm keen to rise
you rev your motor mean
you size me up and with a roar
you skid right through my waiting open jaw

Give me grimey tyres give me gear sticks give me rear mirrors let me wear your clutch
Give me petrol stenches leather benches breaks on baby oiled your tank too much
Give me fumes hot fumes fill my lungs with smoke
Smack the dials on the dash, drive your miles down the beaten track

Till u touch me, tractor then you stop.
Drop your Coins in the bin
Quids in the bin
Cash cold cash hard money in my mouth.

Copy,

parabunda castle decr 16 1863

Sir, I am given to understand that you are habit
of receiving your Rents from your Tenants at Llanelli
and the neighbourhood and giving them dirty pint
or a quart of Beeor in the shape of present, it is
very improper for you to do as a Gentleman but
now in future do not degrade yourself in that
manner and if you do my ould Mother Rebecca
will come and pay you a visit in the course of
this Spring your caretter is so degraded you
should do something more hansom for to gain
your caretter to its former state and if do not
you will draw the indignant spirit of my old
Mother Becca to save degradations behave
yourself as a Man you have acted as a traitor
to the working men of the Nighbourhood now
Mr Chambers for god sake do not force me to
work I am one of the Daughters
of Rebecca

TRANSCRIPT:

Sir,

I am given to understand that you are habit of receiving your Rents from your Tenants at Llanelli
and neighbourhood and giving them dirty pint or a quart of Beeor in the shape of present, it is
very improper for you to do as a Gentleman but now in future do not degrade yourself in that manner
and if you do my ould Mother Rebecca will come and pay you a visit in the course of this Spring your
Caretter is so degraded you should do something more hansom for to gain your caretter to its former
state and if do not you will draw the indignant spirit of my old Mother Becca to save degradations
behave yourself as a Man you have acted as a traitor to the working men of the Nighbourhood now Mr.

Chambers for god sake do not force me to work I am one of the Daughters of Rebecca.

PREPARATION SONG:

tear it off and try it on again and turn it outside in.

We know our bows and beads and bangles

hanging fringe that sweetly dangles

Scintillating Stitches in your britches, these things swing and sin

let out your hem

Let us top them

and let my people go

Adorn your arms with twinkles tease us with your tresses shake the locks

Stroke your stubble to submission

Stripping Stockings, we're washing and wishing

For garms that charm and fit like a glove and gliding gilded socks.

Let out your hem

Let us top them

And let my people go

We'll wipe the simpers off our faces replace them with a grimace grin

Then we'll twist our eyebrows downward

Bust our foreheads open, frown hard

Bring our back teeth to the front to bite to hunt to burn

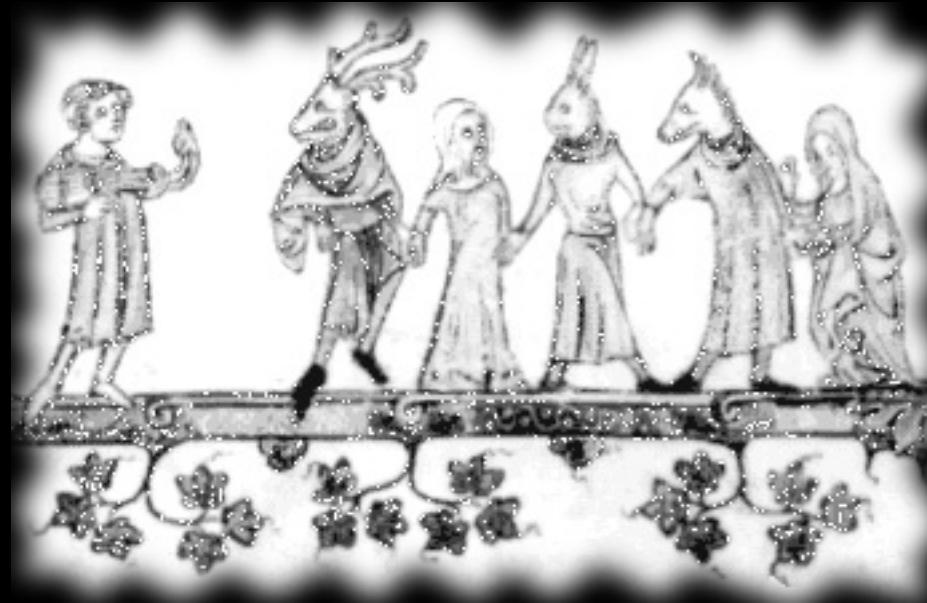
Let out your hem

Let us top them

And let my people go

Twm Carnabwth, notorious for his participation in Ceffyl Pren (wooden horse), the Welsh mob justice tradition in which offenders are paraded around the village on a wooden frame and put to mock trial, leads the attacks.

RIOT SONG:



Be thou the mother of thousands of millions
and thrills multi, spills mighty
Sister thou art, let thy seed take the gate, take of those who do hate them.
Wait, what is it mother, that stands in your way,
that stays locked bolted? leap-vault it that's what we say.
Break your ranks, bring your rakes and your axes and tractors and skirts.

We tried to open, hoped to go on,
hoped to hop over, slide under, slick
But it wouldn't move we couldn't cart our crops our lyme our stuff
So we'll break it down with punches claws poor laws are not enough
To keep us still, we'll bonnet up and battle out and shout about and bray.
Tap here, knock there,
crack slap bang tickle tock tear it down
And lift the toll man through the town
To taunt his greedy guts or chuck an egg.

Catch him!Snatch him!Hold him!Scold him!Pounce him!Trounce him! Pick him up and bounce him!

Be thou the mother of thousands of millions
and thrills multi, spills mighty
Sister thou art, let thy seed take the gate, take of those who do hate them.

Grip the whip ride kick your spurs
Horse Wooden Horse
Hold him up high flay his hairs
Horse wooden horse
tax our tractors, pay the price
Horse wooden horse

Wooden Horse goes the chant
And so we lowered him in.
Hair first, part by part
To start you pour your gin
And ask what's floating in the bottle.
Just a lotta you don't want to know
easy now enjoy the show.

Preceding a receding hairline residing on a forehead big enough for four,
comes a pair of brows.
Twisted, cruel
consume by today

Too loose, too tuneless too,
these taunts train toddlers to teens
between the tollgate and the driver's seat.
Tick tock, tough and tufty don't do softy
Only farmers left alive, only drivers dream

Threshing season, thresh your soul we'll plough you under fields and scream