

STREET CAKE

experimental writing magazine

issue 77

part 2



@pauline mccarthy

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high hi *

a laugh ~~will~~ echo(es)
 between knotted hands
 close against my heart

dangling from a spike-studded belt &
 erased— ~~but~~ a stronger absence than death

fertile hunger ~~will~~ consume(s)
 ghosts of all my lovely sins
 heavy as a lecher's kiss

I am so distant from the hope of myself

 joy has gone the way it came
 keeping ~~itself~~ it seems in a state of miraculous repair
 like moonlight dissolved in fog

maybe the fire in my lashes is a reflection
 no lame excuses can gloss over (as)
 one pauses ~~long~~ before
 pictures pass in long review

quiet breathable atmosphere—
 rehearse your list of loves to me
 slow mute explosion(s)
 time's brittle drift

upward, upward through my heart
 vowels rise like balloons
 with the blunt edge of a practiced tongue

exquisite early morning light
 you can go on breathing but I'll be ~~safe~~ in hell (when)
 zeppelin drops me from a (this) terrible altitude

*Abecedarian Cento Sources:

Claudia Emerson- Lines 1, 6, 12, 15, 19, 23

Mary Oliver- Lines 3, 5, 9, 13, 20, 24

Dorothy Parker- Lines 2, 7, 10, 16, 18, 21, 25

Sylvia Plath- Lines 4, 8, 11, 14, 17, 22, 26

Vicious

wife walls cat dog thoughts virus hands people attack bi cycle bleach door handles mind letter paper cut words wash

Daily Log: Week 18

Day: 1

Calories time: 22 weeks

Breakfast:Intake: ~~Coffee, cream, sugar.~~ Herbal tea. Silence.

Liquids: Urine: dark. Red?

Exercise: Breathe.

Note to self: Buy eggs.

Midmorning snack:

Intake: Granola. Top envelope in pile: bill for sonogram.

Liquids: Sweat: cold.

Exercise: Lie down. Prop legs on two pillows.

Note to self: Cancel maternity photo shoot? Buy eggs and yogurt.

Lunch:Intake: ~~Salad.~~ Ibuprofen: three capsules.

Liquids: Blood: copious.

Exercise: Stand under shower spray. Avoid staring at the red clots lumped on the drain.

Note to self: Cancel baby shower. Buy eggs, yogurt, and shampoo.

Midafternoon snack

Intake: ~~Potato-leek soup.~~

Liquids: Tears: abundant.

Exercise: Curl into fetal position. Try to remember to breathe.

Note to self: You will survive. You have before.

Dinner

Intake: ~~Pizza.~~ The creak of the door. Footsteps.

Liquids: N/A. Throat lumped. Nauseous.

Exercise: Sit up. Face him.

Note to self: Say it out loud. ~~I lost the baby.~~ “We lost the baby.”

Dessert

Intake: Blanket.

Liquids: Hot tea.

Exercise: Folding into his arms.

Note to self: Find hope.

Becoming Furniture

After *Seated Figure*/Jacob Lipchitz/
1916/National Galleries of Scotland

The seat was so comfortable,
she found it difficult to move.
The seat was so cosy, she
started to take on its form and colour.
The seat was so relaxing,
she began to merge with it.
Now begins she who knows
where it ends. She'd rise
if only she knew start where to.

.

About a boy who is pure of heart

The answer was yes. Without another word she dropped the moth.
There were messages in a bottle and he was mildly interested.
Tell me a better story, she said. About a boy who is pure of heart.
The idea was to go back to the beginning.

$\{[Bra(n)]kets\}$

you + me

[when a (petal) drops]

me + you

[and another (one)]

me + you \neq you + me

[the crownless (flower) dies]

me – you

[our gloomy (garden)]

you – me

[taught (me) to master]

me – you \neq me – you

[the (art)of letting go]

you/me

[the weakest pasture (weeds)]

me/you

[(perish) in cold (wind)]

$you/me \neq me/you$

[and (numbers) say (I'm) right]

$love\sqrt{me}$

[(you) were my {forever}]

$sex\sqrt{you}$

[and (I) was your |now|]

$love\sqrt{me} \neq sex\sqrt{you}$

[our unequal (feelings)]

you us me
sex us love
now us forever

[left our (matrix) empty]

$$(you + me)^{sex} = \sum_{k=love}^{sex} \binom{me}{you} me^{love} you^{sex-love}$$

{and even if (I) could read this, (we) couldn't make (it) [count]}

Pride

Pride
breeds on
a steady source
of income.

[REDACTED] ration

I have been informed that [REDACTED] art [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] or
intelligence [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] my possession [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

_____ may be _____ an offence _____
_____ without _____ authority _____

114

██████████

11

██████████ ██████████

termination [REDACTED] continues to apply

Signed:

For [REDACTED] me [REDACTED]

114

double *twist*

territory

limbering

slip down

no man's land

TRES

PASS



Now or Later

Third floor, going down
What's that big building right there?
One Caesar Salad
Huge, I know
I didn't see you yesterday
Please make sure you are paying attention
to all announcements
Ma'am, you have to put your shoes on
Nobody's complaining
Somebody just did
Where can I buy the yellow card, the Metro card?
Whenever you need anything,
let me know
Ma'am, please wear your shoes
At the door you have to show your
vaccination card
Is that Robert?
It's me
One side of French fries,
two mahi-mahis, one sea bass
Are you waiting?
It's against the rules and very dangerous
Calm down!
No, you calm down!
And the artichokes
Oh my god it's already kind of
perfect.

This is a found poem. The title and the lines are things I overheard in New York.

Autocomplete

- (0) I will only hope that I have your heart and mind not knowing how much
 (5) one of those two
 (3) Three continents
 (4) Fourth and the first one is the same
 (6) join in on a whim and then do it on a whim basis
 (13) we are not listening
 (9) get it to the green house on Friday night
 (12) go back and forth with the world with the world with the world with the world with the world
 (1) and the sky in your head
 (11) I am an avid fan and would like a loaf
 (10) have a few
 (8) not sure yet how long I should wait to see you
 (15) Fifteen seconds
 (16) and the occasional human experience
 (14) was it dream or death
 (7) incendiary
 (2) the sky
 (2) the sky has lived a little
 (2) the sky has lived a little long
 (2) the sky has lived a little long since it took me
 (2) the sky has lived a little long since it took me so
 (2) I was the only thing left

PROCESS NOTE: I typed an ordinal or cardinal number (e.g. “zero”, “sixth”, “fifteen”) into my phone, then inserted the words that autocomplete suggested. The autocomplete function seems to be based, in part, on my previous typing. I used the numbers 0-16 to create strings of words. Then I sliced these strings and rearranged the fragments, whose word order was not altered in any way.



Rescue, 2022, acrylic on paper, 11x17 (cm)

'Rescue' ... after 'Ninth Street Women: Lee Krasner, Elaine de Kooning, Grace Hartigan, Joan Mitchell, and Helen Frankenthaler: Five Painters and the Movement That Changed Modern Art' by Mary Gabriel, 2018

Lee couldn't help Jackson.

Grace couldn't help Frank.

Helen couldn't help Robert.

Elaine couldn't help Willem.

Joan couldn't help herself.

apocalyptic horses



Note: The source of this erasure poem is liner notes written by Patti Smith for her album *Horses*.