



### **Cassandra in the *Propylaea***

When there is sisterhood  
where sisterhood should not be,

we stare into the sun. Venus  
of Milo, of Medici, of Willendorf,

of very little of her own. Swallow--  
a small flighty tic of the throat.

Observe: the statue still stands.  
She fell asleep in the sanctum

and the snakes flicked their tongues  
in her ears. The Temple of Aphrodite

was a promise, to be unrelenting  
in her submission. Tongue is worship,

the mouth is a door--silent and raw  
with the world. A small price

to pay for this, lips forming an O  
in the night, whispering: *I understand*,

scratches on a priestess' tongue, remnants  
of men who wanted something to blame.

What if we could call up Apollo, ask  
about the ego over red wine and honey?

But I abide by the law of conservation  
of history. The sun burns the naked

pillars and buries a stone fruit beneath  
her chin. We wouldn't want to violate

causality. Give me bruised lilies, watch as I scatter  
the blooms. Of all the ways in this world

to lie--

she wants it through her teeth.

**Bacchanalian**

I

michelangelo's bacchus lounges beardless and with chalice.  
intoxication pools in his navel, on his lips,  
in the x and y chromosomes of marble.

II

satyrs drink wine from his clavicle, then soften.

III

amazons cut off their right breasts for battle,  
and i bind both of mine.  
i count bodies of water: lake erie,  
the mekong, myself,  
and think of how all of virgil's women  
were brought to the aeneid to die.

IV

i deface androgynous effigies not  
with paint, a cartographer's graffiti.  
the tools of my trade are wings, made from  
mod-podge glue and craft feathers and joined at both hips,  
draped over shoulder blade and groin and fragile knot of spine.

V

my history is just the sandbox in which i start fires  
to make colored glass and stone.  
i look on at the children who play in a shirt that passes my hips,  
a body's worth of pinions down to yellow marrow.

**Your Honor,**

In my defense,  
she was wearing her fuck-me corset.  
Perhaps my only crime  
was neglecting to be more savage,  
a spear to the stomach less subversive  
than the alternative. Don't worry,  
we'll all still know where I *really*  
wanted to stab. Some fully-clothed rapture,  
north of all music  
and salt.

## **Murderous Mary**

Only for your eyes. For your virgin teeth.

For my mother double-spaced and breaking  
a knife in the kitchen. For a candle in a  
little blue tin, left guttering on the windowsill  
and gone out overnight. For my sister  
running to the bathroom to muzzle her epithets.

For my mother breaking her hand on the  
unqualified edge of a dining room chair.

The table is mirrored and godly like glass.

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I crack an egg on my hip and birth me  
a sister, swallow the uterine lining whole.

For dyeing my gums on a pillowcase.

For breaking my sister's thumb before an NYC show.

My mother never raising her voice. For  
the daughter of a daughter of a daughter of a massacre.

For an Asian elephant hung in Tennessee,  
her effigy scalped in the table leaf with the rest.

Her aubade bellows puncture their susurrings.

Mary, I think we'd all like to kill our keepers  
when they prod.

From a thing to its sister,  
let them prod.