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by

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Mixed media by Bett Appel and Rebecca Lu Kiernan

The Experiment

The feathery cobalt grass is gone
And the tangerine-violet swirl of sky.
The platinum lake behind our hexagon home
Stands silent, vacant, alone.

The alien will come tonight.
I will walk into his unanswerable light,
Surrender to the hum of his sleek machine.
He will put his slick grey hands to my forgiven face,
Remove every delicious trace
Of my experiment with you,
Return to me
My identity.

As I wait, I draft this letter
Hoping the other angels won't mind
If
Long after logic and psychiatrists assure you
I must have been
A buttercream dream,
You will know you were held sacred
By an unknowable creature
Seven thousand light years away, unreachable.
If this changes history
We can arrange small repairs.
Surely I cannot be held accountable
For some impulsive act I committed
When the pageantry of my mind
Was trapped in human form
And drugged with the brain chemicals
Of what you monkeys call love.

Timewave Zero

The Lover dreams of the Goddess
Even as the bright tangle of Her
Repositions in his arms.
Nightmare, his undercovergirl
Designs a house for another world
Constructed of surgical grade diamonds
From the Soviet asteroid.
Terraformers are meeting
Her basic needs
Of gravity, oxygen, water,
Her demands of picnic weather,
Hybrid wolfkiss orchids,
Apricot moons.
She can order eclipses from the menu.
He curses her for giving him
The physics of prophecy.
Will his name cross her lips
When they are fractured by stars?
He fears she will clone him,
A designer gene, fetish-free
Version of him
With dog-like obedience,
A catly self sufficiency.
She will implant
A greater range of octaves in his voice.
She will give his clone
His violet stage jeans, fishnet shirts,
Leather pants,
Multicolored clove scented scarves,
His Breedlove American Series guitar.
He will track him down and kill him!
The grandfather paradox

Is a time-travel snag,
No law against the killing of clones.
The Goddess dreams of the Lover,
The new and improved one coming soon.
She swings in her sleep
Clinging one-handed
To the terrestrial trapeze
Biting her lip and counting
How many pendulums
Until she must denounce one world
And hurl into the next.

Gifts from Scientists

Thank you

For the velociraptor you cloned me for Christmas
And the unbreachable hex translation
Of blueprints for other-world devices.

Thank you

For the cigar box
Of artfully arranged broken birds
And the rainbow glitter you glued
To their gently twitching feathers.

Thank you

For discovering
The extinction level event asteroid
And naming it after me!
When you pushed my eye into the telescope
I could have sworn
You were giving me a star.

Thank you

For the broken birds,
Easily discarded
Instead of the merciless words,
A cross from which
I could never have climbed down

An Affair with Time

He is a three-legged
Hit-and-Run victim
Staggering dazed
Down a cobblestone street,
Wolf without a collar.
Thorax crushed, his howl
Is an unbearable airy whistle.
One cobalt eye
Dangles loose from its socket.

The accident
Has not harmed his mind.
He summons her cognac hair
Sweeping against his face
In every indelible embrace.
He recalls her address and phone,
The quick way she undresses
When she thinks she is alone
As opposed to her slow theatrical tease.

He eats garbage and the irony of roadkill,
Lives in a moldy cardboard box
Beneath the bridge.
His heart is seven years of anesthesia.

Some nights
The moon winks like suicide.
He creeps in clumsy silence
To the window of her dreams.
She sleeps in a perfect tangle with her lover.

He turns his broken face away,

Struggles to catch his breath,
Imagining he will recover,
Scratch at her door in the light of day.

Wolf without a collar,
Guest in her kaleidoscopic house.
She will love him just like new.
He will trust her
Not to Hit-and-Run him

As she will Always do.

Nibiru's Cuckold

Mars has already made her secret adjustment
V838 Mon's light echo has confessed.
Neptune is trying to hold still
Against Nibiru's muscular fingers.

Who will teach you to breathe gold?
Classified math behind platinum walls
Slices time, cells, codes.

Three days of suspended rotation
Will not stop clocks
Or hands peeling petals with questions.

Upon release,
Will you admit I exist?
Will you turn
To God or scientists?

Will you pluck the withered flower
From the final field
To learn, my Darling,
You were simply on my fixed trajectory
And I loved you, loved you not?

The Case Against Chaos

We were promised
Trick candles and red velvet cake,
Midnight fireworks,
Champagne in cave-crystal flutes.
You wore a Tom Ford tuxedo in abyss blue.
My transparent gown of glitter
Made promises the night could not keep.

Giant screens showed a split-screen view
Of asteroid and missile.
Bach filled the silence.
No one will ever know
What ruined the math.

In a flash,
Our skeletons fused in cognizant embrace.

Had I more time,
I like to think I would have told you,
Nothing of me was true
And I destroyed every universe
In which we would not meet
Just to spend these seven years
Entangled with you.

An Interview Without Coffee

Some responsible creature
Who could break the brain chemical trance
Induced by our brand of copulation
Should detach and close the window
Against the apricot stream of sun,
Tango of cut-grass breeze
Twirling French lace curtains
High and wide.
We have trespassed into the unaccountable.
Apocalyptic climax after climax,
I am so emblazoned with you,
I am beyond you,
Hunting you again.
I have kicked
2.5 marriages
Out from under you.
I have juggled rain and fire
With such calculation
And informational eclipse
That one does not know
The other exists,
Just to meet you at 3 A.M.'s
And between sets,
To vibrate against your voice,
Melt into the hum of you.
My feet trample the headboard.
Some interloper
Stalks by our window
Slower this time.
You turn me sideways
So you can see bounce.
My briefcase is full of science

To stop the ending of time
And I am hours late
For the perfect crime.
If tomorrow comes
I am sure to have
An interview without coffee.

Gods

Because the train of time is crashing
I cannot estimate
How long we kept our deviant math
Inside the seventh imposter stone.

Secret physics club of two
Looping the arrow of time
Into a perfect cherry stem knot.

Why is the world so panicked
That the future will fail to unfold
Into its boring habit?

I will meet you
In that honeysuckle hour
Of a sunlit kiss
That bent the bluebells
And the wolfkiss orchids.

Darling,
I am breathless
To turn the seventh stone.
Our love can never be
A creature so cannibalistic
As memory.

We are already Gods.

Perfect Crimes

There was a letter in the pocket of a raincoat
A drunk, apocalyptic version of me wrote.
I burglarized your lighthouse to remove it.
It would be sad and difficult to prove it.

I killed your pink seahorses with a truffle spoon
And mated your shrill, foul-mouthed parrot with a loon.
I have seven alibis for that alleged night
And calm, time-bent selves immune to irises so bright.

I am going to return to steal more things.
Laughter, Europa, Io, Jupiter's rings.
Do you feel dizzy? Need a pill?
I'm taking gravity. Hold still.

Hazard Signs

Time's arrow bends

As my blind obsession

Permeates your secret life.

Incalculable chemical reaction

Between the long vowels

Of your sweat-soaked pleasure

And my fetished-washed

Sublimations.

The way you ache for me

Some aperture

Between confession and repeat offense,

I know

What the avalanche must whisper

To the snow.

Beyond This Equation

I keep my cannibalistic rituals
And hostile artifacts from the alien.
The alien keeps unimaginable technology,
Inevitable events from me.
Our shared secret is a sentient being.
Darling, five secrets if you are counting.

A thousand featherweight light years away,
Sleek fingers through the labyrinth of my mind
Running every possible equation.
Sublime intelligence will not find
The solution.

I wear withered, blue-leafed vines from your past,
A criminal smile from your treacherous future.
A ghost dilates the ship's door.
Even time is no secret anymore.

The Sixth Extinction

A split second
Or eons
After the Sixth Extinction,
The auroral green-edged pinks
And lava-esque tangerines
Took away
What I thought of as my breath,
Dismantled
What I thought of as the sky.
(Has the world exploded, or have I?)
I could not separate
What I thought of as my eyes
From the fuschia rainscape.
No mother, no father,
No faithful dog.
(Don't the dead come greeting?)
I searched for you.
You died in my arms,
Kept me calm.
"Look for me on the other side."
I do not think I am going
Anywhere.
I find ways to pass
What is not even time.
Wearing your robe until you came home,
Finding the shoebox
Of every card, note
And grocery list
I ever gave you,
The kiss by Willow Lake
That was neither chaos, nor fate,
But three seconds' proof of God.
(You must be alone somewhere too.)
Perhaps what you think of as your mind
Is also pushing play and rewind.
When all is said and done
Starless in the memory
Of one's home constellation,
What survives?

Psychologists say memory
Is just a story
We keep changing to ourselves
You kissed me and we laughed.
Perhaps it was just a gallery lithograph
That once I saw
Alone,
Lovers parting at a train
That runs into being strangers again.

Postcard

Darkness swallows. Cannibals drum.
Stars forgive. Angels hum.
Lilies wilt against the lie.
Wolf thinks he can scratch the sky.
Clawmarks vandalize the moon.
Don't miss you, won't be home soon.

Post Scriptum

Attention, Earthling

This terrestrial artifact,
A sun-bleached hue of plum,
Bullet-proof and water-resistant
To seven fathoms,
Claw-marks from
A disenchanting tiger.
Oh, I was an exposed target,
Cyanide pill in a locket,
Potassium iodide
In my raincoat pocket.
Ah, your respectable attempts
At hypnosis.
I laugh at your luck,
Only you
Would attempt to recruit
A chrononaut.
Earthling,
Your moves are glacial,
I have,
For longer than I care to confess,
Outfoxed the speed of light.
The platinum aperture invites me.
Clairvoyance reminds me
I dare not contaminate my world
With the hazards of yours.
I dial my code against the case.
It flips open.
All my tools of covert operation
Spill into the starving, brown
Radioactive grass
Like an asteroid leaves tektite
On the strewn-field.
But, your gift?

I spray one drop of your cologne,
Close my eyes, I am Home.

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"Hell Hath No Fury" -mixed media by Bett Appel and Rebecca Lu Kiernan

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Submission must be in the body of an email unless otherwise agreed on.