

[*perfect teeth, listen up*]

perfect teeth, listen up:

you're not going to get anywhere.

tomatoes and onions sustain us,

and peas and carrots, perfect teeth.

ah, yes, shakespeare is very nice,

but beets, chicory, and watercress?

and rice and beans, and collard greens?

lovely little teeth, the bull you're eating

just yesterday was chomping in the field. and you complained

that the meat was tough.

life's tough, perfect teeth.

but eat, eat all you can,

and forget this chat,

and dig in.

[*i enter the idiot's bookstore*]

i enter the idiot's bookstore.
i don't have any money
and i don't have a knack for crime either.

lining up before my eyes
wonderful titles
moribund from sitting so long
on the shelves.

steal us, they say,
we can't stand it anymore
in the idiot's bookstore.

who'd believe
this version of the facts?
help me, *maragatos*
in this most stolen hour
of a destitute liberator
of books.

my heart pounds. pounds
more than the *salgueiro* drum line.
my whole body shakes
and my hands sweat buckets.

i reach the street, hands empty
and the books cry: sissy.

autofocus

remorse is something
very difficult
you told me
biting a morsel
off your tail

i got you
while you spun round
and i turned down the radio

it was a scherzo
a who knows
an andante allegro
it wasn't a good
soundtrack

while i dealt
with that junk
you'd already swallowed yourself
by half

rem is some
ve dif

i called the ambulance

arcade at the edge of the thames
playing indoor hoops with my sisters

on the first throw
— i misgauge the distance
between my hand and the basket —
the ball disappears behind the contraption

my sisters burst out laughing
so do i

the ball disappeared behind the contraption

then it's their turn
and they play and win and play again
and the machine pours out tickets

that we trade for candy
or a dinky toy —
i don't remember

oh how lovely it would be to have a little mustache
just beyond the lenses of your glasses
to stay hidden behind a fuzzy
caterpillar

a little stache to be able to be

a little stache to go out and see
the world yet carefree

a little stache to be able to bear

a nasobuccal
bucconasal appendage

like a dignified hat

no one bothers you in cafés
(beauty is in the eye
of the disbeliever)

and at the end of the day to hear
a woman say
thank you sir
while entering, at last, the elevator.

february mon amour

january appeared without warning

but february at least knocked

and made grand promises

“like carnival,” he said.

(february is really short

at 5 foot 3, with sideburns

he'd make the best advertisement

for the glastonbury festival.)

i winked swiftly in the pillows:

“i'm done, february

i abandoned the calendar.”

“you're a pain,” he said

and went to cry in the john.

august the eighth playboy bunny
or the golden pavilion of kinkaku-ji
or a kitten in a mitten

my grandpa said august augurs ill
he didn't choose the month
he went on when it ended

what passed through the head of the violinist
turned pallid by death
hurling himself with his black hair &
his stradivarius in the great air
disaster yesterday

do
re
mi
i think of bela bartok
i think of rita lee
i think of the stradivarius
and the various jobs
held by me
to get where I am today
and now the turbine fails
and now the cabin breaks in two
the whole kit and kaboodle tumbles
from the overhead compartments
and I plummet too
beautiful and lifeless my black head of hair

my violin against my chest

a guest up ahead prays

i just think

do

re

mi

i think of stravinski

and the beard of klaus kinski

and the nose of karabtchevsky

and a poem by joseph brodsky

that i once read

pure women, unfasten your seatbelts

now you're earthbound

one

two

three

post-operative poem

ex

in latin

out of

ever since some serviceable parts
seem to have been

eviscerated
from you

you walk down the street
and recognize them

hey, there goes my
eighth rib!

mine, i say!

and you point to the lacuna
on your left side

(it could hold
a harmonica)

look!

daydream

how much do you want, tell me, getting chills,
to proclaim north wherever your nose points, to free yourself,
full steam, from the uninteresting, to open your mind, be
awkward, hasty, whatever, sit in the wreck
alongside the work, tell me tell me, with chills
in your belly, how much time lost, how many coins in your pocket,
how many books unread, how many minutes of waiting,
how many teeth decayed, tell me how much you want all this
and where you want me to send it, if you want it wrapped up

[*at eleven years old*]

at eleven years old
behind my grandfather's house
at z-3 fisherman's way
i smoked a gol cigarette purchased
singly in a tavern
where the waitress knew my mother
the waitress looked at me sideways
but gave me the cigarette all the same
and there where there was a kitchen garden
me my sister and a cousin
took our first puffs
it was really bad
fear spoiled the pleasure
of the five-cent gol
that someone threw aside
at the sound of an aunt a dog or
the wind at the feet of the kale

the goldmine of my mom & my aunt
it was called
administration island
or middle island
where the two of them sold
avon cosmetics
arriving by motor boat
with bundles of products
lipstick mascara perfume
and most of all rouge
they were received
by knotty admonishing
moustachioed housewives
dishcloths on their shoulders
snotty children in their laps
my mom & my aunt proceeded
with the beautifying of the natives
returning color
to their faces
the whole spectrum
of an evening sky
at the duck lagoon
blues and purples and oranges and pinks
and then they lent them
mirrors
the housewives of middle island
bought a lot of makeup
my mom & my aunt
left loaded with cash

in the bathtub with gertrude stein

gertrude stein has an ass out to there gertrude
stein and when she gets out there she makes a great noise as
though someone dragged a wet cloth across
the huge glass window of a public building

gertrude stein from here to there it's you the washcloth
behind your ear's all yours from here to there it's me the rubber
duckie's mine gertrude stein and thusly we're pleased

but gertrude stein is a charlatan thinks it's fine to let one
loose under the water eh gertrude stein? it's not possible
that anyone could so enjoy making bubbles

and at that moment as it's her tub she makes
like a scoundrel and steals my towel

and runs out stark naked huge ass descending the
staircase onto the streets of st.-germain-des-prés

the others' woman

i stayed a long time in that tub with no water
thinking about why gertrude had left me

my nails purple my fingers shriveled in that heatless
bathroom in an apartment near the jardin du
luxembourg

no love and no towel

she has alice and basket i am left out

in other times rilke would call me to the jardin des
plantes

today i say adeus and go to the gare du nord

lou andreas waits for me in göttingen we will plant kisses
on the gänseliesel

alice babette, first movement

in the hotel surprise a letter from alice

who knew and endured grilling immense vol-au-vents

the paper was a fine silk a blade

vented neither possession nor pâté

i was opening the envelope the paper was a silk

on the little table an envelope and it was the handwriting of alice

shoulder/épaule

many are the plans with the others' woman
but two birds kill with one stone
djuna said better not bet on one
who'll only stand by your side per chance
and bought me a cognac and left me at the door

dirty game, allegro andante

at five on the dot i ran toward the jardin du luxembourg
but just on one foot because my boot was pinching
arriving there 'idiot' someone screamed
it was alice with canned goods

it was dark i fell into the ambush
punches rolled with alice on the sod
until the other decided to show her face
it was baker in her skirt of bananas

epilogue

gertrude stein hair of the caesars
alice black gypsy eyes
josephine baker djuna barnes
the five of us in the hall of mirrors
i was alice and djuna was josephine
gertrude stein was gertrude stein was gertrude stein
at the exit gertrude tugged my arm
and said vexedly: i did not see the fun
of what you published in the papers
it rolled over me like a wehrmacht tank
it was not for ezra whose bel esprit walked there
lesbians are a waste he said
have you ever heard of mussolini?

i can't manage to read *the cantos*

shall we free ourselves from ezra pound?

let's imagine ezra pound

insane in a cage in pisa while

les américains eat vienna sausages

and peanut butter in the barracks

dear ezra, who knows what de cadence is?

shall we free ourselves from marianne moore?

Translations from Angélica Freitas's *Rilke shake*

Hilary Kaplan

rilke shake

make me a rilke shake
with love & ovaltine
when i have a sleepless night
and nothing lights up
i order a rilke shake
and eat a toasted blake
sunny side up
when i am sad
& lonely while
love doesn't blind me
i drink a rilke shake
and brush a toasted blake
against the epidermis of the butter

nothing beats a rilke shake
on the question of anti-heartache
nothing surpasses the frappe
of rilke with ice cream
no matter how much you pour yourself into bed
and take pleasure and have fun
some nights the moon is weak
the stars vanish in the pitch
and then when there's no cigarettes
no decent beer
i order a rilke shake
gulp down a toasted blake
and dance like a dervish

[*it's no use*]

it's no use
arriving at the door
and commanding
open
öffnen
abra
you have to
turn the key

plus
you have to know
which key

or
bump up against the hardness
of certain materials

mahogany pine
cedar or a panel
of any wood

to be familiar with the key
or else intuit which
way to turn it

so many people have
so little patience

what's a see you?

see you es un adios.

un hankyles adieu amigos.

there are people who write haiku,

three lines à la bashō.

see yours also follow rules.

whoever writes see yours knows whatever

's sweet is over.

∫

spanked as a child dips his feet in the orinoco

underwater what's the sound of an ocarina?

brbrlllbrrr brbrlllbrrr

∫

snubbed at a party dips her feet in the rio das antas

underwater what's your heart do?

'get out of the rain' 'go inside'

∫

suffragette without rouge dips her feet in the clyde

underwater what's your hair do?

left.... right.... left.... right....

∫

unphotogenic dips her feet in the rhine

underwater what's your cell do?

'after the beep lorelei after the beep'

versus me

down below a samba does not call to me
but knows my name

state of dismallarmament

ma'am, do you have a mallarmé in your house?
do you know how many people die every year
in accidents with mallarmés?

we are organizing a public council
to once and for all ban mallarmés from our homes
reader's digest selections will serve

as containers where we will load the specimens,
at porto de santos, to return to france.
be a patriot, surrender your mallarmé. olé.

end

keats when he was depressed
feeling more pathetic than poetic
put on a clean shirt
i took a bath
combed my fingers through my hair
put on clean clothes
glanced in that mirror
long enough to
sans expensive watch
assume the pose of lota
and *sans* automatic pistol
the pose of a charlie's angel
then I said: "hey, hottie"
quickly grabbed the keys
dashed out
only started to laugh in the elevator.