The Perfect Mango

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The Symphony

Today I write a symphony for you the cello moaning at my side. Listen. The words short and staccato viola playing clarinet and flute soft melody of the piano are you listening?

Her voice fills the room she sings Charpentier the cathedral ringing her soprano magic my apartment alive with her music.

End of the session analysis over for today I am tired numb my eyelids are drooping will you hold me tonight? The symphony has fallen onto itself the tones dissonant the echoes inside need tuning. You approach me carefully haven’t seen me in a day your lips press against mine my body limp. I cannot reach you my instrument is silent I have no words left there is no music inside me. We lie next to one-another you talk I listen your silence broken by a new passion tell me more I am tired writing is burning my soul have you seen my painting?

What are you writing she asks analysis long today. Are you writing the music that you can’t hear are you writing the words that will allow you to speak? Yes, I think yes yes. I am writing my body I am writing my soul I am writing my music I say but I forget to speak and you don’t hear me. My imagination is my truth the truth that doesn’t exist the truth that changes every time I hear a new note
the perfect mango
every time the bow moves the cello and the stained glass windows catch a ray of sunlight.

I am little I am big I am twenty-five and a thousand and they ask is it true did it happen that way how was it can you repeat it are you sure it was really that way? I am little I am big I am two and a thousand and they ask is it true did it happen that way how was it can you repeat it are you sure it was really that way? I don't know I am screaming the words caught in my throat. Memory doesn't exist I exist as I create myself the creation is hurting stop it hurts please stop stop! In analysis I tell you I don't know I will perhaps never know I am tired of trying to know what I will never know. Does it exist? Did it happen? I don't know I don't know I don't know. Yes of course it happened look at me I am here I am writing I am talking to you look at me! Do you see the gash on my left breast look closer you cannot see it it is hidden behind the skin it is there. I made that gash I placed it there in memory of you and you and you. You did not harm me I harmed myself in memory of you.

I am three years old I am little my body light under the white sheet middle of the afternoon maman is gone I don't like to sleep in the afternoon. I am two and a thousand. You enter my room big voice hard my body trembles. You sit on my bed stroke my head push into my mouth I gag I refuse to eat I am big now I have a baby carriage I am old enough to have a baby your body heavy on mine.

Last night you hold me my lover your body cool with sweat mosquitoes flying around your head body itchy. You hold me my body aching with memory stomach pain breasts sore. Your touch is gentle your caress tender go to sleep you say can you sleep? I am tired I cannot sleep did it happen do you know will I know?

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I am three years old little I am having a baby my baby
is black plastic he has a penis can you see maman? I am
two years old two and a thousand I sit on the balcony
body hunched over I cannot sleep nightmares coming in
through my shutters. Outside my door suitcases she is
leaving I am alone I am three she is crying where are you
going maman? I do not speak will not swallow my food
will not let you inside will not open my mouth will not
tell you my secret.

In my book I write my body the body that holds your
imprint the one I have painted etched in gold with red
black paint mirror shards. You still exist I do not see you I
know you are there I remember do you remember?

My lover’s hand on your imprint startles me the hand
tracing you removing you lifting you off my skin. My
heart is revealed red bloody vulnerable dangerous.

* * *

The human body is not a thing or a substance, given, but a con-
tinuous creation.

We play in a tree house I am eight years old there are four
of us you the other girl and the two boys the one I like.
You spin the bottle take off your clothes you say yes I say
naked you laugh. What is a slut I ask maman why she
asks.

Maman makes me a halter top matching shorts terry
cloth pink blue and white I love it wear it to school. Vel-
cro on the back the school bully undoes it holds me down
come and see they say come and see her breasts! I have no
breasts don’t look at me don’t rip my halter top maman
made it. You send me to the principle’s office it is your
fault you say go home and change you say halter tops are
forbidden. I am eight years old tell me maman why don’t
they like me how can I be more like them tell me. Change
your clothes you say you will not be like them you are different I am not going back I say no you say.

This is not a symphony they cannot hear the music they are calling me names I will not hear them I cannot hear the music my ears are deaf.

* * *

John Zorn is breaking my symphony stop! no! stop! Symphony broken into fragments exploding dissonance cello out of tune the warning on the CD says do not listen for extended periods of time can cause ear damage glass falling breaking my body. I have fallen I am broken I am walking on broken glass feet bleeding I am walking on my hands upside down where am I going?

We meet again you have invited many people wearing costumes night darkening. You are there my lover dressed in black intoxicated by the night and beer that will make your head spin your stomach churn but you don’t think of that now. You let me in I am with him the one who introduced me to you you look at me you do not see me. The music is loud the dance floor vibrant with our movement. I cannot see you you are not there you are not here you do not come to dance with me. You disappear all in black I am laughing be careful they say as they watch you fly into the darkness alone. You glide toward me own me with your kiss leave again all in black my cape swinging on the dance floor body alive I am a symphony my feet have healed no broken glass my body whole. You take out a guitar we sing you are asleep passed out from the alcohol dead night. Look they say he does not care I cannot wake you I do not try. I watch you in your sleep face unrevealing mouth open drowned in your intoxication. The one who tells me to be careful to stay away from you puts me to sleep rubs my back tells me to forget about you I pretend to be asleep then I sneak up on you and watch you in your dreams so distant. You wake eyes cloudy mouth dry
do you recognize me I want to ask do you remember me? They told me to leave to let you go I say why are you here you ask. I don’t know.

I return to school eight years old my body broken by your touch loose shirt long and unrevealing no Velcro.

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Sky white translucent high humidity sweltering heat your blinds are drawn I cannot look into your window. The air in my apartment still only my hands moving on the keyboard my stomach purging words one after the other. I switch you off “Canticum ad Beatam Virginem Mariam” turn to Bill Frisell “Have a Little Faith” yes music loud no more baroque sounds screaming off my walls floorboards creaking. The disk is yellow some say it isn’t music I hear it in my heart fragmented making me whole tearing me apart.

My dress sticks to my back sweat pouring down my stomach through the white lace body suit. I want to wear my white dress naked underneath I can’t you say I must protect myself from the ones who cannot restrain themselves. The shimmer of my body breast under white dress makes them crazy it is my fault if I tempt them.

I write in fragments filling the page with my body restrained when I try to write your words big words long sentences where is the order you ask what happened next? and then? Listen to my language. It is a symphony.

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My stomach is full I want to throw up pieces of undigested food fragments strewn on the toilet bowl the undigested remnants of my pain. I talk to you my sentences incomplete I am alone the world is big is this fiction you ask?
I want to throw up fiction undigested truth I cannot tell you I am fiction what is truth? The fragments of my symphony left unfinished by my side my desire created by your absence the absence of myself the absence of my fiction. I am my story I am telling you my fiction stop asking for the truth!

Analysis begins she asks me how I will tell my story will I invent myself fragmented always distant from myself always a performance? Perhaps I say my story is always different it changes every day it is pain and joy the pain strong today. I want to throw up. These words leave marks on the page traces of myself can you see me? I want to dance to sing to listen to the symphony the volume is low my body silent words heavy and lifeless today.

I am nine years old nightmares every night tears are you leaving abandoning me (a word I learn much later) are you there? I sing myself to sleep at night waiting for your kiss sometimes you come so late I lie awake waiting. You peer inside my door you see my eyes wide open you are awake you say yes I say will you kiss me goodnight? You come toward me lay down sometimes beside me rub my back a little mon ange you say and kiss me. I sing at night before I fall asleep as I wait for your kiss.

I scream in my sleep another nightmare he is sitting on me I am trapped I cannot breathe I am scared maman! You lie beside me wipe my forehead gently later the little one will have nightmares as well and you will hold her tight. She is not born yet I am your only daughter you hold me tight of course you say I will be here tomorrow we will be here together a family.

You think I am asleep you return to your bed the one you share with papa I follow you and watch as you crawl in we are together I watch your body close to his I cannot go back to sleep I am scared will you be there in the morning?

Today we are not together this is not truth and you did not abandon me. I know the fears of childhood I understand them still feel them in that scar the one I drew on
my left breast. I will not throw up I tell myself I can resist. I am the culprit. I am twenty-five and a thousand and I am the bearer of my pain. They will not abandon me I will abandon myself to pay them back. How foolish.

Today I write a symphony and if you want I will include you what do you play? These are my words this is my music we will play it for me we will play it on my body as the words are tattooed onto my skin. You can play loud or soft but be careful soon this will be your story too you will see the trace of your fingertips hidden in that crease on my stomach, on the curve of my breast.

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