

The Tower

I

How will I do being old when I'm old –
having to use this same heart – in its place.
Tell all my cells to be made of me younger,
Madonna. I won't budge until time makes me
do it. God likes getting older
like an animal who escaped from the zoo
only to visit on Sundays with her children.
I never had a tail to chase.
I got bored in Plato's cave
which is to say I was young and stupid.
Once I've worn the imagined world out
like a cheap wig, conquered heaven
with you as my bride, Imagination,
give it up and finally teach me the hack
that lets you convert abstraction into life:
more of it – or, fuck, just spill over,
heavy glass, as the fly caught under you flies off –

II

– and onto my pale finger. I feel
like a Brita filter in the rain.
You make me want more stuff
like puppies and the heaven we make
of this feeling of getting things wildly in order
for once, because once we start
things stop – then don't ever do that.
Kissing you is like asking the trees

to say something, and then they actually do,
they say: "TREES." Reflective surface,
I leave it to you to report any news
of what's coming up from behind me
reliably. I'm generally disturbed
by contemporary television, but I also feel
simultaneously like I do about everything a little:
I like it. Let it come at me

like Sarah Paulson de-eyeing herself
in American Horror Story: Coven
so she can truly see
(because the last time she went blind,
before Frances Conroy gave her a new pair
of regular eyes, after she lost them,
she could receive visions from the past.
But it doesn't work the second time,

until later it does, and she sees ALL).
I'd like to get to know the future a little first
before going all the way. Things are constantly
things and constantly saying: Let us happen,
so we can increase as a culture. Something
is always letting itself happen.
Calling it culture makes it sound dirty.
These new forces rise with or without



a target audience. Whatever you give,
give a shit, or you'll be descended upon
by it via pigeon. There are almost always,
too many birds. C'mere, falconress,
I'm whistling at you. Good luck coming down
from your beautiful sky, Mr. Bones –
I say let's you and me GTFO of here.
How many mysteries does it take to make a season

like spring? Who's texting me this late?
Why did I have that dream that my water broke?
Why's time still a thing?
I learned how to make croissants on the internet.
I am comforted by the meanderings of the crowd.
I hear Canadian geese are pests, but all I hear
when I think of them is "honk."
Fly Away Home is the new Wild Swans at Coole.

Anna Paquin is the new Maude Gonne. She was good
in Castle in the Sky, the way an imaginary friend is:
as a disembodied voice. In Angel,
Angel takes the sewer tunnels.
I'm bad at avoiding the sun.
All different kinds of light are light.
Blind people are better at writing poetry.
The best thing I can do is make you crazy.

I remember when all that mattered was that
Helen fell in love. Baby, you make me
get this way. Luckily, it's my favorite way,
that and the subway. The Trojans got around
just fine until they didn't, until they did
again when they won the 2004 championship,
until the BCS stripped them of their national title
for using drugs, like that's the worst thing

they ever did. I don't think I'd want to kill
an army of people for love, but I love you
enough to ride inside of a horse, at full gallop,
into your city, via the upper level
of the George Washington Bridge. New York,
you look all your gift horses in the trunk.
When I was on the island, I learned to hunt
for the best food in hidden places.

I used to sit on the edge of the highest building
and look down to see what everyone was wearing
so I could know if I should borrow your denim jacket
or one of Martha's umbrellas. If Spiderman can be
a musical, then I can be a Spiderman.
For my audition on The Voice, I'm going to sing
"She's Having a Baby" by The Knife, in slow motion
and wait for the chairs to turn around.

Shakira and Rihanna walk into a club
and forget everything. I can't usually remember
what day it is, unless there's a festival.
I want to be naked as you at The Country Club
in NOLA in April in nothing but your birthday
suit and tie with me, wet as a \$2 rental towel.
But now it's the 15th, and I haven't paid my taxes,
but I've started to. The blood moon eclipse



is really happening; it's not a metaphor,
though it stranges things like one does.
Everything's a little Cormac-McCarthy-ish.
It's 32 degrees, and I just walked over
an actual bed of magnolia blossoms.
There was ice on the car mirror.
The birds are being insane.
It's four in the morning,

and their insanity is a sound,
since I can't see them. Thankfully,
they're not speaking to me in Greek;
the crazy hasn't spread but is nonetheless
indicative of the landscape's instability.
Leganja Estranja, I am not your momma.
Just do you but be careful. If you do
you too often, it's sickening.

III

I've never written a will.
I leave everything to myself
but specifically the version of myself
that's something else, like a Siri.
So you can ask: "Paul,
where is the nearest pizza?"
And I can say: "New York."
Have you seen Ghostwriter?
I hear Smiley's used to serve
a "special slice," with anchovies
and a packet of coke. I guess they did that
so they could leave something behind
for their pizza-boys and pizza-daughters.
Who's to say I've no heirs.
There you are! You, reading this,
summoning my pride. If you don't
know you by now, now's your chance.
Exhibit your inhibitions in a glass
enclosure. Have yours blown
into a transparent life-sized replica of you.
Put a message in your human-shaped-bottle
like: "Hey," or, "¡Ayúdame!" or
"This letter is from the future..."
Don't let the moment not happen.
My return won't e-file. I feel like a
honkytonk woman. I feel like
the invisible layer of glass that separates us
from our past is bulletproof. Every time
I see a bullethole in a window, I want to put my finger in it.
The whole place is rigged to blow in less than ten minutes.
There's some kind of emergency override,
but it might be best to just ride this one out
naked on a horse on a beach in Spain.
If I ever get decimated by an asteroid,
my nephew, Paul Legault, can be me
when I've gone ahead and become whatever.
But I bequest the operator's manual to all y'all.
Manually speaking, I use my mouth.
Textually, I'm attempting to use what I sound like
when you read this inside of your head
as a way of saying: Hello,
I want to sound
like a bird's sleepy cry
among the shades,
like one shady bitch.



My superpower is all mirrors
and luck. Don't break them.
Seven years is like infinity in that
I don't know them yet.
One must be oneself
and what one does,
but there's a loophole.

If the poet does not use her powers,
beauty goes on using them anyway
for her own purposes. Someone just yelled
fag twice out of their car window, one for me
and one for this other guy in an argyle vest,
who I now assume is gay – he probably is.
I have an iced coffee and a new haircut.
We make blank expressions at each other.

It is the gentlest of muggings:
thought turned to language
like Rimbaud turned to crime.
I'm going to send my soul to Harvard,
so it can drop out, then start Weezer,
then go back to finish its degree later.
It pulled the red string when I walked away.
It was God in the Fire with His Revolver.
I never really wanted to have a clue
about what being dead is like,
but there's this dead rabbit
on the side of the road
my dog apparently wants to eat.
There's sleep and how birds do that.
There's cloud storage.

