

SOME OTHER STUPID FRUIT

a problematic feminist narrative

Margaret Bashaar

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I AM A THIEF

We met in a museum—your head was tilted up,
face blurred. I could never see your shoes,
though I tried. We followed each other
up and down staircases, between beetle-
gnawed taxidermy displays, met at the feet
of the Tyrannosaurus Rex fossil and there
is no metaphor here.

There was a spoon in your hand and I took it,
baby in your arms and I lifted him into mine,
turned and placed him in my mother's.
The cat is in my lap now, the man is in my house.
The baby does not fuss, but I also do not feed him.
If there was a dog, he would be at my feet,
devoted and panting.

THE SEDUCTION OF SNAKES

Every woman I know has a snake inside her,
twisting beneath the skin at her temple,
ouroborosing through the ventricles of her heart.

This isn't some sisterhood bullshit, some wannabe
salvation for Eve, some half-assed claim that before
god grew a cock there was no war, because I know
there is violence in all of us—don't try to tell me
I wouldn't slice a thing open to watch it die,
that if my teeth were full of venom I wouldn't bite
down on your arm hard enough to burst through skin
& watch the wound blacken.

But that's not a bad thing, girl. Here, I'll still put my fingers
in your hair, still press my lips to your neck.
Never mind the pull. Never mind the slap and bite.

I WEAR WHAT I WANT

My mother told me the heels
that hobble are all worth it
in the end.
& I believe her.

Peel the skin from my face—
this company has an untenable shoe budget,
gym membership for all employees.

I own 30 paintbrushes—
what do you think I paint?

FOOTBALL SEASON

I am a princess, big city girl,
face crowded with sunlight and smog.
This steel skyline knows me
for a toothache and I have straddled
its rivers all three at once while you dress
your son with the name
of their most infamous rapist.

Woman, how can you worship that
muscle, that stink of alcohol sweat,
that skull-cracked mouth? Our sons,
if any, should be the ones
who understand *no*.

THINKING FOR YOURSELF IS A LOST ART AND GOOD RIDDANCE

I will tell you what color nail polish to wear,
which moisturizer is best beneath your eyes
and you will learn to paint your own French tips.

Remember the important things: pitch your center
of gravity forward in heels, do not skip leg day.
Clench your jaw until color bursts behind your eyes,
until you feel heat below your ear like a bleed.

*Go on—put that cock in your mouth.
Then at least there will be one smart thing
in your pretty little head.*

IN CASE YOU DIDN'T HATE ME ENOUGH ALREADY

I want implants.

I want Botox tips from my mother.

I want to zap the spider veins
right out of my long, pretty legs.

I want to wear lipstick, wax
my eyebrows, wax my pussy,
wax my stubborn upper lip.

I want to wear designer dresses,
designer shoes. I want to burn
every pair of jorts I ever owned.

I want to submit and submit and submit.

The last time a man on the street
told me I was beautiful,
I said *thank you*.

4 LAWS OF THE QUANTUM PHYSICS OF SLUTS

1. A slut can only exist if she is being observed by your boyfriend
2. Seconds your boyfriend looks at a woman divided by the length of her skirt in inches squared equals the magnitude of slut
3. A slut's vibration is increased on the molecular level if she wears heels above 3 inches
4. A slut can exist in multiple spaces at once if more than one boyfriend observes her simultaneously.

MY PLACE IS IN THE KITCHEN

Watching 3 women dressed
like the Stepford Wives—
fake pearls, fake lashes, veneers
& cardigans & pinched waists—
smash cake in each other's faces,
make out, & then electrocute each other
is totally on the list of things I want in life.

I once spent the equivalent of a full
month figuring out the logistics
of a sexy pie fight. & no, you don't
have to shave your legs, but I don't
have to want to see you naked,
put my teeth to your salted flesh, grind
these cupcakes into your hair.

I am beautiful & dumb
like a beautiful dumb thing
& I know it.

IT WAS THE KIND OF NIGHT THAT IS 2 SHADES OF BLACK AND 1 SHADE OF BLUE

I snuck into your home.
I ransacked your bookshelf.
I found that book all those women
smarter than us claim
they have not read.
I had a knife in my pocket.
I cut out all the book's inaccuracies.
I chewed them up. I swallowed.
I replaced the lost pages with pieces
of your not-husband's sweaters.
They all were blue and smelled
like nothing. I left
and I will not bother you again.

WHAT GIRLS WHISPER TO OTHER GIRLS WHISPER TO OTHER GIRLS

For a time I wanted to know the weight
& density of your hair.

What your tattoos look like,
though you do not present as a woman
who would have a tattoo.

Do not worry—I don't want these things
any more. I don't want to see just how far
across your face your mouth can stretch,
if you are a pear or a peach
or some other stupid fruit.

I KNOW I COULD HIT ANOTHER WOMAN

Open-palmed.
Nails out & shaped & polished.
Big vintage ring on my finger
leaves my skin green.

Split her skin,
mismatch her cheeks.
To cause a flinch is good.
Crying, better.

Thumb curled outside the fist
so it does not break.
Knock her to the ground and kick
until a rib breaks.

Throw a sucker punch and keep walking.

THERE IS REALLY NO SUCH THING AS WINNING

Every lover you will ever have
takes a plaster cast of your face,
paints a mask of you.

We're all in somebody's closet,
disembodied, kabuki-ed, echoed
voice just waiting to come out.

We design sets and are designed
for them. We burn theaters down
in each city we open our legs.

Salt the earth. Curse the ground.
Summon ghosts to your high school
boyfriend's childhood bedroom.

You will never win this land war.
Run and fuck and run and fuck
and call it making love,

but I know you and I know me
and neither of us is Russia,
you cunt.

Margaret Bashaar's first book of poetry, *Stationed Near the Gateway*, was released by Sundress Publications in early 2015. She has chapbooks from Grey Book Press, Blood Pudding Press, and Tilt Press and her poetry has appeared in many literary journals and anthologies, including *New South*, *Caketrain*, *The Southeast Review*, *Copper Nickel*, and *Menacing Hedge*, among others. She lives in Pittsburgh, PA, where she edits Hyacinth Girl Press and encourages art anarchy.

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