

# bk of (h)rs

*←← Pattie McCarthy →→*

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## matins

blue, then. again she is—bending. against  
a gilt-checked backdrop, palm fronds.  
there is the denial of the senses & then  
there is the obliteration thereof. she came  
back to life with the relics of sweat on her  
tongue & strips of fretting fabric,  
something you lost unrecognizable in her  
hands. textile fragment :

removed for restoration.

suspended & broken folds of her mantle.  
to cover, to cast off.

given that we will re-assemble  
given that we will pass things without notice  
: a torso from a deposition, given its posture  
: a series of heads in profile encircled  
by a tendril meander.

the more—the more—the more—your  
unlimited cache of rapt faces.

so give me something  
to cover my eyes.

all open doors are nervewracking.

all the makings : the bones of a saint, black  
shoes on the bedspread. reliquaried your  
weight, a fall of hair. she's gone to ground  
& found the hive. they were, of course, all  
necessarily sometimes daughters.  
that desire should be relinquished  
upon the veil.

the clerestory as choice & not-choice.

alphabetically I was a cinch & cut  
you out from the philosophy.

“(instrument) for taking the stars”

that kind of singlemindedness

smacks of bad behavior kept behind teeth.

all these things are one day sore. here  
where everything is rolling out from green,

as if you could find a central spot, to still be  
still. the other green was reached crushing

new wild violets & mixing massicot.

something you lost & the manner  
in which it is lost. & so your eyes are

painted the color of a dark coat at night,  
frantic with absence & struck by return. or

should I say, struck with realization of it.  
shall we meet in the after ?

some strange comfort, such as it is.

## prime

ash is not a solid.  
in the course of awake—take  
a wineglass of this decoction : garden rue  
& wormwood, horehound & the finest  
nettles : for some days.  
bleuet has set a feast of sorrows  
& all our humors in a row—  
in that dress that doesn't suit me & is  
incapable of my own distress or your  
life spent in hallways.  
the reconciliation of reason with revel  
is drenched, an arras : weather & equinox.  
largely forgotten like fine lettering  
& whirligigs. fine things in general.  
wanting them to converge :  
    they do not converge.  
hindered by her own mercy—he  
does not carry his learning as lightly.  
the alphabet borrowed & re-arranged  
when I learned the puzzle of spelling  
    vertebræ : something to turn on.

his physics a religion without  
narrative : etymology a science  
they thought we put too much stock in.  
what I mistranslated as *how you changed*  
truly reads *have you (an)other*—I have  
something to say about pot-metals  
& declension.  
if this is sinking, darling—then  
    sink it is & so we shall.  
matches run low—avoid this by keeping  
candles lit. the process can also be  
counted upon to process. on 'don't walk'  
we stop—too much of you  
falls about my head.  
“logic has made me hateful” he said & he  
was correct.  
now, he is an infant. later, he will be dead.  
these are the given continental options.  
there will be lovers & subterfuge  
there will be deaths of circumstance  
& spectacle. there will be three  
intermissions. she said *pietà* & she said it  
*siccus oculis*. I dreamt I spoke in my sleep  
—but I do not. a disgruntled orchestra  
enters a traffic circle.

none

we un-did the vernacular & un-hitched  
the pluvious debris.  
the grief has aged  
her by this page. a brutal grisaille  
disproportionate to a reach misunderstood  
as a loving gesture. or, at the very least,  
an arm outstretched intending no harm.  
“(plant with) footlike leaves” whose pulp  
is edible but its single, nodding flower is  
poisonous. its dried  
resin is cathartic & their faces  
are monochromatic in grizzled caterwaul.  
her arm, the length of everything intended  
nothing. meant nothing in its own context.  
reached *toward*—extended into  
consequence  
which had little to do with her arm, its  
length—chiselled  
out from one another & yet still one  
another—yet still intertangled,  
pulling weeds from the neck of my sweater.

should we return, we would not recognize  
ourselves without the colors.  
we would be stunned & perhaps  
dismayed at how we’ve faded.  
at a certain point in that particular century  
(& ever since), her arms were raised.  
cinnabar, a single embellishment in its  
severity—everything draws away  
from & pushes us to the disaster  
: resembling an almost total  
eclipse, fourteen - oh - six.  
we know how to make leap-years  
now—we think we know how to  
account for nonsense reckonings.  
we know how to make shadows  
where the earth is warm—  
we know to hang copper pots above hot  
vinegar, to further dissolve it in wine : all  
sorts of temperas were devised.  
their bodies produce  
no sound in motion.  
early winter pulls the rings from our fingers.  
there’s an element of quid pro quo to this  
that leaves one kneeling & baffled as to why  
: the gesture is addictive, is catching.

geography anatomized : the girl unfinished. pre-nuptial and acrylic, all sins carefully accounted for—a moment on pins and needles. and every Wednesday night the ritualized numbness. low doorways, slanted halls, the branching nightmare of a child too aware. coiling on a trellis, carageen. ergo, our opera theory. out of the chaotic variety of what was possible—here is what was, what “had to happen.” in-spite-of-myself but myself, transfusion. there is no night—miscellanea resulting in an irrelevant and chronic case of historiography. arguments ensued, our generic argument with several accessible spaces for plugging in specifics. hidden in heather and gorse (isn’t that how it’s meant to go ?) when the sea shall give up. this vicious circle stuck stuttering its heroics—his art is a grammar that appeals to me. the untillable landscape of a sternum, elsewhere. enumeration of articles. an apple of available discretion. the edge of an assassin and I have put on my best face. biography as a system of betrayals (this from someone who has never claimed to be an optimist). with girlish courage she assures us that she walks in the sky. hanging harps of discord in an alphabet of trees, leaves. this was done to ease memorization, this was done by design—if design could be accidental. that the incidental becomes instead central. the skirmish between figurehead and figurine has been revived. agonies cameo in threes. I left quite unconcerned but (and this is clearly the most important point) second-guessed thoroughly at a later date. a bridge falling down with bells on. yes—she looks remarkably well for one who hasn’t blinked in a decade or more. and ever this omen. an utterance against interest, hysterically inadmissible. if that isn’t proper dinner-table conversation—the wholly felt will be surgically removed. with the approach of fabled fair weather, we grow accustomed to long walks. either in common or individually—camouflaged by fragrant thickets. consider the effort a lullaby : say goodnight goodnight several times to insure comprehension, reciprocation, which defeats the purpose. past the picturesque shipwreck, a river no one notices except to cross

despite its tidal pools, eddies—if ominous then intricate. another morning, soft rushed to wake where east is to our west. rivaled, I but an anapest. partial to waltzes, we are mathematically incompatible. since I cannot be sure *if* I certainly cannot say *why*. out of the chaos of what happened, this is what surely will happen. again, we endure long years. separation : she drags a train of it. chandeliers, baroque in exile. in a larger philosophy than the one to which I aspire, or from the French ‘to hope’ or ‘to put trust in’—to wish, rivulets. for something industrial amidst extensive and literate clouds. if she unmask to the moon, leaded transoms. an instrument for taking—in time-honored tradition. as though that wasn’t proof enough. tolling ex cathedra, boning of the neck. threaded—a web or way out, either. Héloïse, your feathers choke me. crowded skyline stories. a desire to be renowned for stillness yet she is manifested perpetually in grievous motion. while absent-minded singing is the most comforting sound—if nothing brightens soon I’ll take my librettos and go home. its skin romantic-sized : melancholy anatomized. an elaborate penance for having been that girl. literally *for what* not *why*—her jetty amulet fallen weep a garland for a brook. torn in tatters, apropos. black, pink, oil-lily blue alternate in wakes and shake fog from your hair. something secret between, inappropriate but not terribly so. this is where it begins—within the ellipse. that’s the way, always. astrolabe : a pen and spindle. this is a woman smoking. these are your nervous fingernails. this is a delicious salad, a cold night, a long walk home. your mad kings and sad stories—crowded, filmy. follow me into the desert—despite or because of your crooked mouth. heard in camera, and happily ever after. agonist, alive inside this. here, almost everyone is marked by that cloudy, classically iconographic radiance. relax, it may rain any minute now. the consonance that results. an arc as finite representation, restoration of that which was better left rundown. much original charm : dormers, moldings, curtail steps (origin unknown). should you need me in the dark, descend with care.