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Girl in the Museum Diorama

Scene One

The boy chooses the police uniform
from the costume trunk

It fits him like his other clothes never could a second skin
night blue a fresh bruise
after a game of hit for hit

He becomes his own sundown
even at noon

I choose an astronaut's space
suit close the shield of the helmet

and our game begins

Scene Two

In a plastic kitchen
the boy is home on lunch break

but there is no lunch on the table

Push the button by the glass dear visitor
and hear the boy

“Where’s the wrench?! The sink’s dripping! Do I have to do EVERYTHING
around here? Where’s the GODDAMN WRENCH!”

A bit of cellophane dyed in blue
the *bloop*
bloop of waste

between drips suspended breath
you might think of a penny lost
a promise slippery bright
the boy’s hunger enlarging tiny cuts

sure no one’s fault the sink’s drain an unintentional wormhole
small thief of love’s grace

It could happen to anyone you think

and go to the next scene

Scene Three

The kitchen is plastic
but the egg yolks are real as ruptured suns orange and molten
sliding down the oven refrigerator
walls The boy's arm wound back
in a knuckleball pitch and in his grip
a duck egg

In this scene I shake my head no
my space helmet
plastered with yolk

My green glass eyes can barely see the quiver of his lower lip
the pout of his brow
Wasn't it just last week we were ponies

rubbing necks our mouths singing "Mairzy doats and dozy
doats and liddle lamzy divey?"

Yes and now this new strange exoplanet
harsher than our desert home
the scattered shells of ovular moons rise and set no more

Scene 4

It's quite a jump I know but this is how
it goes push the girl
and she shoves back aims a rubber-band gun
at his head in a forced march

August monsoons flood the ditch
deep enough to swallow bury forget

Gold badge lying in the dirt the boy's last trick
is not to tremble
to make himself look small

He builds a raft at gunpoint my rubber band cocked
all the way back pulled taut to the day I accidentally
fell in love The scene that was cut
a willow tree midsummer true blossoms pink as sows' ears
the boy's floating smile not for me a joke told
by the breeze

And now all this trouble this game
that won't end this game
where we both lose my thumb on the clothespin eye on the stock
ditch full and running fast

Scene 5

An island of bird bones the boy sits alone
his little boat tied to shore

Dear viewer press your face to the glass push the button

and hear the gulls
circling overhead

After[shock]

Now I cannot tell a threat from a fork
a fire from a smoke tree. I end up dancing
with anything that moves, spoon a Green
Mojave, shoot my foot instead. Mountain lions
watch behind dusty skirts of willows
as I hang wet dresses on the line.
My bare ankles lustrous porcelain chickens.
A fine snow trembles from the troposphere
doesn't melt, isn't cold, but traps light
in tiny coops. The lions salivate, step closer.
I sing for them a sleeping song, sing for my life.
Surely this is a sorrow I can name
sorrow like a wooden door that warped in summer
and will not stay shut.

Pilot I

Because the sky is half-filled with promise
half-filled with thunderheads
I go outside hopeful for a fallen pilot

My bare feet in the lava sand
an offering to the god of pilots who drop
over deserts

If a god for successful missions
a god for collision parachutes
my arms outstretched

He will have a few scrapes
a fuselage burn on his right cheek

(I stick my toe into a spider hole)

Too many false alarms out here
a pickup backfires
then an extra strong boom on the base

but a two-seater plane flies low and I swear
I hear a sputtering
an engine aching to fail

Just thunderheads holding in their guts
no rain for us thistle heads And so
I remove bullets from my pistol of wants

If he couldn't hold me all the way
his arm out of socket
so be it

If half his hair is singed
and can't feel my fingers
I say OK

(I stick my foot into a snake hole
hold for one star fall two)

If the plummet renders my pilot mute
I will kiss away his last words *Mayday mayday*
oh shit mayday

Pilot II

When I find not one but two mylar balloons
grasped in the chain link
their bright pink sugar sweet
declarations of *It's a Girl* and *Look What the Stork Brought*
I suspect the pilot

They are weighted with plastic
rattles full of Sweet Tarts

He knows how to calculate free fall
force of gravity time
velocity how long before the splat

I try to decipher the message
touch my belly which is not a belly
not yet not unless I push it

out Then a freshly cut branch
cherry blossoms still wet from a northern dew
Best a boutique hair bow
sheer as moonlight scalloped loops piled high
I wear it
and my head sounds like a rain tree

But when the pelican arrives
I have to call the number
on its tag Fish & Game comes to collect it

I try to return the favors try to turn my house and yard
everything within the gate upside down

so that it might all float up to him
like the strangest snow

Pilot III

And there were other objects
that could not have been gifts

Snickers wrappers
chewed gum
a Sprite bottle full of piss

the necessities of flight life in the air

Not gifts not formally but that they came
to my yard of all the yards
and all the spaces where no one lives

That was something

Maybe he's been circling for years
waiting for me to notice
and here I've been inside so many afternoons
playing this hundred-year-old piano

whole octaves out of tune
the soundboard rising and falling
a jagged range

the dog howling from his shed

Pilot IV

Mustard yellow
papers
of discarded
smokes
expired coupons
empty lighters
fishbones
toothpicks
underwear ads
scum bags
things
I took
for trash
for accident
messages sent
from a blown-out
world
that would never
have
the strength
to hold me

Pilot V

The pilot wrote a book of poems
each one was titled

“The Pilot as A Young Man”

I had to climb a nearly limbless
tree to fetch it

and stayed

my thighs gripping the highest
place so I could read every word

of weather

Pilot VI

When his plane crash-landed it skidded
through Goobler's Orchid Emporium

He mangled the dead letter office kicked up
a storm of unopened birth announcements

He careened through my father's house too
arrived with shotguns embroidered pillows
and tire irons stuck to him a belief in a Christian God
a store-bought cake

He was smiling like someone remembering a song
his ears full of Orchid tongues

Pilot VII

When the pilot arrives
everything
is still
quaking

The blue light
of the cracked
tank
guppies
and Cherry Barbs
on the carpet
the glass
of my dresser mirror
my own mouth
especially
all of this
animation
suspended

Pilot VIII

He backs from the room asks if it's a bad time
and should he go

His arm is displaced dangling

and there's so much blood
I choose him over the fish but I can't be happy

They are dying suffocating my fish
and it's true they only live so long

but maybe they are more than fish?
Unwritten novels

trips to Europe
very impressive summits

Oh pilot your timing
disrupts absolutely

Your jawline
is a fault line isn't it?

Pilot IX

Your eyes—I thought they would be
more reflective Thought I'd see glitzy debris
whirling a fallen man and a risen woman
meeting in an empty field
I've never been to a therapist but I know
what she would say I fell in love
with the you that isn't here the you
that's in the air still circling