

Julia Bloch

[from Apartment]

Rosencrantz & Guildenstern were on to something

I have had a slight collision with your face
the banister's distressed the small of my spine
will you allow me one more favor of night
it's true you're cagey

Put me back in alphabetical order
you do sort of angle yourself toward the world
which is why when I said *fox* I thought *ferret*
I couldn't be helped

Your mouth is a wreckage of fractured car sounds
no longer pinned I'll search you online later
given a finite number of words I go
for the compliment

You'll need to know I sleep on only one set of sheets
you'll understand I unpredict myself

Because I know this song & how it will end

my myopic heart decides to write down every
thing you say from how you like my green shirt
to the indecision you wave before me
in white strips. *apart-*

ment means I've got my eye on your rent control—
sorry to be so crass in my urge to tie
it all together. last night your fingers marked
fugue states as the song

played *do you know what it's like to be hunted?*
sorry I asked you to meet me for breakfast
at 26th & South Van Ness but the day
was beginning. and

I wanted to watch you drink coffee. and
in your most frail gesture are things which enclose me

Plenty

in the dream we are flying too close to the
water. I can see each plain wave. people fall
into the ocean, hard. I hang at the lip
of the plane, ready

to go, but you walk calmly to the back of
the plane, over and over. I say your name
again. the wind whips around a dark metal
edge. all I can see.

the year's end seems to snake toward me, the sun
a dark disk slicing through the sky. I get your
letter. *one is very bad. one means wolfish.*
I can see your words

shake as you write. I need a successful
illumination. *it's cold as fuck outside.*

On the way home from your house, there's a bar called Chances

See, this late, the
streetlights are the
harbingers of my
intent. Behind the

grey film of the sky,
red blinks to black. My
shoes are filled with
one whole beer. I

just rang you with
my sober and languid
hands. Driving
home across the hip

of the city, singing
to nothing, I string
myself across your
slight advances. Bring

yourself on—I want your
face for exposure
therapy, a vial of
you-coated pressure

pills. Did I mention I've
got a wet skirt. Have
a heart. Think of
the hour or of

how you might fit yourself
to my fine fancy. O of
the very coinage
of my brain, my love.

[from I Dream I'm the Death of Buffy the Vampire Slayer]

I dream I'm the death of Buffy

The world is full of fracture; Buffy is slow to catch on. The glossy print in reds and browns is a rehearsal for the end of the world. All dressed up in the Christmas lights of love, she is my one true sister, my moral enemy, adolescence. *She saved the world—a lot.* I am in the dress of blood. I open my fingers on the scaffold. Still here. Still here. Still here. In a room without you, I'm empty, in a room empty of you. When I wake up, I'm surfacing. *Blood makes you hard.*

I dream I'm the death of Xander

When the shorn side of you steps apart into this ray of blue flame, I'll tell two different stories. Nonvillian doesn't mean null. Frozen rain makes a damp slap on a muddy pavement. The hotel lobby stinks of exhaust but I won't go so far as to call this landscape vapid. Or to withhold the wiry future from this potion recipe. *Once again, with the sorry.* This poem is cut like a man.

[from Letters to Kelly Clarkson]

Dear Kelly,

I feel it's time to wear more skirts, it's time to change brains, it's time to up my dose, it's time for less empathy. I don't have any appetite for this appetite. I tell my lover she's my little Hamlet when she cries and cries.

Let me explain: the feeling there's something else you're supposed to be doing is terrible as a flock of birds. I tried to up the antecedent. I was fit to burst with words. Honey, I wanted the hit.

Dear Kelly,

From high high up in the Opera House, I watch a woman's small dress bisect a glassy stage that reflects the snakey sea. O little ghost ship, o little cursed figure — outside it's a grinning concrete day but in here we're underwater, gilded, impossibility gliding the space between brain and voice, a dark cloud of sound. *I think the industry could use a little class*, you once said. Tricked up on caffeine, I finger the difference on the page where your name turns from au courant into black and white. You're off somewhere taking your modernity leave, plotting a brand new sound, or else grasping at threads as the curtain falls apart.

Dear Kelly,

In Madison, Wisconsin, there is an office building called the Sonic Foundry. Can you tell me again about the curved bar, how she remembered the sound of my voice and followed me home? I chalked *a beautiful damage* on the sidewalk and months later, my hands filled with feathers.

Tonight you are a caged predilection. The eyes announce the face — I think this kind of attention is called *precog*. We wait and see.

Dear Kelly,

At London's Royal Academy of Arts we lurch past a mouth of death, a skirt of serpents, a Christ of feathers, a chest of feathers, a Lord of Death, a liver hanging like a bell or flower. I stand in a black wool skirt in front of a Viking burial scene, watching a ship set on fire & sent to sea.

Television is an event, too, but other times it's a curtain call, or it's fact masquerading as dream. What's it like, to be tiny? Does it hurt when I turn up the volume? *He mistook emptiness for innocence.* This liver, suspended by hand, blooming, is also made of stone.