

the devil of affinities



“By day, the viscera-sucker appears as an exceptionally attractive woman with long hair and a fair complexion. By night, she discards her lower torso, hiding it under the sheets, in a closet, or among a patch of banana trees. Having converted her arms into wings by anointing her armpits with a noxious oil and being propelled by her now stiffened hair, she takes into the air, alights on a roof, and thrusts her long tubular tongue through the palm shingles to extract the viscera of her sleeping victims through their mouth, nostrils, ears, anus, navel, or genitalia. She stalks tuberculars and pregnant women because she is addicted especially to phlegm and fetuses, as well as to human liver and blood. After feasting, she returns home to rejoin her lower trunk before daybreak. However, if someone, usually her new husband, rubs any or all of the following—ashes, salt, vinegar, lemon juice, garlic, ginger, pepper, and other spices—on her discarded part, reattachment is impossible, and the viscera-sucker dies fragmented.”

—Herminia Meñez

The Manananggal is a mythological monster originating in the Philippines. She takes the form of one woman in two halves. You don't see it at first. She just lives near you, or comes close to you. You don't trust this neighbor. Despite seeing her on a routine basis. It's something about her communication, which is strained and full of holes. And her appearance, which is incongruously attractive. Her desire seems to rise like a swollen polyp beneath the garble of her words and skin. You suspect it's an ugly thing.

Who you calling ugly? When a woman's life is at stake (it's never not), then you can become a femicide tool.

Trail her with your suspicion, you misogynistic-xenophobic cop brain. Watch her creep into the forest at night and lurch stiffly. She scans her surroundings to make sure she is alone. Her body rips in half at the waist as though from an internal bomb detonation. Her legs remain perched on the ground, while her torso begins to levitate, sprouting wings and a long tubular sucking tongue, designed for penetration and extraction. This torso flies back towards the village, in the direction of prey.

Now you have evidence of her terrorizing. She sucks the viscera out of sleeping villagers, as her own organs dangle from an open wound. She sucks unborn fetuses out of pregnant women, while her own uterus is in shreds. Whatever is inside is pierced, dissolved, slurped up, aired out, passed through a twisted metabolic process that makes no sense. Her split body is a crack in our community.

—Amy Lien and Enzo Camacho

0. reminder:

it might look like it's trying to kill them but it's trying to kill you

actually it's
ordinary it's rather
extraordinarily
to wrap my brain
around it. it's like
you don't see it at
near you, or comes
something about her
which is strained
who are you calling
you who are the
you need to sit with
like, figure your shit
say.



nothing out of the
that the ordinary is
violent. i'm trying

amy and enzo said.
first. she just lives
close to you. it's
communication,
and full of holes.
full of holes? it's
problem. actually.
this feeling and,
out. it's like they

like honey is

the sleep of the just.

I. el demonio de las comparaciones

just like some places belong to
the way the dead were told to die

not like that

maybe it's time

to reconsider

the harmony between desk and desk
chair

like

how many sub-minimum wage gargoyles

panhandling watery fear

in this trap

if inching lava is the sleep
of the anxious

if you feel
destroyed
let us talk



and how a time machine is like a cave

II.

A reversal might be a natural object, like a tree (so-called) or the creaking of a word (when it splits), like a house removed from its context.

When it splits and turns around and creaks.

There might be a kind of creaking happening in the reversal (though I'm so tired, I might be too tired to notice). That is one house I don't want to look back into (come to think of it), though it was less of a house and more of a reliquary (I can't fathom the fact of it).

Religion is the shadow of the obvious and it hurts that I never needed anyone but I need help now.

The only place I've found to retire into is Reversal

(I haven't covered it in Sameness and it is in no sense beautiful). In no sense. Sometimes I live inside of it, right inside, pink of illusion, devil of affinities. Some days I wake up completely covered in it, wrapped in it like cling wrap, call it being swaddled, call it having been created for this place, call it waking up with an extra 15 pounds on your chest, call it whatever you want.

The only place I've found to retire into is Rupture. The Inferno (all that it is) is seductive and warm but it's not just that I like it down here (which I do).

It's not just that I like it down here but you can call it that (call it what it is, a temporal machine, the time that remains, an eschatology of the poem).

Call it the thing that saves and punishes, the Citation, as Benjamin saw it, call it back to its origin.





III.

The only place I've found to retire into is
depraved difference. Every city I go,
there are piles of it. Dirt. Like a grammar. Dripping
its silver tap (what does it do, that drip)
down Night's little raw Spine. Maybe it was that
raw silver tap that sustained Crisóstomo
through his discovery of what *really* happened to his father's remains
(they were exhumed, then deposited in the river)

that rainy Night at the San Diego Cemetery (call it
a spell, call it a two-at-once-ness).

And I don't have the privilege of un-seeing that.



IV. art makes me less crazy

it should be looked at more
and discussed less
it's an honest joy
to be shocked by beauty
in 2020
i was shocked when your gf was caught stealing
from Whole Foods
i was thinking of a line
by Lorine Niedecker

*I've been free
with less*

Poetry
the less than less
the first of something

how long does it last

V. *how long do things last?*

Cole.

chilling
with objects
in your studio
like cooling carcasses
horned and clawed

after

you tell
the

the third

is called
it is also

many



class

me
omasum,

stomach of a cow,

a book
called the bible

things are called the bible

handbook for the killing
this is discussed
in various sources
on the subject of
an expensive form
all new thinking is loss
on the subject of the new
all newness is old
words
and tones
recycled
and derived
over time
like glass
smoothed by the ocean
smooth but ancient
fossils of a corrupted and failed modernity
like they say—

contaminated.

*I'll be seeing you
In all the old familiar places*

things have been doubling
Twinning
maybe it's time to go home
or maybe it's the future
fucking finally
that thing is happening
in the dark
facts are bigger
more bulbous
some kind of splitting, happening, somewhere.
it feels
porous
diffuse
like the old man
lurking around campus
just staring

Artforum magazine

I dream all night.

VI. *we agree that it's fucked that Hercules pulled up to the red island and slaughtered Geryon and Orthrus and stole his lil red cattle and peaced out but what are we trying to do about it*



with less

I've been free

Calvino wrote something about how, in a world becoming ever more inferno-like, we must identify what is not-inferno and give it space, make it endure. Something like that.

I don't think it was very nice of Dante—in his *Inferno*—to place Geryon, that little winged creature, in the shadowy abyss between the seventh and eighth circles of Hell—the circles of violence and fraud.

On the little winged creature, Anne Carson writes:

Geryon is the name of a character in ancient Greek myth about whom Stesichoros wrote a very long lyric poem...some eighty-four papyrus fragments and a half-dozen citations survive, which go by the name Geryoneis ("The Geryon Matter") in standard editions. They tell of a strange winged red monster who lived on the island called Erytheia (which is an adjective meaning simply "The Red Place") quietly tending a herd of magical red cattle, until one day the hero Herakles came across the sea and killed him to get the cattle. There are many different ways to tell a story like this. Herakles was an important Greek hero and the

elimination of Geryon constituted one of His celebrated
~~I'VE BEEN F~~ ~~EE~~

~~IT~~ ~~EE~~

Labors. If Stesichoros had been a more conventional poet he might have taken the point of view of Herakles and framed a thrilling account of the victory of culture over monstrosity. But instead the extant fragments of Stesichoros' poem offer a tantalizing cross section of scenes, both proud and pitiful, from Geryon's own experience. We see his red boy's life and his little dog. A scene of wild appeal from his mother, which breaks off. Interspersed shots of Herakles approaching over the sea. A flash of the gods in heaven pointing to Geryon's doom. The battle itself. The moment when everything goes suddenly slow and Herakles' arrow divides Geryon's skull. We see Herakles kill the little dog with His famous club.

VII.
the quietest
little dog knows all
about howling.

