

NATURAL SELECTION

Texts by Gini Savage

[1] Creation

I give birth to myself
my own mother and father
for years I ran like a clock-work mouse
Mama says, Papa says,
when does Goldilocks say
I am
Driven
I didn't stop
expected more from the umbilicus
never once got off the hook line or sinker
now before the world
I reach out

[2] Animal Passion

Fierce as a bobcat's spring
with start-up speeds of sixty miles per hour
I want a lover to sweep me off my feet
and slide me into the gutter
without the niceties of small-talk roses or champagne.
I mean business.
I want whiskey
I want to be swallowed whole,
I want tiles to spring off the walls
when we enter hotel rooms or afternoon apartments
I won't pussy-foot around responsibility
"shoulds" and "oughts" are out for good.
And I don't want to be a fat domestic cat
I want to be frantic,
yowls and growls to sound like the lion house at feeding time
I don't give a damn who hears,
I don't give a damn!
no discreet eavesdroppers' coughs can stop us in our frenzy.
Let the voyeurs voient
and let the great cats come.

[3] Alas! Alack!

Alas! Alack!
I have a knack for falling for the wrong man
Cavaradossi or Don Ottavio were just too tame
I never seem to want to stick to my own script
It's the chain-smoking bad guy in leather
the one who'll ruffle my feathers the most
who gets me
I fear it's a lack___Alas!
As Tosca I lost it over Scarpia
not such a bad fella
he had the power and a steady job
the better tune
so when they asked me to pick up the knife and dispatch him
I demurred
perhaps it was his theme song I preferred
I know there's a lack___Alas!
If I were Oberon, I'd choose Puck,
for Pamina, it's Papagena
If I'm Brünnhilde it's bound to be Wotan on whom I'm stuck
If Isolde were smitten by King Mark or Melot
would it make her a zealot?
Damn!
I know there's a lack___Alas!

[4] Indian Summer – Blue

When I was sixteen I had a red hot Chevy

Bucket seats, white top, the steering not too heavy
I loved that car like a child loves a pony
shoe-blackened its tires
my freedom to ride
Now I am Bluebeard's wife
I'd rather be Sleeping Beauty
"Honey, don't open that door," he says
though he gave me a master key
and I've peeked through the keyhole
always a guard on duty
a red light and odor of rusty gardenia
slips out from under the door
no bushes grow in the garden
a saint's blood smells of roses
Blue was married before at least three times
no family portraits and I don't ask
It's so hot
I get tired here in the east
I could doze away the days
Blue thinks I'm too fat
too this
too that
Mama says
Curiosity killed...
the Cat may well undo me.

[5] Joy Alone (Connection)

the stunning silence of myself
from the hearts of forests
middle of mountains
a late low sun rests her friendly hand
on the crowns of uncompromised trees
a fox streaks across the sand and scented sagebrush
a chatter of chipmunks scatters
squirrels who stuff their briefcases for the winter
blue collar workers long term plans
the resiny crunch of orange pine needles
warm under foot
a windfall of sweet cones
joy alone
a startle of saplings
the power of trees
unraveling of rivers
joy alone
joy

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SONGS AND SONNETS TO OPHELIA

[6] Ophelia's Song

Text by Jake Heggie

The hills are green, my dear one,
and blossoms are filling the air.
The spring is arisen and I am a prisoner there.

In this flowery field I'll lay me
and dream of the open air.
The spring is arisen and I am a prisoner there.

Taste of the honey. Sip of the wine.
Pine for a chalice of gold.
I have a dear one and he is mine.
Thicker than water. Water so cold.

In this flowery field I'll lay me
and dream of the open air.
The spring is arisen and I am a prisoner there.

[7] Women Have Loved Before

Text by Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892-1950)

Women have loved before as I love now;
At least, in lively chronicles of the past—
Of Irish waters by a Cornish prow
Or Trojan waters by a Spartan mast
Much to their cost invaded—here and there,
Hunting the amorous line, skimming the rest,
I find some woman bearing as I bear
Love like a burning city in the breast.
I think however that of all alive
I only in such utter, ancient way
Do suffer love; in me alone survive
The unregenerate passions of a day
When treacherous queens, with death upon the tread,
Heedless and willful, took their knights to bed.

[8] Not In a Silver Casket

Text by Edna St. Vincent Millay

Not in a silver casket cool with pearls
Or rich with red corundum or with blue,
Locked, and the key withheld, as other girls
Have given their loves, I give my love to you;
Not in a lovers'-knot, not in a ring
Worked in such fashion, and the legend plain—
Semper fidelis, where a secret spring
Kennels a drop of mischief for the brain:
Love in the open hand, no thing but that,
Ungemmed, unhidden, wishing not to hurt,
As one should bring you cowslips in a hat
Swung from the hand, or apples in her skirt,
I bring you, calling out as children do:
"Look what I have!—And these are all for you."

[9] Spring

Text by Edna St. Vincent Millay

To what purpose, April, do you return again?
Beauty is not enough.
You can no longer quiet me with the redness
Of little leaves opening stickily.
I know what I know.
The sun is hot on my neck as I observe
The spikes of the crocus.
The smell of the earth is good.
It is apparent that there is no death.
But what does that signify?
Not only under ground are the brains of men
Eaten by maggots.
Life in itself
Is nothing,
An empty cup, a flight of uncarpeted stairs.
It is not enough that yearly, down this hill,
April
Comes like an idiot, babbling and strewing flowers.

EVE-SONG

Texts by Philip Littell (b.1950)

[10] My Name

Eve, Eve, must be the sound I made
as I was being made.
Eve. Eve. Eve.
Out I came, made up by a couple of men.
Old man made me out of Adam's rib...
Oh, did he?

God made Adam
God made Adam
God
Adam
God
Damn it!
My children are going to know who their mother is.
Eve.
Mad bad Eve the amnesiac,
Eve, Eve the nymphomaniac,
ME!
Was young man Adam completely unconscious
as I was manufactured?
Did he groan and whimper EVE as I slipped out?
Did God mutter EVE as he slapped me into shape?
Did I scream EVE at the inevitable rape?
Or was EVE the last breath shaped into a sound
by my mother's mouth as I came out?
I was too little to save her or remember anything about
her...
Eve.
What are they trying to tell me with their stories?
I am allowed no clothing.
I am allowed no shame.
I have nothing to wear but my beautiful hair,
My body, my face, MY NAME.
Eve.

[11] Even

in the evening I am at peace.
in the evening I hear ev'rything more clearly
ev'rything
to the hearer all the world does sing
with a ringing and a quickening
overhead the birds wheel and turn
overhead the setting sun
reddening no longer burns
at the water's edge a wind brushes by me
with a susurraton:
grass and leaves
flowers glow against the dark'ning trees
eyesight and the light both go
ev'ry evening the forest darkens
in the evening my senses sharpen
I have no peace at night
I have no peace at night

[12] Good

Good Morning Whoever you are.
Good Morning. Do you have a name yet?
Let me name you.
It must be the right name
So I don't Forget.
What Shall I name you?
What Is your name?
I have not Eaten yet.
Are you slow?
Are you fleet?
Are you obedient?
Are you Good to eat?
Mm..
Almost Ev'rything is good to eat.
Good morning.
If I could I would eat the world
Because it's Good.
Mm.

[13] Listen

It's entire body ripples back and forth like a sentence,
fascinating.

Do you want to be like God?
Do you want to be like God?

How do you mean?
Be old and have a penis?
I don't think so.

Do you want to be like God?
Do you want to be like God?
You know what I mean.

Yes. I do.
My entire body ripples up and down like a story.
I am listening.

[14] Snake

Snake, is it true
About the fruit?
My intuition tells me what you say about this fruit is true.
I'd like to find out, snake.
I'd love to know.
Go ahead in front of me
Where I can see you.
I will follow you.
Oh!
The snake is in the tree.
Where I cannot see him.
He is now the color of Shadows.
Very few things are
As visible as I am
When I'm clean.
When a thing is visible,
It always mean that the thing,
The tree frog, or that fruit,
means to be seen.
Visibility's
A warning
or
An invitation
And it never tells you
Which.
What's visible will either
Feed you,
Mate with you,
Or kill you.
Either way you gain
Experience.
Here goes.
Sweet.
Sour.
Salty.
Bitter.
And the taste of air,
Of rottenness,
Earth,
And water.
Now I know.

[15] Woe to Man

Woe to man
Woe to man
What can a man expect?
What can a man expect?

Think of all the riches, gifts,
Woman brings in her train,
Oh,
Besides her obvious differences
(Inside out below the waist,
Bigger breasts, smaller brain)...
Can you think of any?
Anything?
Anything?
She is nothing
But trouble
Oh nothing but trouble.
Nothing.
Nothing.
She is no thing.
Ah!
You haven't lived until
A man has said that to you.
Woman
Because she was born of man.
Woe to man
Because he is born of woman.
La da dee da dum.
La da dee da da dum.
La la da deed um da.
Ah.

[16] The Wound

The wound
Reopened
Opens the tomb
Her womb
Quickens
The woman
Sickens
And hungers
Hugely
The world in her belly
The sky in her head
Limbs heavy
She swells
She swells
A drop of water
Will not hold
Let it go
Let go
Let go
Not yet
Not yet
The new-formed baby
Will not let me
Let it go
Just yet.
What is already
In that head?
Forget. Forget.
Forget. Forget.

[17] The Farm

As I recollect
It was more like a farm
Than a garden.
We all worked.
It was a nice farm.
Trees.
Ev'rything grew.
Good soil
And plenty of water.

No, it didn't rain,
We lived by the rivers.
The Tigris and the Euphrates.
You might say
That's where it all started.

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