

# pivot

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*Two Poems*

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Self-Portrait As Trotsky's Essay On Revolutionary Art

Call me the uncrossing  
of arms placed over the chest. I am not here  
to receive only the blessing.  
I am no longer the paper body  
that might fear a chalice, I will not drown  
in the compulsory guilt of distributing  
each oasis. Call me the kingdom  
of necessity, I can see up far  
the illuminated road ahead and venture  
further in. I will take  
the host.

You should not assign me  
as introduction. Some eager student, eyes  
bright pilgrim springs  
will get hung up on my ill-defined  
purview, say there must  
be other imperatives. Leave before the last  
battle, which is when I reach for that seventh  
book, the betrayal that calls  
every talking mouse to a barn door  
and judges how they've scurried. I cannot abide  
the resurrection of a single stable  
into heaven. I know every lion  
is a donkey in stolen skin.  
I pile every copy.  
Lock the barn door.  
Set it on fire, and for kindling  
a smudged printout of my self,  
the only one.

So just once. It isn't even a priest  
whose thumb lights the forehead,  
just a math teacher  
helping out at mass. Even forego the church,  
say it's high school linoleum  
that forgives the scraping chairs. And then the world  
that speaks stars through every crack  
in gravity gets a future that extends  
past a single human arc.  
Is that not eternal renewal, time to learn  
to wear lipstick to come back  
for the years that aren't battles,

*("Self Portrait," continue previous stanza)*

for the reflections that linger in desert pools?  
If you just have faith this  
is the one folding table  
where the revolution meets.  
And here I am laid out, my body  
my promise against the story poison  
that says politics is an ape bringing apocalypse  
and not our closest aping of cure.

I hold out my hands, right  
over left. Do you know how I have yearned  
for this. I don't. I hang my mystic  
with a canvas of red yellow glitches at the entrance  
to the barn, don't take them when I leave.  
I raise the wafer to my lips.  
You wouldn't abandon the revolution.  
That's all I can say.  
The children get to grow up.  
Narnia is not dead and this  
is not Narnia. My tongue. Your heart  
fills with body. I cannot know  
this feeling. I have nothing to offer  
you who must translate the splinters  
of dryad screams. I was only the world  
way there. But think if I lived  
just one time. And bought you the time  
to see the portals in ponds, see them not  
interchangeable. To learn better  
how to love. And then you could leave me, fulfilled  
in an empty barn, where all I can taste  
is the hay that's really there.

### We End Capitalism With Lemons

The seams of the white comforter are yellow with the long  
wait and the glow from the lemon trees. We built a whole  
greenhouse just for them, so we could always  
have lemonade. We breathe out citrus and

breathe in each other, here in this bare  
blossoming world where there is time  
to fall in love. The walls have sunlight  
on their tongues, and on mine

I have you. We have been tired so long.  
Do you remember how you moved  
in right away, how our only  
time to hold each other was in sleep, how your grey

nightshirt pulled all the grey  
from the world outside and left it a shade  
of bearable. Do you remember stealing lemons  
from grocery crates, remember stealing

from time. How we learned to aim them at the right  
upper floor windows, saved every seed. And later how your touch  
should have opened mine but instead I curled tighter  
on the warm hook of your fingers, lost every climax

to an indissoluble core of frozen grey sugar.  
You have been so patient with the hard lump  
in my throat. But now we breathe  
in the sapling world and you

on my tongue are so sweet  
this long-soured sun turns lemonade and it's not  
that it's different between us, here. It's just  
that the panic at the window casings

has eased. We want to talk as well as smile.  
And now, here, where there is time to fall in love,

I cough up the lump onto the comforter  
and from the inside out it melts,  
staining the sheets a shade of soft.