

Excerpts from the solo show "Eve and Mary Are Having Coffee"

MOON DANCES WITH THREE PLANETS

"A triple conjunction low in the southwest just after sunset."

- <http://news.discovery.com/space/astronomy/moon-dances-with-three-planets-131006.htm>

I don't want to boogie with anyone else but the universe.

Mercury

Venus

Saturn.

I want triple conjunctions

All down my back

And a moon

With three planets

To choose from,

Tango with:

Mercury

Venus

Saturn.

They sound like electric light bulbs,

Since we've whored them into

Car brands and shavers for ladies.

Once upon a time,

Some people believed

In these Roman gods,

But not all.

Not all.

There are calendars Javanese

And Bengali,

Ethnoastronomies that know

No retrograde.

Saturn won't have to return,

Not anytime soon.

I want to swing dance with the stars,

And not on TV, and I do mean

The gaseous balloons

From whence we came

And sucked our plastic thumbs alive.

I want the heart

Of my baby in an asteroid,

One I keep like a sling protecting me,
A bit less than my own hips
Slip'n'dip around Pluto;
Like a gogo dancer
With a hula hoop,
But celestially awesome.

I want to be alone.
I want darkness and explosions
Of subatomic particles
That will one day be Life.
I want profundity,
Not a Petri dish.
The Petri dish that came
From stars and Petri
And associations
With the pterodactyl
In that movie;
I think he was called Petri.
Pterodactyls came from stars.

I want extinction from cognition
In the minds of others.
No Internet.
The pterodactyls, in dreams,
Come running down to me from the stars
Like fighter pilots
Who don't justify things,
And are honest about being bloodthirsty.
I impugn them with the terror and disgust
We give dinosaurs.

I open my mouth
To the winged creatures
Clawed at the angles,
Bearing down the Milky Way.
"Come dance me skinless.
I'm twirling with the moon."

EVE AND MARY ARE HAVING COFFEE

Eve prefers Bethlehem single-roasted.
She is so bitter and wise
That she doesn't care
To use non-fat milk.

Mary is wearing, adjusting,
Nervous,
The folds of her favorite shawl.

They start in their awkward,
Hallowed voices,
Speaking of fecundity,
Fealty,
Mothering,
Blame,
Comparing the penises Of Jesus and Adam,
Ribcages,
Antimatter,
Shame.

All those heavy periods
In the Holy Spirit's presence-
Sacred menstrual,
Clotting detritus.

They are comparing apples and breasts,
Roundness and fullness
And loss of both,
All the metastasis of legions.

Each is enumerating flaws
In the skin and symmetry
Of the other.
Each is secretly biting her lip,
*How would the Great One
Prefer her?*

The Chosen Coffee has unwittingly
Grown cold.
Neither can divine
The grounds of either.

"I don't have to like you," Eve says to Mary.
Mary says, "I'm on your side."

COFFEE MONOLOGUES

Eve says I am fair trade,
Shade-grown.
A Sumatran and Javanese
Who doesn't drink coffee.
Despite the mercury in me,
Eve assures us all,
I am organic.

"Fair trade", to me,
Is being in Europe going "Where is the free cake?!?!?"
And then when old ladies ask "Whyyy?!"
I go, "Fuck you, colonialism!"

I never said I was
Quality Java
In terms of propriety.
But you must appreciate the sentiment.

Mary says,
There is a house with too many stairs
That does not welcome you to it
There is a tube station without a lift
There is a bathroom with no handholds
When you need to shower just so
There is a realm that goes
OMG
Inspiring
So inspiring
So so inspiring
Despite despite despite
Despite muscles
Despite being a woman
Despite being an Aries
Despite double-jointed thumbs!

Eve says you must be faking
Eve says you push yourself too hard, my poet
Eve says how come your English is so good,
Did you write that yourself?
Eve says talking about yourself in the third person is precious;
Use the Royal We, you're in Britain.

The three of us say,
"We take it black."

Myself, just to play along.

Mary says I love when I know I shouldn't
And Eve says you always should
Mary says where are you from
And where are you going
Woman with secret knives and secret kitchens
And Eve says I will miss you as you are
As you are always changing
You have chiaroscuro for antipasti
You have firecrackers
On the eve of the last day of
Ramadhan in Jakarta for dessert,
And your breath bleeds knives of light
Before it will go dark.

You are cardiomorphology
And scars on the moon.
You breathe small
Because you are afraid to ask
For someone to love you whole.

Some people love you whole
But not the world,
And the world drip feeds its ignorance
Down into the seabed
Of what it is to be a woman.

And Eve says to all of us,
Mass incest
Was traumatic for me
But it made you.
And Mary says monotheism
Spawned far too many terrible tattoos-
Among other atrocities-
But it sang the life of your grandmother's whole,
And they come together,
Eve and Mary,
Saying, "What is identity,
When we speak and sign
In colors.
Eat and are eaten,
Serpentine ouroboros.
Drink to your mind's eye.
We grind your brew in our teeth.

Come play outside,
It's daylight
And we all deserve the sun."

MY MOTHER CALLS ME SRIKANDI *Published in "The Missing Slate"*

Bow and arrow clasped beneath the ribcage.
Sex turned, pulverised passionfruit, inside out.
Killed by swordsmanship. A wren
Of a beached thing, flailing, always once
Something else. We were once always
Gods,
Mythological creatures, imagined
As *future generation* in a bowl
Of cassava given to a toddler, mollified
Only by prophecies come to bear,
On stories collectively hung upon midnight.
A soul in Shikandini's shapeshifting body,
Vapor, her lungs
Dripping wax from shadows.

Poet's note: Srikandi or Shikandini is a figure in Indian as well as Javanese mythologies, each with different retellings. My mother invariably calls me this as a compliment.