



Slippage

It's almost the year of the earth pig, thank God because my kid has stomach flu
 & we need a fresh start Cleaning the carpet my husband said
we have to move & Nan said *I love the Chinese almanac: here are the days to fuck*
someone, here are the days to avoid trolleys, here are the types of people
you need to suck up to, *here are the days to wear red underwear. NO*
BULLSHIT keep your ear to the ground or pulse to the nose or whatever that last one
 being a wrong idiom the way she once wrote
 bread and potatoes of the immigrant experience
 & I wrote *carb hound!* But being golden, we love the moon & the lunar year's
 dark ascent & slow revelations & I said *Shit*
now I need to add another problematic poem to my book as the scorpion child raced
 across the loft holding a light bulb and I shouted
 NO to keep him from dropping it over
 the banister & when he cried I told him *my "mean voice" is my gift to keep you safe*
 but I couldn't tell him who gave it to me & ended up saying *God* & *Mother*
Nature & the Universe & explaining too much about light bulbs
 how they work & of what they are made & what might happen I said

too much about illumination

about the world in fragments

last night Nan took her son to the hospital

because we've always been yoked together

& her daughter fed the cats including the cats of others who needed feeding

& I said *send me that fire pig energy* & regarding this book & its celestial disarray

she said *I will take responsibility for any cultural misappropriations you can say that
in your acknowledgments* It's always a good day

to avoid trolleys it's never a good day to move a Taurus manifesto

Over shishito peppers, Rebecca & I discuss H.D. & matrilineal descent. Our conversation turns the room red because I'm the useless kind of synesthete. I tell her she is basically a Scorpio which is a lot for her to process because she's basically a Scorpio. The other Rebecca in my life, not Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* which I am saving and don't you spoil it, is a Pisces moon, & when I told her this she said *yes but Barnum effect and all that* which is such a fishy way of accepting a compliment. H.D. had friends too, her friend Silvia Dobson, her dragon, wrote her a letter about shopping for goldfish. Rebecca means *servant of God*. In the letter, Silvia Dobson calls H.D. *My dear cat* & writes, *I rang boldly and entered a new world. Fish Enthusiasts are new to me*. I write a letter to the state of Massachusetts asking for Robert Lowell's birth certificate because somewhere outside Woodstock the scorpion child demands *Yellow Submarine* on repeat while the road undulates beneath me and I think *I myself am hell; / nobody's here*—. My husband asks which of my most-hated songs I would rather have on a desert island (he's a Virgo sun), *Yellow Submarine* or *Don't You Want Me* by The Human League, convinced the utopian vision of the former (which, excuse me sir, is profoundly *dystopian*) would be the better island jam, at least at first, although he admits *Don't You Want Me* would remind one that sometimes it's better to be alone and I say *how can you know me all these years and not realize that Don't You Want Me, while among the worst of all possible songs, is profoundly and extremely the ideal desert island song insofar as it's a moeey ballad you can dance to, thereby providing both catharsis and cardiovascular exercise?* If he were on a desert island he'd build something, write a message in a bottle, I'd be eating fruit in the trees. Only civilization could have brought us together. Only civilization and the comet in his chest. Once, regarding a romper she was wearing in Brooklyn, Rebecca, definitely the Pisces moon one, said *it's like am I wearing this because I actually think it's cool or because its presumption of coolness somehow flickers back & forth from presumption to actuality moment to moment?* She sends me Barthes on astrology: *the stars insistently and wisely prescribe more sleep, always more*. I know the house burns down but I don't know if he did it. She corrects me, *I always thought Rebecca meant ensnarer*.

The fish salesman *might have been Aquarius himself* and might have been a conman. The dragon reports to her cat that *Golden gold-fish are almost too expensive to buy but you can get brown ones which colour up during the summer. If there is much sun and warmth, they colour quickly. If the weather is bad, they may not glitter till Autumn time.* I am waiting for a letter from the state of Massachusetts that says *Robert Lowell was a Pisces what else do you need to know?* Chet, a Gemini, says *either you only live this life once or else you live this life over and over and either way you want that cake.* The dragon says this *seemed like a little fable.* Rebecca has the moon, Venus, Mars, and Uranus in Scorpio, not to mention Scorpio rising, which is why she identifies with both H.D. and Antigone. My husband has the moon, Mars, and Uranus in Scorpio, not to mention Scorpio rising, which is why he could survive for a long time in the jungle. Writing to her friend about her fishpond, Silvia Dobson explains, *Today I planted up the pool but the fish must not go in for a fortnight. You won't get sparkling clear water for a twelve-month, said Aquarius. Don't on any account try to clear the green away for it will get thicker and thicker and then, at the right moment, come like crystal.* The dragon hunts for fishes on a *narrow sordid street in a stark bombed area.* My great-grandfather, one of twelve, was the only sibling to make it across the Atlantic, but I have forgotten the story as I've forgotten the language. En route to Paris I spun Natalie Merchant's *Tigerlily* in my Discman, eager to meet lost cousins who would complain about their soft stomachs, spurring an instantaneous feeling of kinship. In *The Gift*, H.D. writes, *A child born under a star? But that didn't mean anything. Why, every child was born under a star.* The neighbors set off firecrackers as a shadow creeps across the moon. *They say I must be one of the wonders of God's own creation.* All these years later, orange and green are still my favorite colors, the way they came together on the cover, & I would happily live on unpasteurized cheese. The scorpion child says *my imagination is just about fire.* Earth's shadow reddens the moon, confusing fish & scorpions. Natalie Merchant is a Scorpio, too.

Waxing crescent moon in Sagittarius
 & what the fuck
 do I want
 to manifest
beyond stilling time, its slippage

In the scorpion queen group text, the scorpion queens are talking
about their vaginas.

They say we are making shit happen the way Latour says
things happen.

I am not a scorpion but an interloper, always
in the pit
on the desert floor, they are telling me to bill the patriarchy, they are telling me
get on a train, go somewhere, go to Philadelphia, the Lake District

we agree if men got IUDs but I you don't we agree

on the dragon as suggestive emoji holding that crystal wrapping around

Bruno Latour, fire pig, lion moon, classic fucking Gemini

Venus, Uranus, and the sun in Gemini
hence all that pushback against subjects vs. objects actors! networks! Dragons!

You guys
your vaginas are perfect how could they not be perfect
but it's never OK to disagree with a scorpion not even
about her own perfection

as we slide on into that station
where we have always
been modern

Waxing crescent moon in Sagittarius a million stock photos of the moon

the birds flying

by the morning moon

I wish Aquarius would get born before we perish.

When I call myself a sleeping bear the scorpion
child says *& I'm the cub with you*
a better lesson
than all Aesop's fables combined

bear mother, dragon mother
reclined in the chair at her childhood
dentist, where they still play
Dave Matthews & call her

young lady! At the park the scorpion
decides crashing is the new breaking
which is not not a statement
of praxis & into me he is

or someday was a Capricorn, obviously,
like a swimming goat, Dave Matthews
I mean, a grass fire on the hill
and the way the light came

through the window, when I was
young, once, a lady, I guess, in a manner
of speaking, my purple notebook
my own alma mater

My Virgo ascendant wants to buy a house.

My Taurus sun wants to upgrade the furniture.

My Gemini moon forgot to tell me what she wants she's too busy

 rubbing the snake oil into her legs

 and winding down the staircase

her mind buzzing

 like her mind

According to Emily aka *The Voluptuous Witch* Jupiter is a sugar daddy & when he's in
Sagittarius it's time for me to work some house magic

and I do, lugging a desk upstairs & hanging the *ketubah* emblazoned with a watercolor
pomegranate, plump sign of futurity.

At the Eastman Museum, I start getting snappy.

There's a fake elephant head where a real elephant head once hung
reminding me that photography has its genesis in that concentrated iris which
I mean that confiscated iris I

In the dragon stories, the dragon always has a den, I always make it cozy.
The scorpion child turns on the fire to *make it be cozy*.

The pomegranate is a sign of fertility.

If I wanted a tattoo, which I don't, I'd carve it
on my wrist.

I left Colorado for western New York just to see the Maroon Bells on a box of tissues

George Eastman was a Cancer & no offense to my Cancer girls (including the one
who painted the pomegranate) but that explains his perverse sense that an elephant

would be best enjoyed at home just
give me a moment inside the camera obscura its heavy-ass curtain
falling
to reveal the image of the garden something in the eyes the elephant's eyes
gave it away their marble unreality upside-down image

silver chloride quicksilver a school of fish scattering as the elephant steps
into the water

I think I broke my eye inside the camera obscura,
all that concentrated light.

The moon follows the car says the scorpion child & not to be that horse girl from the '90s but I put on a song by the Dave Matthews Band & ask him to listen for just that lyric & then I start to recognize bits and pieces of stories *I think I can I think I can* and I realize this has always been a song for a child, which explains why I loved it when I was a child.

In the scorpion queen group text, the scorpion queens are discussing
their camera rolls, scrolling
fast past portraits
of their mutinous vaginas. They are doing this at the Museum of the Word, making
passersby blush
like chimeras. This is a euphemism for exegesis, like
the vagina itself. The scorpion queens are startled to find seven photographs
of a Gemini husband,
indivisible by two emerging, dripping wet, from the shower.
A towel at once obfuscates his corporeal form and renders
the photographs more intimate
as captured by a Pisces child her tiny wild heart Mercury & Venus in Aquarius
fish in the water as in the trees climbing and I am trying
to say something about form // Platonic ideals // & drier modes of inquiry
but the message escapes me because the medium is too fucking pure, man.

Standing in the kitchen, my husband says *I'm glad this has brought you some joy*, which is the most Virgo response possible.

Upstairs, the child lies flat on the table of my back
the way scorpion babies ride on their mamas.

I dreamt u sent me a parrot & I thought *what is this statement of praxis?*

There is no dragon in this poem, unless
the dragon is Form itself.

Jack Kerouac
was a Pisces.
What
the fuck
is a Pisces

The moon waxes toward Purim & Mercury

goes retrograde which means it is not going backward

but appears to be going backward I tell the children the story of Esther

a queen who revealed the hidden parts of herself

which is why we wear masks we hide our faces to celebrate revelation

it's a twisted logic you thought the Victorian frog who bows & bears

a bouquet was *not the enemy but rather the objective correlative*

of our contempt for the enemy

thus revealing your secret kindness/thus revealing that I am awful

& Nan tells us the scorpion child's dreams are auspicious

even when they wake him at 3am which Matchbox Twenty promised would be lonely

& he won't go back to sleep because a dragon is there.

Jeremy Fisher is an illuminated manuscript the source text is an amulet

also known as Beatrix Potter's brass

frog doorstep, which she brought to life

her lover died though

When it starts raining in the kitchen Nan says

Confucius says small water disasters in spring

bring good luck & when I say you made that up she says just the Confucius part

but Confucius is a construct on the first day of spring a car taps your child so gently

if it were anything else a bee a brush from a stranger

but you cry in your office, your Aquarius moon reminded of its, our

precarity. Esther didn't ask to be queen she was only tending her garden.

Didn't ask to be anything.

The child applies glue, presses sequins

to a paper mask. We fold *hamantaschen* dough into fertility cookies seeded and fruitful.

I asked *is the water still fortuitous*

if it's from a malfunctioning toilet & Nan said let me consult the books of the ancients.

Days ago you sent us photographs from Lake Elsinore, all poppies & painted ladies.

Orange, a color named after a fruit.

I said *auspicious nightmares & toilets 4 realz?*

& she said *for realz but you still have to take care of business you know*

you still have to be a woman & hold the bag.

Teach me about dragons, or don't.

The language of explanation is a heart emoji.

It means you know what I mean.

The scorpion children play dragon and unicorn,
by which I mean they play with fire.

They were born one day apart
 and that is the day that always seems to be between them, wide open.

The night of the super blood wolf moon I maybe hurt
my teeth on some overcooked potatoes. I read
Where the Wild Things Are, lining up the moon
on the page with the moon in the window, whispering
my same wild song as the scorpion child falls asleep
with his leg against my shoulder. I am the place
where someone loves you best of all. The wolf part
of the wolf moon refers to the hungry beasts of January
though the woman who cut my hair told me it refers to *pack*
energy, or maybe that's the same thing. She has two tattoos
of the moon, one for the moon under which each child was born. We were born
under waxing crescents, we are just getting started honey, we are just getting started.