



Columbina/Saturnalia and Other Poems

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COLUMBINA/SATURNALIA
AND OTHER POEMS

A Thesis Presented

by

Leah Barber

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

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M.F.A. Program for Poets and Writers

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and Other Poems

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ABSTRACT

COLUMBINA/SATURNALIA
AND OTHER POEMS

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COLUMBINA/SATURNALIA AND OTHER POEMS is a book of
poems.

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I am God if I feel.

Vaslav Nijinsky

COLUMBINA/SATURNALIA

[Before literature and history]

Before literature and history

There was literature

There was history

It was ghost-faced

Bridled With experience

And we lost what we misplaced

Your wet yellow lips

Your glass

Your poison

Somewhere from above

I tried to fit my vicious will Inside

My form

Candy-lipped mime

Book from which the books come

The instances

That populate the world

The powder

That populates

Like death

The world

[My mind is pure]

My mind is pure

Of heart I escape naked

From my alias

On the back of a mule

A stiff Glittering thread running

Through it

Beyond danger

The desert being anywhere

Where nothing is

I have often been

Stolen from

The landscape doesn't change

It dreams to stay the same

[Simmering aboveground is the feeling]

Simmering aboveground is the feeling

I was carried off I came back

In the sound's blackest

Registers Far below the trapped music

An enormous heat rises

This heat merely an element of that heat

I am seduced No Persuaded

Even if I am so clothed

In descriptionless Tyranny

I'm naked when you come

Pathless Arrow of my eye

A pretty water hung Mirrors hung

Swords At the tent's entrance

There were people

Not like us They moved like gel

Around us in an Exile of their own

Kiss of the fool The mite-faced Fool

That which is scarcely

Here In the world Is here

[In the virtual chamber]

In the virtual chamber In the old

I begged and then I looked away

In fear From fear's monitor

The animal shine shot through

My back The liquid's hot

Potential My fate

A projectile in

The fluid world

I chew like a sword

Jester Touch the knot of

A sex An orange light

Dances like an insect by flames

The walled

City Keeps the sewage in

And I dream of

Early art

Nameless land in your eye Lightness

Of event In a city without

A sense Orange mirror

Your face of double

Passion Nights

In the hayloft

Where I lifted

My sleeping leg From water

And made myself What I am

Oh Orb

I sit on a spired fence barely penetrated

[I do as much as I can]

I do as much as I can Between

Moments

So that I don't have to change What happens

When I start with an impulse

You Discover with your open hand

And the action

Is clear as a flip-book Senses dot the

Periphery Of my continent

Before Like islands We are led

To some heaviness

My mouth leaks music You move me on a loop

[Luminous foul corridor]

Luminous foul corridor

In late paradise

I feel The limits

Of glory Horror and orthodoxy

I'm a savant of your

History do you know

What wanders up my dress

It is my talent for the past

This labor Is like failure

Is failure

You are maimed with weather

White leather

I take you Senselessly

There There and there Finally

Naked you wonder

What your rights are

In the stateless world

[Rabbits with shine]

Rabbits with shine
In their eyes Ruffle around
Evil Her red face looming
At the Italian boys
All of it Still
Framed by desire
The brown river threads itself
A question through
The scene
What brings me From one stage
To the next White melon
The bitter man
With the small stool
Speaks of survival
Like a beetle In mirage water
But I can't see when I come
You run at me from a distance
The shape of my
Character starts
Not in my mind But in my
Experience Bring my

Shadow Like a mistress

To the Italians

This brown water A sign

Leaches words Oil

Fever Runs on Earth

A vehicle

A shameless fear opens

The living To scrutiny

Opens the lungs up A fume's twin ghost

[In open squalor]

In open squalor

I love you ambitionless

In Egypt Etruria

I press my drive

Around As host

To my life

I know the extremity Entrance

I have some fear

I want some more

I feel it dry

Oblivion In blue clothes

I am changed by trouble

And I sleep It is hot

And when I move away

From you

Upstream It is lord

[Form protects me]

Form protects me

From extinction

Form repeats

Still You may press down

On the old For the new

Soon

See my shadow

Standing lengthily

Apart At the end

Of day Time

Its sheer necrotic novelty

An uneasy frame

In ambient red

Everything I saw

I never said

People Their early beauty

Itinerancy Its edge

A looking light

All rooms Ruin

[My ambition is a gas]

My ambition is a gas

Beyond me Everywhere

Posing as air

In a new

Fractured country We are driven out by folk

Belief kills off something

In a people

I rise Out of habit

I sleep without knowing the time

And with no way to pursue it

Blue porcelain Red and yellow porcelain

Heavy-mouthed fish

I eat The sand between their heads

Like saffron

In winter Meridian

The mirror of

My jester

Goes away like wine

[Contort in the known]

Contort in the known

In the verse theater

Immanence My sponge

In vinegar

The plot Humiliate

Become human

Blue reds run Wild

In the mineral cold

Coloratura of the general

West I feel your

Destruction

In the unpopulated

Catastrophic images

[In the river]

In the river

You rinse your painted face

Repent An insect

We cull flowers

You eat spiders Shuddering

At the crowd

Like an ultrasound

I slide the light inside

If I could invent a family

I would know Again

Who I belong to

Where there might only be

Water And how little water heals

I descend with my hideous

Sisters A young voice

Moves like mesh through a curtain

Fevered we are with disgust

Being an actress

I touch your hand

Without touching it

I touch your configuration I want to touch it

[My infidelity to the world]

My infidelity to the world

A typeless beauty

In the highlands The single

Humanoid figures No

My compass

I love them for their natures

They have nothing And come in alone

It is work to be

Thought of And to stay alive

To be thought of is to stay Alive

I have already been living

At the heart A terrible Mystery

I know I have sinned I don't know how

THE DEATH CAR

Poem for La Brea

Sardines and Polish beer

Youth is terrible.

But I love money

Pray for weather

Sense your eyes

We are insanely, insanely extinct.

Man from California

Fat onyx ring

Time is a menace

Hot with reason

In the hearts where a drum disappears.

Before cameras

I had images behind my eyes

Orange images

It was like water

Going out loving you.

Poem for an Equinox

I dip my dirty hand
Into a new tub of lotion.
A loss of faith seems the only way forward
Earth is more than surface
We've barely touched it
The past
And it goes away constantly.
Squeeze the foam
Like a wildcard
A blue joker
Out of me.
It's oral
And anarchic
Nothing but hell.
I want a baby
Milky vetiver
There are signs
All on the mountains
And death loves
Desertion
No, survival does

And survival looks like death

But it isn't.

When you die

Another you

Appears immediately

And that's annihilation.

I bring myself to the edge of a poem

I want to refuse it.

Novelty

I'm still at the Christmas party.

A man shows me a video

Of a man fucking a snake.

The future is here

For six seconds

I'm wearing new blue boots

I buy a set of twenty tea lights

It ends

On navy sheets.

It's too late to be afraid.

Are we strong enough to survive

Documentation, not really

In these little

Short shorts.

Everyone who's ever died

On camera

Their yes burns like a yes

Onto the glass.

Rune

I'm back with a theory

The theory coagulates

Wildly

And is young like reason.

People are used to being asked for more

They are global with shame

In a paltry blue state

Drinking locust juice.

No feeling is long for this world

Only objects are long

And even then

They are not much long.

The Death Car

There's money all over

What we invented

But I wouldn't weep for any of it

Culture precedes everything.

The giant of him

A whole fecundity

It brings the world to its knees

To name a single thing in this picture.

Big foods seduce the knife.

Lay your hands on me

In thirty-eight minutes of sunset.

There's no era, only a desire

To square

To square up.

Poem for the New Year

Apocalypse without love

A sweet little pillbox

At the end of an orgasm.

In the Uilleann pipes

In the boarding school in the mind

The heaven we feel.

The heart's like a deity

To a horse lover.

The winter light

The rarest brick towers.

The world is the place

Where you hurt, where you are.

In the courtyard with cold German breakfast

It was a gorgeous day.

Hollywood Babylon

Bert Brecht hated New York

But he loved Chaplin.

Chaplin was blonde and short.

He had two child brides.

We know the end

White dress and a pair of penny loafers

Playing go fish with a deck of cards

All jacks.

Things are things.

Ideas are also things.

They all come from somewhere.

They come from hell.

On the boardwalk

There's a thief with a rose pinned to his dick

A shirt with little mirrors sewn into it.

Warped little mirrors

Sewn into black velvet.

The Last Castrato

When I died

I rode in a car.

When I was born

On the floor

A jewel scintillated

A skull came down on a paper balloon

O demon

That xenophile

With a long white scarf, to be congratulated

Beauty, you are me

We are alone

Singing is more painful than watching

No, watching is more painful.

Picturetaker

Origin is the goal.

To want to be denied it

And worse, to be denied it.

It's almost the end of disaster.

I miss my disaster.

Sending air down on the dumbwaiter

Touching all the elevator buttons

In tight kidskin gloves.

In the doorway you say

What do you have to say for yourself?

In a theater of the whatever

Life is not about happiness.

Hell

Love makes you believe in hell.
You have long red hair like hell.
I love you like Nicole Kidman.
Time leaves you everywhere
Hungry, desperate and dead
In a black Buick
With four, five hands
Behind your back
A Bohemia of distance
Across the tiny garnet flowers
And everything slow moving
And coming ever nearer.

Captive Song

There are few things in this world I haven't seen

Pictures of.

My hands.

I enter

The new room

I could stand three feet on my knees.

People like to read books in languages

They don't speak

Then they can enjoy looking

At characters and don't have to use

Their mouths.

Some people never tell anyone anything

Their whole lives

And some never say any words at all.

You are free to be the perpetrator now

If you want to be

I think I understand your impossible

Inclination.

I give you permission.

I won't make you say

Any words

I won't make you read

Any books.

Forget what I said about restlessness

I could sleep anywhere. I could sleep standing up.

Dirty Boulevard

The freedom of love it astounds me

When we walk by the furniture stores

With their waterbeds as big as houses

On the dirty boulevard.

Loneliness is pitiful.

Freedom is my dream, I always forget it.

It wears a pornographic face

The face of a vista.

You're gonna get what you want

You're gonna get it

And then you're gonna lose it

All like the stars

Uninterrupted and sweet

A website of snow

So red it stains your eye

Stains your eyes green and red

When you look away from it.

My Love is Bigger Than a Cadillac

An act of self-hatred

Like butter on water


When you wear those high-neck blouses

That make me want to see you again.

A woman touches Jesus

But he doesn't see her

Jesus eats crazy amounts of bread.

 There's a Kate Bush song that goes

"Have you ever seen a picture

Of Jesus laughing

Mmm do you think

He had a beautiful smile

A smile that healed."

In the suburbs of my love

A little karaoke goes

You are beautiful

You are so beautiful

But you are not as beautiful as the beginning.

Poem to Extricate

There's no beginning of the end of horror.

I want love from this petroculture

Apocrypha, and you, uncut

In a sweater wet with silver

Telling them nothing.

In the inner life of history

It's space that is profane, not Earth.

Each word is a bribe, literal and hieroglyphic.

Objects become dangerous.

No, they show their danger

When the sun goes completely, completely down

I want to see many pictures.

I wonder what my life will be like, what it's been like.

Song of Songs

Like fucking a fume away

This flame.

And it's a future to make love to you

Your good ointments

Your name

A domino

In a room full of others.

Desirelessness

It's in the world

A little taste of surrender

Like murder

Climbing up the brown buildings

Shimmering down

On bits of ticker tape.

Poem for a Hustler

There's no one born of woman

Who can tell you

You did it to yourself.

I feel such a transgression

To deform a life

With the half-known

Your elixir

Is everything to be confided?

We have despite our odor

Lived the lives of innocents.

I love your parquet floors

Your pubic hair

In cave-light.

I think I am covetous.

Casual Mondays at Home

Powerwalking through the apartment

Taste a food with my digit

In a terrible bin

More like a strobe.

What did I win?

A bag of black vinegar, this platform

Picture from the gone world

The meatiness of your hands

A merciless piet .

There's a blight upon the world forever

The basic shame that exists

Within us

In all arts

The brutal big effect

The brutal arts.

Paranoia Is the Problem

Let me befriend it.

Whisper your name into my locket

Sloped under a radiator

On the table on all fours, weeping.

The glory days are happening

In my apartment

When water turns the wrong way

Down the steam knife.

The future is an open question,

A festive spanking later.

We will cry for an hour

Together from 8-9 PM.

We will create a scenario.

We will cry at the fact

That everyone in this video

Lived their whole lives, and then died.

Cordelia's No

You don't want all my love.

How much would you pay?

You need to say what the danger is

To be totally influenced by everything ever

To move between absolute seduction

And cryptomnesia

I was thinking of the goddess, of course

The combination of violence and fraud.

Humiliate me in front of the government

I'll win, living

In antechamber

This angel

Occurs, an arrested storm.

How do we numb ourselves?

The illusion of ending is art.

Poem for the End of January

I guess I loved it.

I didn't mean to.

Maybe the real threat is daily life

After all this time

The trouble

With experience:

It weighs you down.

Words seem not to be

Death's medium.

From there,

No one writes postcards.

When man first walked on Earth,

How much glimmer?

This poem needs a glimmer

To make it furniture

In the brain

A bedside table

Littered with little notes.

A poet's not a radio.

When I want to say something

I write a poem.

An illogic follows

Eventually. Its weapon.

I stayed up late.

I liked the café.

I will show my hands inside the puppet.

I will save my life by destroying it. I won't.

Poem Written Six Months After Reading Lear

The cause of history

A basic irrationality

Surrounded by lives.

The past, a dictator, says love.

A collective orgasm

In the presence of reality.

The drum kicks in sadly

At the joke.

I don't want to be in the ground.

I want to be in the world

And to protect myself from it.

Oh, this is a rigid art

That sings inward

Like the shame-flower

In domesticated green.

Will it all be destroyed?

Definitely

I will hear it on my radio

In the 22nd century.

It will be like a snow globe inside me:

Life, barbaric

And delicate, lyric.

Internet, EU

Because I want to survive just enough

Jesus, tell me what it's like to be dead

I forget

How quickly the moment passes

To dream the life you're entering.

It will be August tomorrow.

I'm gonna take a picture with my mind

Syntax is time

I'd at least ride its motorcycle

Cold as puce

The color of Babylon.

What are the things that make you think of me?

A parody of the 20th century

In basic existence, edged

For years on end.

When I hover over dead text

It becomes a link

A cash business

Selling kidneys.

A person or thing that watches

Or stands as if watching.

Inner Snow

Cities are where the love is. Not in this Puritan hell

But I like the wrought iron lampposts

Behind you

While you drink your milky coffee

Not smiling.

The heat of the day

Meets the heat of the computer.

A wood moth falls out of the tree

And lives an hour. I want to want to live

Where I live

To be loved where I live

I had a dream like this, it was just a color

The rapid weather

Shit smell of summer

The limestone's reflection

In the black glass.

I'm Scardanelli, I go mad

At the Paris keychain dangling

From your belt

At techno night

The intricacy of speed

Its vividness

For I am drunk.

You put the frame inside me.

Walking after Watching Fritz Lang's Metropolis

One way of living is mercy

A movielike beauty

Made of hand-drawn eyes.

This is crisis. It's life

Everyone walks by

Your face a moving image

Your life a life.

Many times you're in a place

Where you don't want to be.

No one comes out of their grave

For desire.

You will go your whole life

Without seeing it.

Everyone

Has thought of something

In the afternoon

I have made myself ugly.

Exactitude is cruelty

Whim

Satisfies endlessly

We are going to hell

For reading this
Before bed.
Men are playing chess in the park
Fathers are notoriously
Hard to forgive
Chess is a great muscle
Against the "what is the future"
Question
A nice way to work up to the feeling
It's hard to do just one thing.
To sing exactly
What you are
In the tension of the morning
Commute
A clean sexual energy
Comes through in the details.
The demonic finalist
Of material culture
Is love
And there is paraphernalia of life
All over
A woman.

**Poem written in Winter with Lines from Mechthild
von Magdeburg**

God said

I couldn't help but be God.

The romance between the maid and the Lord.

The androgynous prelapsarian body.

Resurrection, because the world

Thinks of us.

Second life, because it sees us.

Let the mind recognize itself

In the kitchen.

It will ask for nothing

Like sleep. Only a trace of it

Will remain in the body.

Who made this book?

I made it, with my powerlessness.

To live, lie down in snow.

Love is beautiful. It can be abused.

Ballad

Full moon tonight
And these clouds are a dune
A 24-hour gong
The louder the better.
To love, see everything as time
And feel time as obsession
A pain like chewing gum
In the subarctic
While you chase your demon
Across the breaking ice.
Will it be different
From perfection?
Death, so moral
And outsiderly
A black pomade in my hair
No, a clear red
Like an embryo
In an oily glass.
I am tired now from my meal.
I want to touch you
With my eyes closed

Like someone learning.

Not every word is saved

By its ending.

I don't want any words here

But my own.

I'll love this passion

Inside doubt

I'll love it for what it is. Philosophy

Notes on Antony and Cleopatra

Medea was a pharmakon

O My oblivion

Later You will really lose

Antony So tough

He drank horse piss The secret

To the palimpsest

Use everything

Address someone Who is not

There's a love poem History

Deep gossip

And someone described In absence

All is horizon

It is unskillful to eat

Your tool Rome

Happens When you really start

Falling apart

And that's when the poetry comes

In aught August

A strange narcotic sexed

How do we surrender

Youth Or try not to surrender it

Intrinsicate knot
A neologism for love Not war
Begins with nay
Supersaturation Rips you apart nightly
To create The night
Isis and Osiris
As water is in water
Women's secrets Darkening
I saw the back
Of a black hole
Living here Shattered
By the horizon-effect
Ultra chartreuse Venus
That youth
It was pissed out of us
In the spring water
An ancestral urge
To taste for poison Time is out of joint
Dripping slowly toward Christ
You go there There is talk
You go there and you talk
And that's history Doubt

The kind you put everything into Poetry
Complete effort A chiasmus
Double-negative Ultimate artifice
Or ultimate real erotica
Her body exploding into a million
Golden pieces Body is gossip
Hidden In nets
A woman talks to death That shadow
A perfected defect
This language ravishes Me
Turn the ship around I will follow you
The I Where the nay was
The worm will Go through
The guts
Of the beggar-king
A crooked elegy
Digested We will give up everything
To experience each other
At the severest limits of Our lives
Out of time
In Judas's unnaturalness
And villainy

There is left us Ourselves
To end
Ourselves The messenger
The real messenger
Form A lengthy suicide
Effacing the whole
Dream
To have even
A little of yourself At the end
Hypercompressed soliloquies
Written on a ruin
The blue smell of gas
In the omnes Drum solo
Camp psychodrama The world in undress
The set is all In the language
The fourth wall
But the wall speaks
A wind
Strong enough
To break Glass
The wounded chance
To think in public You don't own it

You just walk around In it

If I can't be I will end

If I can't be

With you I will end