

*I Heard the Angels of Madness*   ⋮   I dropped a spoon. (Company's coming soon.)  
Gossip and greetings murder my musings  
as guests arrive in a bright upstairs room.  
I tear a page as drunk choirs start singing.  
Unconsecrated toasts challenge decay;  
A wine glass shatters (or perhaps a heart?)  
and bleeds vermilion, staining the page.  
I sigh and swallow, 'Til Death do we part.  
I dance to ancient cathedrals screaming  
of drunk sinners' cocktail cacophony  
and visions of tombs of maggots teeming  
I succumb to their champagne symphony—  
A pulsing vertigo greets dawn's gray grace;  
The Angels of Madness sweetly serenade.

**Sestina**

Love undoes the Venetian blinds and breaks  
the nightmare fever, my head still dancing,  
his cataracts howling at the sick moon.  
Love's mouth laments, and, tracing my bare  
silhouette, prays "awake, my pretty?"  
Oh Lover, have mercy. I say nothing.

*Seduced by a foreign tongue so nothing  
bleeds out my mouth, black and blue bruised waves break  
the bony purpose of the flesh, pretty  
nonetheless, drunk roman candle dancing,  
disappearing, angelic arms and legs: bare;  
kisses translate under the Montauk Moon.*

Desperate Love wilts as the obscene moon  
betrays each sin. I confess nothing.  
Love's red-light district roses pierce my bare  
flesh. Crucified, Love's hysteria breaks  
my fall, "why?" screaming "why?" Vengeance dancing,  
Love's black death angels painfully pretty.

*Coney Island distorts all the pretty  
ones, wasted glow under the neon moon,  
exposing two desperate hipsters dancing,  
decaying, numb hands pleading pulses: nothing.  
Tilt-a-whirling as my vertebrae break:  
Hands, hands everywhere, and a ripped knee; bare.*

Frail Love and I lay vacant, bored and bare,  
tangled in our deathbed's stained sheets; a pretty  
mess; Holy silence: we hear our hearts break  
like fevers and sighs from the sullen moon.

And I, nothing. And he, nothing. Nothing.  
So silent I hear nothingness dancing.

*Gasping evocations and slow-dancing  
with deafening vulgarities, the bare  
cinderblock walls sing, but I hear nothing.  
Beat strangers eye and finger this pretty  
slut's stigmata as told by the mad moon,  
sweetly infecting till the shadows break.*

(Oh my pretty Love, forgive me nothing!  
The absurd moon fades and the silence breaks.  
Love and I lay bare and bedroom dancing.)

*The Diner*

I. He had ink on his hands—I should have kissed those poem-bruised fingertips but I read the menu instead. His college-ruled kitsch was metered and neurotic. He should have overheard my microphone confession but he didn't. His jeans were ink-stained; he should take the pens out before washing. He kicked across the booth. I shouldn't have sat Indian-style but he kicked me there anyway. I was hungry and bit his omelet heart in two. We should order soon. He should always write in books and I should always search rummage bins on Twelfth Street for his handwriting. He should proofread me. Kiss me! Close the menu and lean over and— The waitress asks What? She should come back. He shrugs. *Coffee?* I nod. *Two coffees, please.*

II. He raises the winter-faded mug to the heaven-hungry couplet parting among the stray hairs. The steam whispers of caffeine like the shadow of rationality between the pale blue lines lingering on in a language I don't understand, but those words, I think I love them. He translates the inky vomit in milligrams and AM's and PM's as the light bulbs overhead burnout and he presumes the expiration date on the box of metaphors—Rejection

is an ode in a self-addressed stamped envelope. I spill his coffee, staining the pages of potential.

III. The world is his ashtray as he smothers me in the corner of the booth, cigarette-skinny. I kiss his face in the glass staining the diner's seafoam scheme with red. My purse pukes on the table and chipped fingernails manipulate makeup until a pulsing lipstick bleeds a heart on the glass. Tragic. The waitress rolls her eyes. Just coffee, thanks. Black eyeliner blurs the pop song epigraphs we memorize and recite and pray for in diner booths and back seats, the vulgar bathroom stall advice—In the name of the loved and of the lovers and of the forever forgotten, amen.

IV. Define Good. His pen stopped. Am I? Maybe, he said, nothing is. His cigarettes punctuate the existential casserole of an emptiness to be contemplated in hungry silence that perpetuates the pianist's verses and choruses and so on about post-modern romance. Is this Good? He writes Hamartia! Hungry, I binge and purge words—Dessert? The blank notebook serves sweet nothings and erasure ashes remain.

V. Silence crawled wormlike from his mud coffee.  
But—it was the vacuum he said. But maybe  
death stops and starts like my break-beating heart  
and maybe death is white noise just like that  
and—It's the pills he said so I spilled more  
onto my dinner plate and I was spun  
angelic in a seafoam tutu. I knew.  
Pink shook into strawberry submission,  
cream was whipped and cherries were gutted.  
Fat fried thoughts as the toilet flushed all.  
White noise black death angel! But anyways  
I slept with so-and-so. He emptied a  
pack of cigarettes onto his dinner plate  
and with knife and fork he began to eat.

VI. He screamed Hamartia! without meter  
and the desperation tore the pages  
spilling ink on the pavement. The poem  
rises from the white chalk outline and haunts  
the diner. He eats maggots and I, words.  
Hearts crack on concrete and spoil in the sun.  
Why still kiss me goodnight and tuck me in  
beneath typewritten twilights? And what of  
empty mailboxes and silent wires?  
Grand Central's constellations are static  
as the trains come and go and a worm  
inches out his nose. And what of tomorrow?  
And tomorrow? And punctuation? And  
empty first pages and metrics and rhyme?  
And what of tomorrow? What price has he  
on circles? On the head of our idyll?  
I've a train to catch. He, my Hamartia,  
eats maggots and I still binge and purge words.

*Lobsters Mate for Life*

⋮  
He's my lobster.  
That old blushing  
linoleum domesticity,  
hanging Christmas lights  
and green plastic wreathes  
in our doorjamb bliss;  
amaranthine in our  
refrigerated  
saran-wrapped flesh;  
drunk in our  
American aquarium dream  
of love songs in  
supermarket aisles;  
clawing at our bed  
of lettuce in  
post-Communion prayer.  
But scientists say  
it's dinnertime  
and you're hungry;  
these things always end  
up Tupperware leftovers  
anyway.