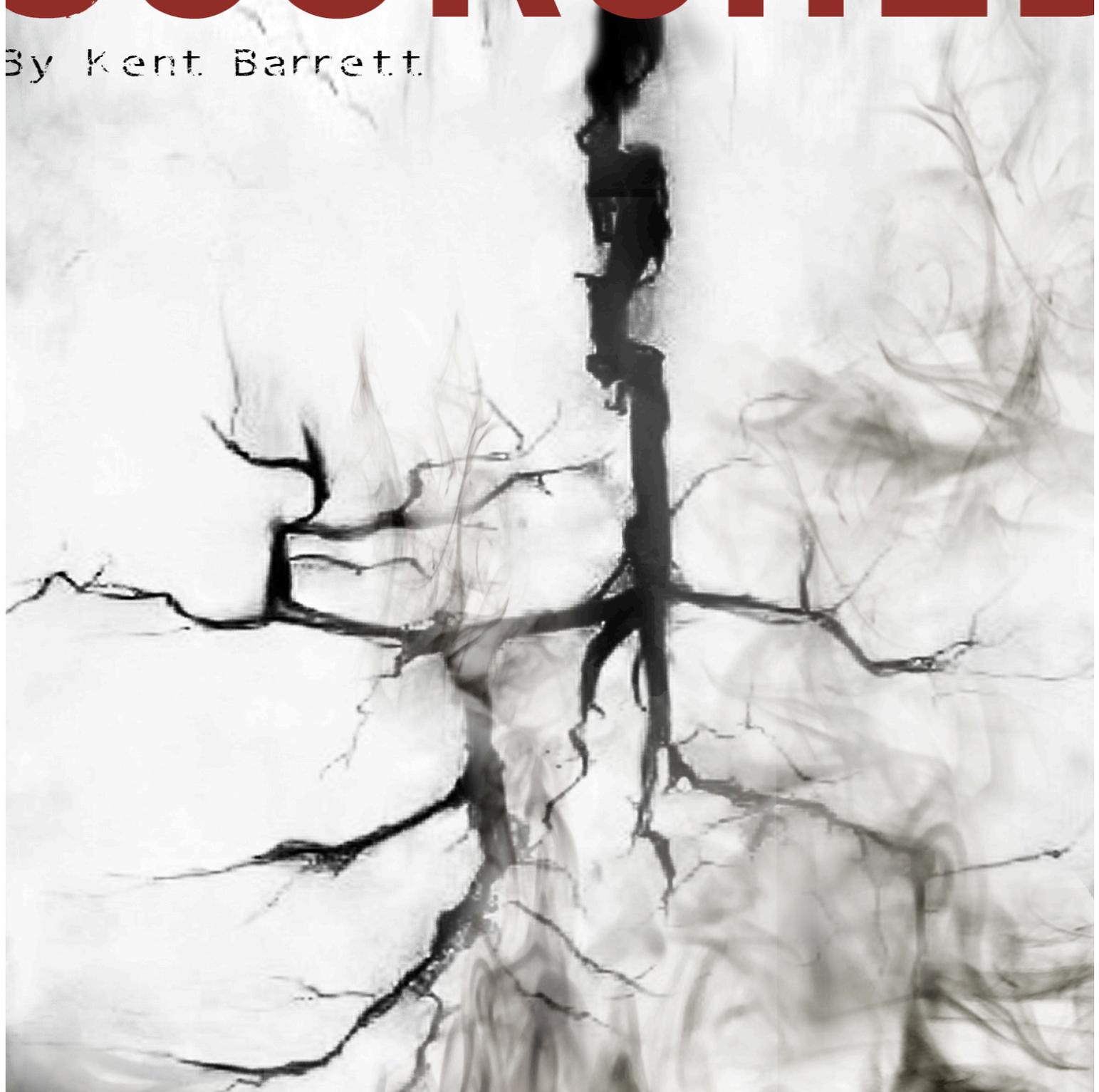


# SCORCHED

By Kent Barrett



# GROUNDS

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**By Kent Barrett**

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## argumentum ad hominem

(Latin for playwrights note)

In the fourteenth century a North African man named Ibn Khaldun wrote a seminal text known as the *Muqaddimah*. In it, he describes (among other things) the cyclical nature of human beings and the societies we form and ultimately destroy. What fascinated me about this book was that while Machiavelli, Hegel, and Marx all propose similar views in expressing the recurring nature or “feedback loops” of civilizations, Khaldun maintains an optimism and distinct understanding of progression from one society to the next primarily through the study of monuments.

In the *Muqaddimah*, Khaldun lays out a four part process of formation and decline beginning with a sequence of naiveté and progressing through sophistication, decadence and finally destruction through senility. Khaldun explains that as nomads begin to form commonalities out of necessity and comfort, societies are born. Yet, within this creation, lies in its very essence the key to the civilizations future downfall. As people begin to share, communicate and work together this, in due course, leads to a governing body and excess. Since tranquility is necessary or at the very least encouraged within the populace, so too do its members lose their inherent savagery and natural instincts. Thus, Khaldun argues that the constituents are no longer able to be self-reliant so each must depend upon a governing body whose interests are primarily rooted in selfishness and greed. Consequently, the decline of the civilization arises when disenchanting members on the outskirts begin to raise dissent based on the senility of its people and ruling class. Eventually, these rebellious peoples will overthrow the sovereignty and become the ascendant, beginning the cycle anew.

While Khaldun does assess a difference between altruistic leadership and monarchies concerned only for themselves, he infers that eventually *God* will decide that the state must fall. Therefore, a society may heighten and preserve its prosperity and prominence, but destruction is unavoidable.

When studying the lives and times of society’s past, Khaldun proposes that the most helpful information can be ascertained through the viewing of monuments erected and abandoned. He points out that the very act of history itself survives the cycles as seen through the metaphor of these monuments. I would argue that, most times, these monuments are nothing more than testimonials to the stories and beliefs of a people, it’s rulers, and gods. Furthermore, the true irony is that these acts of constructions themselves, will eventually fade, fall and become nothing more than dust.

So what does all this mean? Well, to me, this show is about creation and destruction and the endless cycle and intrinsic nature of each. I think a single act of creation takes tremendous time, labor and skill, while destruction comes effortlessly. Yet, it is within our fundamental spirit to achieve both. Truly, we can do little else.



*These lines are not designated to character or chorus.  
You are free to do with them what you will.*

A Barren Space

A Man

A Woman

Standing nude

Straight

And apart from one another

Like statues

A Chorus: All dressed in white, painted bodies and blank souls.

They are the everything in between.

We are the everything in between.

Two environmental scientists,

A man

And a Woman

devote their lives to the preservation of the rainforest.

Yesterday, they walk into a section of the Amazon

And set it on fire.

Fire.

All I can see is my world burning to ash.

My whole life.

Consuming.

The lives of so much more.

Smoldering.

And the man starts to dress

The Joelma Building in Sao Paulo burns to the ground.

And the chorus starts to move

In Croatia a sweatshop incinerates everything

Everyone  
Inside  
And the woman starts to dress  
Moscow is destroyed by fire  
Three times  
Chicago  
Twice  
New York  
Atlanta  
Boston  
St. Louis  
Salem  
Parliament  
The Globe  
The Whitehouse  
The Basilica  
The Temple in Jerusalem  
The Temple of Artemis  
The Library of Alexandria  
1000's of hotels  
Theatres  
Churches  
Houses  
Factories  
Stores  
Nightclubs  
Tunnels  
Towers  
And the forests.  
The forests.  
Wild fires engulf California.

Burn through Florida.

Decimate the olive gardens and farms of Greece

In Thailand

Mongolia

Russia

Vietnam

Australia

Burning

And Burning

And Burning

The woods and wildlife to dust.

Ashes to Ashes

Dust to dust.

The Amazon.

The Amazon seems as if it is always ablaze.

We met through Green Peace.

I was tired of making minimum wage giving museum tours to bored children.

I was sick to death of sitting in a cubicle, trying to pretend the first half of my life didn't matter.

Unfulfilled.

We met through Green Peace.

At a rally in Washington.

Tear gas burned

Smoke

Everywhere

He picked me up off the street of a stampeding crowd.

You had fallen.

Or was it me?

No, I was the one who fell.

Not until later.

Yes, later.

That night, we sat on the grass next to the river.

The Washington monument loomed over the trees and all of us and everything in between.

Everything in between.

We talked for hours.

Learning about who we were,

Where we came from...

The monument loomed over us, like a Titan.

Titans.

The old gods.

The ones who ruled the earth

Before the Olympians overthrew them.

Before the world turned toward modernity.

We sat on the grass.

Experiencing each other.

Experiencing this world we shared.

We just sat there,

Talking

On the grass.

Yes, the grass.

Bermuda.

Dog's Tooth.

Cynodon.

Invasive.

Foreign.

It took over.

We sat and we watched, the fireflies.

Watched the fireflies dance around the sky,

Their light reflecting off the water.

The only natural light you could see in this city full of monuments

and foreign plants and men who thought themselves gods.

We sat.

I sat.

I sat.

And I held

I held

Her/His hand.

I held her/his head in my lap

I stroked his/her hair

And the world stopped turning.

And all we had was each other.

And we talked

And talked

And we sat

And we talked

I love this place

I hate this place

I love the fireflies

Love to watch them dance

Buzzing

Burning

Moving

Through the air

I could sit and watch the fireflies forever

But by morning they'll be gone

They're not... gone.

You just can't see them anymore.

Unless...

Unless.

I love.

I love

Being here with you  
This is nice, isn't it?  
And the world  
Our world  
The whole world  
Stopped  
It stopped turning  
And it stopped moving  
And the fireflies seemed to dim  
And the city seemed to shrink  
And there was nothing  
Else  
No one  
Else  
But...  
You  
I  
Me  
Us  
We  
Could I?  
Would you?  
Could I... kiss you?  
Hmm.  
A spark.  
Did you know that fireflies use aggressive mimickry to trap their prey?  
What?  
What?  
What does that mean?  
Well, It's this thing that some insects do.  
Huh?

What?

Some female fireflies... they, they give off this light, pretending that they're non-aggressive.

Pretending.

Pretending like they're non aggressive females ready to mate.

Right.

So the male fireflies... they get duped by this whole song and dance routine so they... um. Well, you know, they try to um, mate with her.

Ok...

But instead, the female eats him.

Are you trying to tell me something?

What?

No.

No.

Yes.

No.

No, I just...

Um...

I...

You're not afraid I'm just trying to trick you so I can eat you later?

Well, that all depends. Are you sending out signs that you're ready to mate?

God, we're such nerds.

God.

Gods

Monuments

And grass

And bugs

Somewhere a fire is burning

When I was a little girl we used to catch fireflies and put them in a jar. We'd poke holes in the lid so they could get air, and my mom would put them next to my bed at night. I'd go to sleep watching them fly

around, buzzing by each other, and giving off their beautiful little lights. It helped me sleep at night. Knowing. Just knowing that they were there.

But when I woke up every morning they'd always be dead.

Right.

Right?

Right. Well, they can't live in captivity. They last anywhere from a week to two months out in the wild, but when you bottle them up like that, they die in a few hours. They can't survive if they're trapped.

Who can?

I've been feeling a little trapped lately.

Trapped.

Encased.

Like fireflies dying in a jar.

I think we all have.

And that was that.

I moved in with her.

Move isn't exactly the right word.

No?

No.

No.

He didn't move his stuff out of his old place.

Just sublette the apt. with whatever I had inside until the lease ran up.

We've been together ever since.

Common Passions.

Common Grounds.

Scorched Grounds.

All around us.

The beginning of civilization

It starts with fire

A Light

A Weapon

A Tool

Prometheus?

Prometheus.

A moon of Saturn

The Titan.

Yes.

Yes, that.

Let's get it out of the way.

No sense dwelling on tales already told.

Prometheus brought fire down to the people...

What more is there to know?

Well, right, but there's a little back story

Remember

Is there?

Was there?

Do I?

Did he?

Yes.

Yes.

The Titan who tricked Zeus.

You will pretend as if you are Prometheus

And I?

And You?

You will play as if Pandora.

Pandora.

The first woman.

Punishment of man.

Beautiful evil.

Isn't that nice?

The one with the box.  
The box full of sin.  
And hope.  
Let's not forget hope.  
Yes, hope.  
The final curse.  
No!  
No?  
No.  
Whatever.  
And You?  
And us?  
Yes, us.  
We are Hesiod.  
The poet.  
Narrator.  
Teller of over told tales.  
The in between.  
The scene is set.  
A feast  
A table  
The settling of accounts.  
Between men and those who think themselves gods.  
Both Old.  
And New.  
Prometheus  
The Titan  
Offers a meal  
A sacrifice  
A symbol  
Of all that is to come.

To the Olympian

Zeus

He offers.

We offer

Two choices

You have to choose.

Always.

What am I doing here exactly?

Your time will come.

Be patient.

Two choices

In this case

It is a stomach

A stomach?

The stomach of an ox.

Gross.

Be patient!

Or

The glistening fat.

Two choices.

What Zeus

The Olympian

doesn't know

he cannot see what is underneath

That is always the case with a choice.

A symbol

A sacrifice

What is underneath.

Inside the stomach, the meat of the ox

Inside the fat, the bone.

I think it's important to point out, that it's all the same ox, though.

Right?

No.

That's not important.

Are you sure?

Yes.

What's important is the symbol

The sacrifice.

One is beautiful with nothing of value at its core.

The other hideous, but full of substance.

You must make a choice.

We must all make a choice.

Always.

Zeus chooses

The beautiful exterior

Of course he does

This sets the precedence

A precedence.

From hence forth, man keeps the meat, and sacrifices the rest.

Fat wrapped in bone.

Burns it

To the gods.

Capitalism in action, huh?

Would you be patient?

Please.

Zeus becomes angry.

He steals the fire.

The means of life.

Takes it back.

Power.

Control.

Now, how are they supposed to sacrifice their fat wrapped bones, if they

can't burn them?

That is a good point.

That's not the point.

What is the point?

This is when Prometheus steals back the fire, and brings it back to the people.

Oh.

Oh.

So they already had it...

Right.

Right.

Right, right. Then Zeus gets angry, and chains him to a rock and birds eat at him every day and every night he heals himself in an unending cycle of torture.

You can't just throw around the word torture like that.

Can't I?

You are disrupting the story.

The way everything fits together.

So there's a design?

Is there?

These are not questions

Or words

That matter to this particular scene.

Aren't they?

I'm very confused.

Zeus releases Pandora!

Finally.

First woman.

Punishment of man.

Beautiful evil.

Hey!

All Gifted.

From her is the race of women and female kind

Of her is the deadly race and tribe of women

Who live amongst mortal men to their great trouble

No helpmeets in hateful poverty but only in wealth.

I think we got it.

Do we?

I don't.

Yeah, come to think of it, neither do I.

Thus, it is not possible to escape the mind of Zeus.

What?

Nevermind.

We'll come back to this.

We lived together in poverty

Hateful poverty

I spent my days working in a coffee shop.

I couldn't even get a job doing that.

We spent our nights applying for grants

Fellowships

Job opportunities in our field.

Anything we could find.

Our only goal:

To stay together and try to pursue our dreams.

Our two loves.

Or researching.

Yes, the research, I almost forgot.

We did field work when I had days off work.

Sometimes you would skip work.

Yes.

We were very poor.

But for the most part, happy.

Yes.

For the most part.

We were in love

With each other

Or was it the work?

Does it matter?

Common Passions

Common Grounds.

Scorched Grounds.

All paths led

In some way or another

To the fires.

To the Amazon.

A letter came in the mail.

A response

Long overdue

Anticipation springing forth

The first step.

We could finally walk away from this life

From this place

Together

We left for Brazil a month later

No need to bring anything.

Leave it in the past.

Anchored.

Tied.

Torn.

But abandoned nonetheless.

We flew to Brazil.

A new world.

A new beginning.

Full of change.

I had never seen such poverty before in my life

Hateful poverty

Shut up.

No. It was.

Hateful.

Our plane landed in Sao Paulo.

Sampa

A city full of lights

Air thick with smog

Parks full of monuments

A reminder of where we came from

This was to be our second beginning

A new life

A new job

A new home

Not this city full of artificial lights and monuments and people  
poorer than I imagined.

The country

The Forests

The everything in between.

Just in time too

I was beginning to lose hope.

Hope is the last thing, you know?

Yes, of course

But always there.

The final curse.

The savior of our people

But it stayed.

Stayed?

Bottled up.

Like a dying firefly.  
We walk down by the river.  
Away from the hotel  
The city  
There is no escaping the smog  
The trash  
The poverty  
Hateful.  
All of it.  
We walk down by the river that first night and we talk.  
The shadows from the trees sway  
Engulf  
Us  
And everything  
Else  
The wind picks up  
The trees sway  
The bugs sound  
Crickets.  
We can hear them chirping.  
The forest crickets  
Did you know that only full grown male crickets and can chirp?  
Let me guess, they're trying to mate?  
Wouldn't you like to know.  
We start to find..  
our peace.  
Our world...  
Slows....  
The one...  
we share..  
Together...

Without.

Without..

Without .

Anything.

Anyone.

Else...

Nothing...

...

So hard..

to get to.

To keep...

That.

That...

Place.

That..

That, peace...

...

Serenity.....

Calm.....

Let the rest of the world burn..

We have each other.

For a moment..

....

Then a flicker of light.

You keep playing with that damn rock.

I'm amazed they let me on the plane with it.

I'm amazed you haven't lost it.

Trinitite

The green glass.

The product of Oppenheimer.

Bringer of fire.

It's radioactive you know?

Yes, you've told me.

From the desert sands of New Mexico

After they dropped the bombs

over

and over

and over again.

The desert set ablaze in god like proportions.

The sands heat up

So quickly

Faster

And faster

So hot

Hotter

And hotter

Faster hotter faster hotter faster hotter fast hotter faster hotter

faster hotter faster hotter faster hotter faster hotter faster hotter

faster hotter faster hotter faster hotter faster hotter faster hotter

Quicker

Searing

It fuses together

Yes!

Forming glass

Green glass

Radioactive

The sand didn't just burn on the ground

It actually pulled up into the vacuum of the explosion.

Raised.

Higher

And Higher

Reaching toward the heavens

Reaching toward the gods.  
Engulfed in flames.  
And then.  
And then.  
Release.  
Raining down  
Everywhere  
On everything  
Trinitite  
Like the shadows burnt into walls  
The shadows of the testing  
Testing  
The site was called Trinity  
How ironic  
It all fits together  
The rock is called Trinitite  
How symbolic.  
Is it?  
I carry it with me everywhere  
How quaint.  
Right.  
Right.  
We walk by the river.  
We try to capture our calm  
Our moment.  
Our world.  
Something's not right.  
It never is  
Something doesn't fit  
It never does.  
Not the way it's supposed to

I want to go back.  
Go back where?  
Go back to what?  
There is nothing  
Nothing to go back to  
Something's not right  
I want to go.  
Go  
Go  
Go  
Come with me?  
We can turn around and leave tomorrow.  
This place.  
It's not  
Not what?  
Not, right.  
This place isn't the answer.  
This place is everything we've been searching for  
Everything we've worked for  
There is no going back.  
There wasn't.  
I should have known.  
There is nothing to go back to.  
Go  
Go  
Go  
You can leave if you'd like.  
I've worked too hard to get here.  
I'm not going anywhere  
but into that forest.  
I can't go without you

The only thing I have to go toward is you.

Please.

Come.

Stay.

I did.

Later that night.

It was beautiful

and miserable

You should have gone.

There was no turning back.

Before we left the river, smoke came up from the forests

Coarser than the air

The sky thick with dirt.

The smoke filled our lungs

Our souls

Made our eyes tear

Our throats close

There were no fireflies dancing that night.

Later we made love.

Softly

And sadly

My heart wasn't in it.

My mind was 1000 miles away

Still, we collapsed together

Into the cold bed

Wet with sweat

Shivering from the heat

Damn bugs all around

They're not damned.

We were.

I tried to hold you

Get off me, it's too hot.

Or was it me?

No.

It was burning.

The next day we woke  
and went out into the woods

The day we had waited for

The place I had imagined in my head for so long

Finally, we arrived.

Did we?

We thought

Perhaps

I had a thought

Yes?

Yes.

Well?

Well.

I.

Yes.

No.

I.

What?

Sometimes

The mind

It drifts back and forth

Flowing like smoke...

...

The Rape.

I was raped.

She was raped.

This is the rape scene.

I figured.

Do we have to do this?

Yes.

Why?

Because.

Because it fits.

It all goes together.

Pieces.

Fall into place.

This part is essential.

Women who are raped are seven times more likely to be sexually assaulted again.

Grounds that are scorched are twelve times more likely to become burned again.

And yet.

And yet.

Nobody will listen.

But I don't want to.

Don't want to what?

Don't want to go through it.

Again?

Now.

Period

.

We have to.

But.

Yes.

No.

Yes.

NO.

Yes.

Do it.

Now.

I was raped.  
She was raped.  
The raping of Persephone.  
Goddess among nature  
Bringing forth the seeds and plants  
Hades falls in love  
Or lust  
Either way,  
He's quite taken with Persephone.  
A man finds me.  
Follows me  
Hunts me.  
And I didn't know.  
And I didn't know if he thought it was love  
Or lust.  
Or something else.  
How could I?  
How could you?  
He finds her in the fields of Sicily  
He approached me in the field.  
Playing with her plants  
Playing with her plants.  
I wasn't playing.  
I was working.  
Studying.  
The plants.  
Asphodels  
Daffodils  
Narcissuses  
Plucking the flowers  
The petals.

Taking samples.  
She likes to pluck things.  
Hades, in line with Zeus.  
Brothers through and through.  
He came from behind me.  
I didn't see him coming.  
He opens the earth.  
Pushed me down on my back  
Swallows her down.  
Ripped open my clothes  
She screams  
I screamed  
She screams  
Screams  
And screams  
And screams  
But no one can hear her.  
No one who cares.  
No one would listen.  
He pulls her down  
He pulled me down.  
Into his world  
He rips off my underwear.  
Beneath the ground  
He puts his hands over my eyes.  
Where there is no light  
I can't see.  
I can't hear.  
There is no sound  
Everything goes white.  
There are no plants

No trees  
No leaves  
And nothing is alive  
And I start to feel him.  
And he forces himself upon her  
And he starts to touch me.  
And I CAN'T! DO! ANYTHING!  
And he touches  
Her  
Caresses  
Her  
Strokes her  
Touches ME  
Stroked ME  
And I shake.  
And I...  
And I...  
And she can't...  
And she can't...  
And she won't....  
Or did she give in willingly  
How could you say something like that?  
I'm sorry.  
    I can't believe.  
I.  
This.  
What?  
He pulls her down.  
I tried to get up.  
She tried.  
She.

Tried.  
He.  
He.  
Pushes himself on top of her.  
Forces her legs apart  
I can feel him throbbing  
And I can't see.  
I can't hear.  
All I can do  
All I can be  
Is this feeling  
This burning.  
This searing  
Terrible pain  
He forces her to accept him  
To take him  
To let him  
Be  
Come  
Inside  
In his world  
Far away from hers  
And he keeps going  
And going  
And it doesn't stop.  
And it feels like forever  
And the seasons are changing  
But there are no seasons  
And there is nothing else.  
NOTHING.  
She cries

And I cry  
And she cries  
And she screams  
And I scream  
And I...  
And no one listens  
And again and again and again and again  
She's lost.  
And she hides  
And she cries  
And screams.  
And she goes inside of herself  
And I don't know what to do.  
And she will not eat  
And will not drink  
And will not talk  
And will not scream.  
Until she does.  
Ever so slowly  
But it's too late  
It is already broken  
She has lost  
Been torn apart  
And a piece of me is gone.  
And she can't ever escape  
Not really  
Even when she does  
A piece of her is gone  
A piece of him  
Forever inside of me  
And I became pregnant.

And then the Romans came.  
With their new gods.  
And new names  
And retold  
Tales already told  
And Persephone became Proserpina  
Translating from latin  
It means to creep forth  
A reference to the way plants emerge from the soil in spring.  
And every six months she returns to him  
And every night I can't get rid of him.  
And every single second  
And every single day  
I live  
And I go on  
And I can't move  
Or breathe  
Or utter a word  
Or form a thought  
Without knowing  
That he has taken from me  
Taken  
Destroyed  
Fuck you.  
Fuck you.  
Fuck.  
You.  
Fuck me.  
Me.  
Fuck.  
Me.

God.

Please.

Just.

Don't.

Just

Fuck

Me.

Do it.

Now.

Stop.

Stay.

Stay with me

Stay

Don't go.

Don't leave.

Stay here.

Stay here with me.

I,

This...

We can't.

Stop

Stop it!

Just stop.

Fuck me!

Fuck me now.

Harder

Harder

Harder

Harder.

God.

Fuck.

I just want

I don't

I don't want

I...

Yes.

Yes?

No!

No.

Yes?

Fuck.

Yes?

Fuck

Oh.

O

O

O

O

O

No

Yes

Ok.

Ok.

Stop.

Why?

Stop!

Is this all that's left?

It's not.

It's just.

You just can't see it.

Like fireflies during the day.

The day

One day...

So many days

Yes.

One time

So much time

Yes

Passed

Yes

Once

We were out in the field

The forest

Yes

The forest

We were out in the forests

Collecting

Studying

Working

I was

I was

We were

Taking samples

Pictures

Pieces

And then.

Then

Hidden among the grass

And leaves

And trees

And insects

And bugs

We found

I found  
She found  
A rock  
A marker  
A gravestone  
A monument  
The earth  
The land  
Was littered with them  
We started looking around  
They're everywhere  
The plants had tried to overtake them  
The insects had started worming their way into them.  
Little lines carved into the face  
Eroded away  
Smoothed  
And cold  
Barely discernable  
But present nonetheless  
Little lines carved into the face  
Little shapes carved from the rocks  
What do you think it means?  
I'm sure it's a message  
A story  
A tale  
About the person who once lived out here  
About the people  
Who once lived here  
Some message  
Some  
Story

Or marker

Or symbol

About their life

Their love

Their relationships

Their Beliefs

Their

Connections

Rest in peace

I always hated that phrase

Why

I mean, c'mon. Are they resting? Is it peaceful? If you're going to leave behind a message at least let it carry some weight.

They're not the one's who left the message.

Well, right.

Right.

Right.

It's the ones who lived on

After

And they left these markers

Monuments

Tributes

What do you think it says

I don't know

I wonder who was meant to see it?

Or why they chose to leave it here?

Or who they were?

If they're buried below

Buried underground

Under the dirt

The weight

The earth  
God.  
Gods  
And Monuments  
It's a little scary  
But beautiful  
I love  
I love  
I love running my hands over the lines  
I love  
I love you  
God.  
I don't ever want to live without you  
I couldn't.  
I don't know how I would survive on my own.  
I wouldn't.  
Without you.  
Without  
Without  
Do you know what it feels  
Do you know  
Do you know what it feels like?  
What if feels like to lose something?  
Yes  
No  
Not just a something  
A something you love  
We throw love around  
Toss it to one another  
Like a kid with a ball  
But this kind of loss

Of grief  
Of emphasized emptiness  
Only comes when...  
When  
When  
Start again  
Yes, again  
From much earlier  
In order to lose you must have gained  
Possess  
Yes, that.  
A beginning  
A creation  
A meeting  
An introduction  
A beginning  
Yes.  
I had a child  
Once  
Only the once  
I carried it inside of me  
Forever  
It seemed  
Growing  
Every day  
More and more  
Moving  
And growing  
And moving  
And growing  
Everyday

More and more.  
My life  
My whole life  
Orbited around this  
This thing inside of me  
I waited and waited  
Prepared  
Lived  
With this  
At the center  
The center  
Of everything  
Days seemed to crawl  
Sometimes they sped  
Like fireflies  
Across the skies  
Time passed  
It was to be born  
I was to be introduced  
There was so much excitement in the air  
All around us  
Thick  
Like the smoke.  
But before this beautiful something could come  
Came the pain  
The screams  
Fear  
Contractions  
Blood  
Some sort of yellow something  
That wasn't the baby

No  
Thank God  
It seemed to last forever  
The hurting  
Longer than all the crawling days  
Just those few hours  
I tried to sleep  
You did  
Fitfully  
Every fifteen minutes or so  
I would wake from the pain  
The contractions  
The blood  
The yellow stuff  
Ok, there's really no need to mention the yellow stuff anymore  
We get it  
We do?  
We do.  
The contractions came quicker  
The heartbeats louder  
Both of them  
All I could see was this big blue cloud  
I think that was a sheet  
Tubes in my arms  
People all around  
Moving  
Swarming  
Like the bugs.  
There was so much blood  
And pain  
And hurt

Everybody moving so quickly

It seemed

No.

No?

No.

Everything slowed

Like the world was under water

gradually and hideously

like there was no place to go

nothing to do

but this

but here

right

here

All I could think about was the anticipation

All this movement

All these people

All this blood

Was for this...

This one act

This one creation.

GOD!

Finally, it emerged

Nothing.

Nothing but silence.....

.....

.....

for a never ending eternity

.....

.....

.....

.....

And then

Yes, and then

Then came the scream

Scream!

The most beautiful scream you have ever imagined

It was perfect

And worth it

Everything

Was perfect

And then

Yes, and then.

There's always a then

Then it had to go away

All of it

My love

My everything

My loss

The big

The big big loss

Gone

In a second

My long long life that had led up to this

Everything seemed to lead up to this

Live up to this

The screaming

The beautiful, magical screams

Started to get farther and farther away

Until

Until it was gone

Nothing  
Nothing left  
That's what it felt like  
That's what it feels like  
To loose  
To have lost  
You spend all this time  
Your life  
Building up to what you think is this  
This perfect  
Beautiful  
something  
And then it's gone  
Ripped away  
I know  
I know  
I.  
No.  
Know  
Yes.  
I  
Feel  
I feel  
I understand  
I can...  
We  
Us  
All of us.  
We  
We know  
We

NO

We understand

And it's enough

And it's not

And its not

Not

NOT

Not enough

I can't

We can't

Stop

Stop

Stop!

STOP!!

STOP STOP STOP STOP!

JUST

PLEASE

STOP...

No more.

Not yet.

Something else

There has to be something

Else.

We are

We are

Something else

We need

A need.

We need.

I.

Need....

Something else

It's ok

Shh

Shhh!

It's ok.

It's

It's not.

Hold me.

Hold me and stroke me

And touch me

And look at me

And tell me

Tell me

Tell me it's ok

Tell me it's going to be

Going to be

Ok

Talk to me.

Talk to me, and look at me and talk to me and tell me

Tell me a story

Ummm... ok

Ok

Ok

In Roman times there lived among mere mortal men the virgin priestess's

The sisterhood of Vesta Virgins.

Guardian of the flame

No

No?

No

Not yet

Further

We must go back further  
To the beginning  
If you want to tell a tale it's best to start in the beginning  
The beginning  
What beginning?  
There is no beginning  
Just...  
Just pretend.  
Pretend.  
The beginning then.  
Yes.  
Yes.  
The beginning:  
In ancient times  
Before gods and goddesses  
But not before the men who thought themselves gods  
They need  
We need  
A need  
A need for fire  
A means  
A means to live  
To burn  
To burn food  
To burn tools  
To burn weapons  
To burn  
They needed the fire  
We need the fire  
A need  
The light

The only way  
To rub sticks  
Or rocks  
Yes  
Special rocks  
So each village kept a fire burning in a central hut  
Day  
And  
Night  
Day in  
And day out  
And someone must guard it  
Protect it  
Watch over the fire  
Ever burning  
A monument  
A monument to the gods  
Or to us  
Or was it the rulers  
Or the people  
It doesn't matter.  
What?  
What?  
Who?  
Who would guard the flame?  
The young girls  
The young girls did not fish  
Did not hunt  
Did not go out into the fields and farm  
They stayed  
Stayed and watched

Guarded

The fire

The sacred fire

The girls became the sacred ones

The sisterhood of Vestal

The vestal virgins.

Guardians of fire.

They have two duties

Sacred duties.

To keep the fire burning and remain pure.

For this, they're crowned with wealth and power and the ability to vote and pardon and everything else not normally bestowed upon women.

And they are admired

And they are revered

For they are the ones who keep the fires burning

And the fires fuel the cities

And the fires fuel the country

And the fires fuel their life

And the fires burn

And burn

And burn

For 1000 years.

The Vestal virgins go on.

Keeping their fires alive and intact.

But there are rules.

There are always rules.

You must keep the sacred fire burning.

You must keep your chastity in tact.

For thirty years.

If they let the fire become extinguished

It's the same.

The same as losing  
Losing their virginity  
And if they did loose.  
Loose their chasteness  
Their purity.  
If they let the fire die  
If they let the flame become extinguished.  
It's the same.  
The same as being unchaste.  
For this, they suffer.  
They will be buried alive.  
Paraded through the town.  
Stripped of their ornamentation  
Stripped of their power  
Stripped of their dignity  
Stripped of everything.  
And they are buried  
Buried alive  
It is never ok to let their blood spill  
Even when they have lost  
Everything  
You still cannot kill one of the sacred members of Vestal  
So they are buried alive  
With a few provisions of food and water  
And they are sealed in a tomb  
Where they know they will die  
And everyone knows they will die  
But no blood was spilt  
And no guilt can be lain on the hands of the rest  
For that is their duty  
And that is their punishment

And for thirty years if you are one of the chosen you must keep the flame alive and keep your purity in tact.

And you will be rewarded if you do

And you will be buried if you don't

And I feel buried

And I feel the weight

Weight

Of dirt

Of life

I feel

So

So

Sooo trapped

Buried alive

And all I can do

And all I can be

And all I can think of

Is

Something

Else.

Go back

Backward

Back farther

Not from the beginning

Because there is no beginning

But somewhere else

Somewhere that is not

Here

With this

In this time

In this place

Something else to focus on  
Or distract from  
Think of the why  
Why  
Why  
why  
Why do you study bugs?  
Why do you study plants?  
I asked you first.  
There's so many of them.  
I know.  
They're annoying.  
They're not.  
They're beautiful.  
And wonderful.  
They're everywhere.  
All around us.  
Billions of them  
Trillions of them  
infinite  
When I was little, I would collect them.  
Like Linnaeus  
Stick them on little pieces of paper.  
I would sit in my bed and look all around my room.  
Surrounded by these beautiful colors and shapes.  
By these majestic  
Heavenly  
DEAD  
Things.  
Bugs.  
Insects.

Insecto  
Insecti  
To cut into  
segmented  
That which is cut up  
They're so.  
Incredible.  
Insectifuge  
Insected  
And so important.  
insectiform  
Important?  
Important.  
Divided  
We need them.  
I need.  
We need.  
A need.  
If every insect in the world disappeared tonight.  
Insecticidal  
In fifty years  
Life on the planet would be over.  
Devastated.  
Destroyed.  
Insecticide  
If every human  
Homo  
Hom  
Hum  
in the world disappeared tonight.  
Homo Fuge

In fifty years.  
Life on this earth  
Would flourish.  
Ad hominem  
We destroy things.  
A single act of creation takes so much.  
So much time  
So much skill  
So much energy.  
To tear it all apart.  
Takes nothing.  
A single act.  
It all falls  
Quickly  
Gently  
Easily  
One after the other  
Until it's all gone.  
Errare humanum est.  
And there is nothing left.  
These insects  
They form the building blocks  
larva  
The foundation  
mask  
The base  
ghost  
Of everything we need.  
larvate  
Everything we are.  
Everything in between.

larviphagic

I love that you love them.

I love that you love.

Me?

You.

Us.

We.

The plants.

The insects.

OK my turn

What?

You asked me first, and I answered.

Now it's my turn.

You're

You are

You're ridiculous.

C'mon. Fair is fair.

Fine.

Why do you study plants?

This is stupid.

Really

Seriously

What is it you love about them?

What is it I love about you exactly?

I'm not smiling.

Niether am I.

So am I.

When when was the last time...

C'mon.

Phhh! I don't know...

What is it you love

Love

Do you see this tree?

Yes.

See the leaves

Yes

Green

They're...

Green?

Right.

Yeah.

But, when the sun hits them,

When the light pushes through the leaves

All of a sudden

They become

We become

We've become

Something

Else

Yellow

The color of light

Through the trees

It's the most beautiful color in the world

And then you start to see

The trees

And the leaves...

They start to fall

This tree...

It's an evergreen.

If you take the bark, and dry it, you can get Quinine from it.

A drug.

An

An important  
drug

A building block.

To sustain.

To make life go on

Continue

We need them.

I need

We

Need

To keep going.

I need.

You need.

We.

We Need.

Confusing motion for progression.

Progressing.

Moving

Upward

Outward

To where?

To what?

The garden.

Our garden.

Sacred.

All around us.

These woods.

This forest.

So delicate.

Fragile.

Like glass.

Green glass.  
It holds everything.  
Everything we love.  
Cradles it.  
Protects it.  
Gives our love a home.  
A place to feel safe.  
A place for life  
To grow.  
But then it starts.  
The fires.  
The clearing.  
The destruction.  
We were in the field.  
Walking under the canopy  
Of trees  
Of broken glass  
and leaves  
and insects  
and animals  
Gathering.  
Collecting.  
Researching.  
Following our loves.  
Our passions.  
And the world was alive.  
Buzzing  
Chirping  
Swaying  
Everything moves  
At once

All together  
And at the same time  
Separately  
But it flows  
And rocks  
And dances  
Moving in and out  
Back and forth  
Flowing  
Like smoke.  
And everything seems perfect  
And everything is wonderful  
And this moment is like all the other  
Beautiful  
Incredible  
Moments  
And we get lost.  
In our thoughts  
In our dreams  
In these moments.  
And then  
And then.  
And then we discovered it.  
Looking all around  
We didn't look up  
Ever  
Never  
We never looked up.  
Or straight ahead.  
It caught us off guard.  
All of a sudden.

Suddenly.  
There it was.  
The world parted  
The earth opened.  
And then  
And then suddenly  
All of a sudden  
There were no more trees  
There were no more plants  
There were no more insects  
Or sounds  
Or life  
Or color.  
It was all...  
Dead.  
Black.  
Buried.  
Under miles of soot  
And dirt  
And ash  
And nothingness  
Someone had taken this...  
This...  
Land.  
This forest.  
Everything.  
The trees and bugs and everything in between.  
The sky shone down  
On this...  
This wasteland  
This corpse of what once was

Or could have been.  
And there was no more color  
And there was no more sound  
And there was no more  
And everything  
And everything else  
All of it  
All of it was  
It was gone.  
Too far gone to even know what could have been.  
Nothing but miles and miles of nothing  
Nothing.  
Nothing.  
Nothing.  
Nothing.  
Nothing.  
Nothing.  
Emptiness.  
The land had been cleared.  
Burned.  
Scorched to the ground.  
Some corporation.  
High in the sky  
A million miles away  
Had decided  
All of a sudden.  
Suddenly,  
Like lightning.  
To wipe clean  
Our garden  
Our sanctuary.  
Start over.

Cleared for cattle ranching.  
To give cheap beef to the West.  
Or by peasant farmers.  
Close by  
Nearer to the forests.  
They could have burned it too.  
To give cheap plants to the West.  
But it doesn't really matter why.  
It matters.  
It matters that it's gone.  
Every second.  
Every single second we loose.  
Another piece.  
Another fraction.  
A section of the forest is burned.  
It's burning.  
Every single second.  
It's burning  
The size of a football field.  
Is burning  
Every single  
Second.  
Burning.  
cracking  
It's gone.  
damaged  
ruined  
Forever.  
Destroyed.  
smashed  
We have already lost so much.

Both of us.  
All of us.  
Over half of the rainforests in the world.  
Half of us  
Us  
Us  
We  
You and me  
But yet.  
And yet.  
It's gone.  
Gone.  
shattered  
There's no way to fix it.  
Put it back together.  
Broken.  
Promises.  
Lands.  
Bonds  
All of them  
So fragile.  
Meaningful.  
Begging to be destroyed.  
To be broken.  
I.  
Yes?  
We.  
What?  
No.  
Yes?  
No.

Not yet.  
I knew she wasn't happy  
I knew he wasn't happy  
This place  
This work  
All of it  
It wasn't what we thought  
But it was all we had.  
Why don't you ever talk to me?  
Why don't you ever look at me like you used to?  
Why do you look at me like that?  
What's changed?  
Do you still love me?  
I still...  
Why won't you look at me.  
Look at me  
Look at me  
Don't look at me  
Not like that  
I can't stand that look  
Why won't you talk to me?  
Talk to me.  
**TALK TO ME!**  
Talk to me like you used to.  
Not like you do now.  
Not like you have for so long now.  
Talk to me  
Not like that  
Not like this.  
Why can't things go back  
Back to the way they were

Back to the way it was  
When everything seemed perfect  
And simple  
And I  
And we  
Could breathe  
And hold  
And touch  
And love  
And feel  
Feel something  
That was warm  
But not searing  
Not burning  
Not scalding like it does  
The fire in your eyes  
And inside of you has changed  
It's grown dim  
It's grown fierce  
And I don't even know who you are  
Or who I am  
Or where I am  
Or where I'm going  
Or what I'm doing.  
What changed?  
Why?  
Why...  
Please.  
God,.  
I just want it to go back to the way it was  
But were we happy then?

Have we ever been  
Have you ever been?  
Have you ever let me in  
Have I ever been inside of you  
Truly inside of you  
I...  
You...  
We...  
We have our work.  
We have our life.  
We have this place.  
This place of our dreams  
This common place  
This common passion  
This common grounds  
We should stick with it  
It will pass  
It will  
It will pass  
It will  
It won't  
It never does  
I love you.  
I...  
What?  
I.  
I.  
I can't believe.  
Yes?  
No.  
I.

What?

We...

Yes?

I.

No.

I....

I.

Don't.

Know.

And then the lights go out

And then the confusion sets in

What

What

What

Whhhaaaat

And then a match is struck

The first tiny spark

A word

I...

.....

A thought

.....

What?

.....

A phrase

.....

Another match is lit

.....

A glowing ember

.....

This isn't going to work.

.....

Another match

And then it start to grow

.....

What?!

.....

It's over.

.....

And another

.....

Consume

.....

No.

.....

And another

.....

Overtake

.....

Yes.

.....

No.

.....

Another match

.....

Little

.....

Noo.

.....

Yes.

.....

By little.

Another match

....

No! You can't do this to me

..

By little

.....

Noooo!

..

Yes.

..

By little

..

Another and another and another

..

Yes.

..

No!

..

No!

..

No! No! NO! NOO! NOOO!

..

One piece at a time

..

One match at a time

..

I can't...

..

One leaf

..

Another match

Please.

One blade of grass

.

Another match

.

I just....

.

One tree

.

Another

.

This isn't...

.

Until it grows

.

More

.

I'm sorry.

.

Bigger

.

More

.

You can't!

.

And bigger

.

Another and another and another

I'm sorry!

And bigger

More

You don't!

NO!

Yes.

Ferocious

No!

One match

After the next

Please! I'm begging you.

No.

Devastating

No! No! No!

Tormenting

No! No! No!

More matches are lit

all at once

It's over.

It gets hotter

It's not.

And hotter

It is.

Burning

More matches

Please!?

And burning

This can't be it.

This is it

Another match is lit

This is it

And another and another and another and another and another

This is it. This is it This is it

And all of the matches are lit all at once

It's over

And a fire is burning.

And an aria starts to play

And Nobody is listening.

Nobody

And Nobody is watching

Nobody

And you won't look at me

Nobody will

And you won't listen to me

Nobody does

And you won't talk to me

Nobody will

Why won't you talk to me?

Nobody  
Nobody  
And you won't  
And you can't  
Why won't you?  
And you won't stop  
Why can't you?  
Nobody will stop  
Why don't you?  
And the fires  
And the flames  
And the fires  
And the fires continue to burn  
And burn  
And the woman starts to undress  
And the fires continue to burn  
And burn  
And the man starts to undress  
And the fires continue to burn  
And burn  
And burn  
And burn  
And burn  
This place  
Us.  
Me  
You  
We  
All of it  
everything  
These sacred grounds

Everything  
Is shattering  
Is burning  
All around us  
And a lullaby starts to play  
And I feel so helpless  
And it consumes  
And I feel so alone  
And it over takes  
And bells begin to chime  
And everything starts moving faster  
And faster  
And faster  
And nobody is listening  
Faster  
I...  
You...  
Faster  
And nobody is talking  
Faster  
No.  
No...  
NO  
Faster  
And nobody is watching  
Please  
faster  
And nobody is hearing  
GOD!  
The gods  
faster

The sounds

The screams

Faster

And faster

And faster

And faster

SSSSSSSSCCCCCCCCRRRRRRRRREEEEEEEEAASAAAAAMMMMMMMMM!!!!!!!

And the fire burns hotter

And hotter

And the bells toll louder

And faster

And hotter

And faster

And the words of John Donne are heard

And hotter

And hotter

And hotter

And hotter

And the fire starts to hurt

And the flames reach up to the heavens

And everything starts to hurt

And everything reaches up to the heavens

And everything gets brighter

And the flames reach up to the gods

And everything gets brighter

And everything reaches up to the gods

And everything hurts

And the flames consume

Me

Me

Me

Me

Me

Me

Us

We

Everything

Everything in between

And the bell chimes once more

And everything starts to crumble

And everything starts to recess

And everything starts to shrink

And everything starts to dim

And everything starts to slow

And everything

Gets smaller

And smaller

And slower

And smaller

And smaller

And slower

Until there is no more

Until there is no more sound

Until there is no more color

Until there is no more hurt

Until there is no more

And there is nothing left

And everything

Everything

Is gone

Just like that

Poof

Up in smoke  
And there is nothing more  
And there is nothing left  
Except for this  
This barren space  
And this man  
And this woman  
Standing nude  
Straight  
And apart from one another  
Like statues  
And a chorus  
And the chorus  
All dressed in white, painted bodies and blank souls.  
They are the everything in between.  
We are the everything in between.

Batter my heart, three person'd God; for, you  
As yet but knocke, breathe, shine, and seeke to mend;  
That I may rise, and stand, o'erthrow mee,'and bend  
Your force, to breake, blowe, burn and make me new.

I, like an usurpt towne, to'another due,  
Labour to'admit you, but Oh, to no end,  
Reason your viceroy in mee, mee should defend,  
But is captiv'd, and proves weake or untrue.

Yet dearely'I love you,'and would be loved faine,

But am bethroth'd unto your enemy;  
Divorce mee,'untie, or breake that knot againe;

Take mee to you, imprison mee, for I  
Except you'enthrall mee, never shall be free,  
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish mee.

-John Donne

