

WOMEN, MONEY, CHILDREN, GHOSTS

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Women, Money, Children, Ghosts
by Emily Bludworth de Barrios

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For
Joaquín

My husband fidgets with the inner mechanism of the country

My husband fidgets with the inner mechanism of the country
By which I mean he works inside a financial institution
Like a man inside a gray metal factory or tinkering in the bowels of a
deep ship
By which I mean he makes the country work
And which you probably think is cruel, evil, selfish, insulated, or
unconscionable
To which I would suggest that you are ignorant of the way reality
functions
To which I would say someone invests in something and that is how
it comes to pass
For example vaccines vehicles fuel supply fresh produce
But many suffer you say
It is not fair that many suffer
It is like a suffocating damp helplessness placed onto the throat
Yes I would say
The road we travel is cruel and many suffer
The suffering is unfair and not noble
(It's a frozen thing that's dead and cannot be thrown away)

In this house we loved.

In this house we loved.

We broke into the light and/or out into the dawn.

We were like a movie.

We were not like a movie.

Too much of or too many of our stories are shown to us on a flat screen.

They are flat stories, like a stock photo that shows a man and a woman grinning or laughing widely making breakfast pancakes and the man with no shirt and the woman wearing the man's discarded shirt.

I would be nervous to be in a situation like that.

To be so gorgeous and to be so uproarious (in that perpetual state).

They sit down to breakfast then and their delicious words squeeze out into a paste in the bright house filled with the bright light of morning.

(As if love were a perpetual garland ringing out over beautifully photographed landscapes.)

Packages show up on the lawn it is astonishing how they appear.

Packages show up on the lawn it is astonishing how they appear.

They are astonishing surprises.

It's what I ordered the cat food the espresso machine the two new tables.

Ordering things and how they appear basically I am a small scale sorcerer.

On the road I press the button and the music goes.

Air conditioning gas pedal restaurant take-out etc.

It is my will being perpetually sated.

Pretend we are writing a fable in which a sorcerer always gets what he wants.

Consider what happens to a soul which always gets what it wants.

The economy Is synchronized and delicate

The economy
Is synchronized and delicate

Or

It is robust

Like a red wine
Or a flavor of coffee beans clipped in a brown paper bag

Something sort of expensive
And shipped over the sea

For which to satisfy
Our complex and robust hungers

Robust could describe a young man in a painting
Cutting swathes of wheat with a scythe

In a field that is gold and yellow
It is the wheat and the late sun

The light falls in “pools” and “slants”

It is the 19th century

In my hypothetical painting

His delicate white shirt is damp with sweat

It is nice to believe

That his mind is smoother or simple

Like a passageway painted white

In a more primitive town

Before the economy got to be so sinuous

And having such long delicate fingers

The economy lies

Lightly or tightly

On the Earth

Like a wreath

It's a loosely connected network

The barges carry the containers

Which transport the boxes

Which hold the things

Across the Earth

It is a type of sorcery

Or it is a highly organized delivery system

Deriving energy from various nodes

Made of persons and products and types of desires which sprout or languish

Deriving energy also from desperation, actual need, also from longing which may be laid out languidly or casually

Like an outfit across a bed

Desperation like an intense and immediate need for food

Desire meaning to imagine oneself golden, wire-thin, very cool, or interesting

On an intensely blue water or an intensely white beach glaring against white sand

The economy

Like a perfectly conditioned person

May seem temporarily

To be robust or “just right”

Like a person laying out in just the right climate

Heavily upon some warm sand

I live
Among the economy

In a brick house

I open the things
And I throw away the plastic

For as long as I'm able
This will be a pristine household

With a crisp and cool conditioned air
With water that runs from the taps

And outside still some wild harmless animals

A falcon or a hawk
A swarm of a hundred maybe delicate and nonaggressive bees

A slender snake
A dozen newly-grown toads

Packages from Amazon arriving every other day
The freeway alive with a hundred thousand cars

Thriving into the city

The economy causes a man to suffer robustly
Or a woman to profit so that joy creeps throughout her life

Delicately
Like a familiar face suffused with warmth

From the refrigerator
She removes the delicate foods

In a house that is cool
In a yard that is picturesque and safe

Being pretty is how a museum feels

Being pretty
is how a museum feels

All the money
located in one firm spot

Like
someone owns a mansion and they invite everyone to the mansion

To sometimes
drink wine and listen to smart people think smart things

Wearing perfume
or cologne and spare jewelry and black clothes and shaved legs and
clean hair

That
is a museum the location where it's luxury to gather and hear
intelligent things

Luxury
to drink wine in a rarefied mansion where even the common people

Can see
pretty things and drink

The common people
exist together among the pretty and expensive things

Having and learning
an expensive way to be or think

I mean
it's a benefit and it's expensive to learn intelligent thoughts and to be
among luxury and beneficial and intelligent things

Like being a color
or a special object in a museum

To be pastel or aqua
or an intense and antique blue

Pretend there is
a mansion with a lawn strung with lights for an evening party

And we are
in that party and the light is dimming and in the sky

I am talking about
that color of blue

In a museum
you experience that kind of feeling feeling like a light which is deep
nuanced or curved

Again it is lucky
that the wealth has been gathered so generously to one firm spot

A museum
is a mansion for where the common folks to sometimes live

And in so living
have a chance to think some rarefied thought

It is a feeling
when one is in a museum when it is evening and deep blue

The unbearable can actually be borne

The unbearable can actually be borne

The birthing book says
The abdominal wall might split in half

The perineum may need to be split
And breasts are really not

As society tells us
Designed for sex appeal and pleasure

So it does not matter what they look like after

An additional thing I give birth to
Is a setting down of vanity

Which feels like a rod of burnt or frosted pain

Setting down one's vanity
One no longer carries the burden of it

Imagine your youth as a frosted plate
And you drop it and it splits in pieces

So now it is broken

You can clean it away and continue

It is turbulent to be a person

It is turbulent
to be a person

Filled with wishes

To say “I want”
amid the swarm of desires

Being emitted
across the Earth

It is redundant
and it is self-important

Let us try it now

I want a trampoline

I want to tramp
loudly throughout the house

I want to trample upon the achievements
of mine enemies

Who wrong me with each innocuous success

Through our desires
we come to know ourselves

Meaning
your desires could confirm

The nature of your values

Eg, a man may wish
to be seen as powerful

A woman
might want to be seen to be pretty

Or like a person may want to be
left alone all day to watch the shows

And eat something
really salty or delicately balanced

A person may want to remain in the warm pool of bed
a little longer

Or to create something
very meaningful

To live her life as an elegant experiment

Also to have
effusive thoughts

Also and etc

Desire pecks at every person like a shadow
It is his great companion

In a swarm of desires
we are overcome

We are confused or overwhelmed
by their numerous branches

We lay down as if to die or sleep
in a thicket of desires

Having stumbled in a thicket
of shadowy desires

One desire chooses us for a favorite

It stings our lips

If we are lucky
one desire stings our lips

And beckons us toward life

80 to 90 percent of my awareness

80 to 90 percent of my awareness

Is a delicate ear turned gently toward my son

Which means I ignore

What would have previously torn me asunder

You may imagine motherhood as a funnel of sand

Into which one is pulled

You may imagine a wrecked ship pulling the inhabitants down
with her

Into the water

Except in this metaphor

You are willingly rinsing yourself in sand or heavy water

It is an ecstasy of familial love

Among the sand and water

Whereby you are erased but replaced with something new

Like a new skin or new eyes

And there is a new creature

Sleeping very gently as if in the curl of your ear

Or

Women create people
And that is how humans continue

And that is how women are laid low

Torn asunder
Crippled Leaking

Etc

Helpless to a helpless thing

Threads of feeling and attention
Binding or sewn

Women lavish their attention

Women lavish their emotion and then
They do not have some left

History is a 6,000 year block
Inside which women are torn asunder

Picture yourself in a room with smooth white walls
(No windows no doors)

That is the myth of motherhood

It says a motherhood may be a perpetual caring
Or a gradual erasing of the self

Or a sacred blanket
Or a devastating failure

To be a mother
Is to be a figure in a painting

Wrapped in a sacred blanket

Whatever the observer sees
You, the woman in the painting, you turn your head and continue

Being already busied with sheltering your small companion
Into the course of his life

It is sad

It is sad
that your thoughts don't mean much

Like how a movie theater
projects colored lights into your head

And afterwards
in the bathroom

Face to face with yourself over the sink

That's still you
in the grim and gray reality over the sink

Crumpled popcorn smeared into the carpet

The colored lights in your thoughts
soaring

Like a very advanced camera
photographing mountains or clouds

Also it is sad
when your brilliant mind has nothing of substance to settle upon

Like a high schooler
in the suburbs

Thinking complicated thoughts about lip gloss

A complicated web of mascara, and glossy magazines, and one
particular boy

It is sad
when the brilliant thoughts look cheap or brittle in the light of day

It is a little embarrassing
to recognize your thoughts as cheap or brittle in the light of day

Some brittle thoughts
in the crisp light of morning

It is sad
when the thoughts that breathe in you

Gloriously

Wither and escape

As evidence having left just a faint whisper of smoke
or an eminent or auspicious feeling

It is sad to have been abandoned
by your own brilliant thoughts

They well up in you and then are gone
You are composed of 100,000 slivers

Welling up and then gone

The culture oriented itself toward shopping

The
culture oriented itself toward shopping

The culture
invented a flat vivid world to sink into

As one sinks into a bath and closes the door and runs the warm
water with a

Book
or a glass of sharp wine

Inside
the white noise of water out rushes any immediate concern

Some lives have been scrubbed of immediate concerns
or mud
or weather

After work
some shopping

For work
some shopping

Running to the store
and picking up some food

Or
hiring a contractor

Or
someone for the lawn

Purchasing new clothes

Which
might confer some attractiveness and dignity

Materials
which could convey

One's
inner goodness, attractiveness, and taste

Having the best qualities and correct values

Best thoughts
are elaborately patterned

Worst thoughts
rise up as a self-righteous ego, scarlet and furious and fuming into
fingers

Or
alternatively as a sheet of empty area

Wherever
the personality goes when the activity ceases

When
it is neither buying nor preparing for a future purchase

In the car
the environment is leather and black and smooth sweet odor

Serenity
is composed of quality materials

It has contours
which are a pleasure to take note of

As the
wishes rear up

On the way to or from some shopping

A little
appetite leaks out

So
obvious in fact it need never be discussed

A
feeling of perpetual lack

Is the water in the river we float down

I flow
from the lip of one day to the next

As if
lounging on a cool dark river that's

Composed
of what I might purchase

In
the mall the stores are horizontally stacked

Into discrete
dioramas of hypothetical lives

I sample the hypothetical lives

I unwrap them
from the quality tissue paper and boxy bags with hard sharp creases

Black
and gold and pink and peacock blue

I imagine
there is a certain kind of person somewhere

Who
wears these clothes with grace

A
person could exist who carries grace in the chest like a warm
affectionate orb

I've
expected to eventually become

I've been
on the verge really of emerging into grace and ease

Kindness
effortlessness

I like to be among the

Everybody
is carrying the fierce fire of the souls

Hid
with some intentional or inadvertent packaging

Statues or knotted ropes or scored stone

Statues or knotted ropes or scored stone or magnetic tapes or
marked paper or grooved plastic or painted fibers or braided
filaments

Are devices for storing information across time

A person is a device

For storing information across time

The parent melts or dissolves

And up springs the child

A person

Is a phenomenal device

That assembles itself from dirt and air

The Greek gods of ancient history

And the Sumerian gods of ancient history

Glisten

In the distance at the far edge of time

With familiar shoulders elbows ears and eyes

Their crisp or frail emotions
Coursing down like cobwebs or hair

Triumphant
Is how it feels

To enter the river of human history

Parents

May drizzle a warm sweet attitude
When discussing their handsome children

Having replicated myself
Personhood will reassemble in my children

I could desiccate and die
Having assembled some children

My pregnancy was a long and happy nightmare

My pregnancy
was a long and happy nightmare

During which I ate
pint-sized tubs of ice cream and walked around the block

Becoming more tubby and unwieldy
as if living in the skin of a drum

Wielding and propelling my belly
feeling dreamy and druggy in the suburbs under the sun

I walked around the block
and watched episodes of *The Twilight Zone*

In 1960s America
it was silver and gray and all the people had disappeared

The tick of a clock
rang out

Men spoke in voices that were
urgent and clipped

Women languished in the oppressive heat
of a wet, dying sun

In *The Twilight Zone* the world was always
dying

In our imaginations
the world always dies

Drowned or burned or infected or
contaminated out

By imagining a death so huge
hoping to infuse our daily lives with sweetness or urgency by contrast

The world dies
how sweet is this morning

The world dies
how urgent my life

There is a belief that life
should be spent leaning forward as if squinting into a bracing wind

As if life's juice or marrow or interior liquid
can be drained or squeezed or sucked

If the world dies I hope it will be

a cinematic death

A beautiful woman
laying down in green grass in a dewy forest

A golden grey mob tearing itself apart,
full of great emotion

When the world dies I would prefer it to be
without disappointment, shame, or regret

Shame hangs on a man's neck
like a terrible bell

Joaquín when he arrived arrived
with no shame upon him

Instead he has a sweetness or urgency
inside him

For example he is pleased
with the bath's warm water

He is pleased with his
small naked body

The world when he looks out across it

is a field of universal truths

It sways or rings with
unplucked truth

When I was 13 there was a girl I knew

When I was 13 there was a girl I knew and an awful thing had been done to her

For three weeks the whole school stopped

One of my teachers wrote a poem about it and read it to our class

The feeling of the poem did not match the horrible thing that had happened

The poem was like an artificial flower in a vase

It gave you that feeling

Which is not to say the teacher was not sincere

But the feeling of the poem did not match the holiness, or the sanctity, or the sadness, or grief, of what had been done

There was a space around what had happened, filled with water, density, or void

You couldn't get near it

We each of us carry

We each of us carry the murder
back with us into our houses apartments or townhomes

There to unwrap it and inspect it

To shake it gently, it makes no
sound

It is our murder now and we
have it in our kitchens

It is a thing that grows without
growing

It creeps or spreads or slides
down the block turns the streets and seeps out further

Eventually through the whole
neighborhood until we all have it

Each of us some portion

Meanwhile it remains mute
dumb and stupid like a stone

Look for yourself it's hard dumb
and stupid A dense stupid stone

I carry with me a dense stupid
stone

You are curious about the details

I will not share the details

I take out the murder-stone

I wait on it

It does not produce aphorisms

I picture the murder-stone in
other people's houses or apartments or townhomes

I wonder which aphorisms are
sliding out of their murder-stones

Smart knowledge sliding out like
thin strips of typed-on paper

What meaningful observations
are occurring in other people's households

They I hope have the talent to
bring life or meaning to the murder-stone

The murder-spot is an invisible
energy that continues to rock

That continues to disappear

That continues to ruminate in the
kitchens families homes

A death or a murder disappears
eventually

It becomes a story

Best case scenario the people left
standing make it into a story with some type of good

And eventually they put it to rest
so they or it can rest

Eventually into history and into
the ground

Best case scenario it disappears

And doesn't continue to pulsate
like an invisible energy or a weighting pain or an ongoing fear or a
persistent and inscrutable stone

Neptune is a place we'll never go

Neptune is a place we'll never go

Even in a spacecraft and even
protected from the vacuum of space

And the methane or whatever it is
there and etc

We'll never enter its blue light

Never crossing the many black miles

Even our descendants will never go there

Never energetically planning

And packing
for a fantastical journey into outer space

Never to unify
into a jaunty, better mankind

Having built a fleet of white,
fleet ships

Inside a well-crafted, windowed hull

Peeping out to the wide planet or stars
which loom gigantically in the window

I speak now directly to the descendants

Who will also never travel
the solar system or beyond

Descendants

If you are reading this
many years will have passed

Mine is a realistic and ancient voice

You
sadly have not united

Into one stupendous mankind

You are still like us

Disparate and greedy

Not having defied the odds or
conquered the dismal emotions

Lying in the dead, cold graves on
Earth

Probably still you pine for the
fantastical humans

Who unite into a striving, better
mankind

Please continue to kindle them or
dream them

The fleet of jaunty selves who unite

And set out together from Earth

Who coordinate
our badge of future honor

In an organized and smiling fleet

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