

Conversation Pieces
Volume 57

Cosmovore

by
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I. Luna

Cosmovore, Homo neanderthalensis, and You

This was the day it shouldn't have started:
I was alone—characteristically—
in the Neanderthal wing.

I remember reading that the females
were discovered to be stronger than the males.
You approached me, territorial.

Hard to believe, isn't it?

As if you were privileging me with expertise.
Then, you were taking too long

with the Archaeopteryx
so I pulled up my skirt
to show you I meant business.

You took it as a challenge.

All afternoon, you bent me over
the back of your couch
and once dusk choked the room closed,

you flipped me onto my back
but kept one hand over my face.
The rest of us, a distant percussion

like the thrum of a prey's pulse
or the shattering of empty wine glasses.

Cosmovore Meets Her Antithesis

The woman sits at her table alone.
She has a glass of white wine
and a bowl of white yogurt.
I convince myself that her eyes are blue,
fixed on the LA Times crossword.

When the woman turns to look out the window
I can see all of the bones in her neck.
When she raises the glass to her mouth
the sleeve falls from her wrist.

The waitress laughs and disappears into the kitchen.
The woman spots me. I stare back.
Her bones would probably crunch like a cricket shell
but I doubt her marrow could be as silver.

The woman twists her face up.
She orders a lemon
she sucks on the lemon
she licks the tangles of pulp hanging from the lemon

she sips a glass of water and pats her mouth.
On the napkin, a smudge of beige and lead.
The woman twists her face again
and leaves.

I go to the table and eat the lemon rind,
the bowl of yogurt,

the spoon and the wine glass.
They clink together inside me.

The woman has signed her bill *Celeste*.
I eat the bill and the tip.
When I laugh, the pennies jingle.

I pour the water over my head
and say her name three times:
here, gone, here.

Celeste returns for her purse,
a yellow leather Coach bag
with too many tassels.

Celeste twists her face
when I tell her the purse looks nice.
So I lie, *But it doesn't look appetizing.*

Cosmovore in Limbo with You

It begins when a beam of light
hits the corner of the room.

I forget my way home
every time I leave you.

So. No one's sleeping
in my egg tonight.

So. You're wet soot.

I'm a potassium bomb

skydiving into the lake
of your face on a clear day.

Last time you could fit five
fingers in my mouth.

Tonight let's try for ten,
and the lightbulb, and the socket,
and the doorway, and your penis,
and anything else that can traffic obstruction.

I keep my heart at the base of my spine now,
but sometimes I turn ostrich.

You're wearing the belt that fits you,
but my hands still pull, insistent.

Our first kiss was a winter blight
that snapped my spine into place,

then shriveled and puckered my insides—
but please don't melt me now.

You put your shoes back on
and begin to check the traps we set.
A bird is trapped in the drain-pipe—
asking the same question on loop,

whatisthis?whatisthis?

You glance at me,
then play your triangle in the attic.
I think I'm listing the colors of the room,
but I'm not listening to me, either.

Cosmovore Loses the Fired Pearl

At the northeast window I burn fennel.
The scent of fecundity
descends over your absence in pillars.

The floor is covered with remnant constellations:
phyllo flakes that drifted from your lips,
pill of fried yolk that escaped teeth.

I lie on my stomach next to the doorway.
You remain as boot-tracks of red mud,
ochre rune of your passing-through.



Color me naked in the parking lot,
the one with bare feet hanging from the dumpster.

Color me swollen with your salt
between navel and spine—then,
color me luteal.



I siphon gasoline in the junkyard,
collect coat-hangers to replace your fingers.

I've kept what's left of you
under my tongue,
shaped it into a pearl,
swallowed.

Cosmovore Surrounded by Husks

The dead gourd makes no noise
when I shake it. No maraca rattle.
Just a damp thud on hold—a nothing.
 I break it open with my thumbs.

It fissures down the middle
like a crack in the skull,
a scar down the navel.

Inside, the flesh is dry
but there's a knot of green
rising out of its gray umbilicus.

If only that were how it went
with everything. That in death
the body simply folds in—
to a new life.

 The flesh
flakes off in my mouth—
toxic, I know, to eat
or to breathe its dust.

But no one else is eating
or breathing and winter
has hung its hooded cap

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all over the pines in the back yard.
They will flourish
because they are sterile.

I scoop out the grey and green sprout
and place the husks at the trunk of a pine.
The cones all seem to point inward now,

a halo of anticipation.
I put one in my mouth
and it fills me with the same dust

of the old, reborn gourd.
These guarded things
are only hues apart:

bitter, then bitter and dark.

Crepuscular Sabotage with Citronella

Your dog is jacklighted at the sight of me.
An omega, he just shuffles, head down, until
twilight when we squirm feverishly at
the ping of your triangle.

When I first came home with you, the dog reared
on its hindlegs and licked my face. I bit down
on its tongue.

The rule was established.

After,

the dog won't even sniff what falls from my mouth.

I walk on my hindlegs all the time,
at least when you're not around.

At the first dusk of each month I garland the bedroom
door with citronella. The dog still mopes at
the top of the stairs it now sleeps underneath.

Not even the strays
caterwaul in the alley. Since I pissed
behind the house,
the sound of night has been flat
black.

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You show no preference
for who sleeps at your feet. Every dawn
I lick your lips and you stare straight,
mouth pressed into a line.

From under the floor,
disembodied whining.

When I hold your jaw
to kiss you, you stare at me until I look away.
But this morning, I pin you until you quit writhing.

You slam the door on the way out. The citronella
floats down.

I can see you from the window. The dog
circles you as you flit toward the woods
in a straight line.

When you bend and heave,
the dog glances up at me, wary, before devouring.