

Mr. Mailman

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To: Surance

Surance who?
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You know her, man!
The one who stays
In side
Ruby Lee's sons' stereocilia!

You know...I heard
that they pulled themselves from the root.

Marching out of that tacky ear canal,
marrying the wild waves occupied by other deafened ears,
and bleeding into the air.
 Bleeding out
 into the in-motions
 blaring from the snares.

 Her diaphragm
 Puckers just like her daddy **Reas**,
then draws back to expel;
spitting images of her cousin,
the one who used to hate green pickles.

Surance who?
Surance Couth!
Come on, Mr. Mailman!

You'll remember
if Ruby re-roots,
when this gets to Ms.Couth

I can tell you about how
they took her tooth,
next.

Because this absolutely will not be returnt to sender.
I know you know her!

Jazzmin Duncan

i'll know soon as i get home

(Curtains draw; Jazz standing stage middle, lights dim)

and just what's a wiz?
what would i ask him?
i look around me and see the shelves of oz,
walls full of captive graffiti, hangers of intricate costumes, streets of glittered afros,
And what is
Real?

(Swivel stage left, sit in the pocket)

don't know what i'm made of
What I become you may steal,
So I mourn what I haven't loved
And my feet ebb with desire

(One spin, then another, crashing into a bright green clothing rack)

walk? you can't walk.
Lime green lapels squeal
Sitting between the ruby cuff-links
And in front of cascading faces made of chalk
...faces who all just saw me fall.

(Sit up straight, maybe you'll get away with it)

But I lay back
Stare into my new linen heaven
smoke that smoke, and drink a glass of wine
i can't win

(He's gonna get me back home;
please allow my feet to flow)

I chant as
Ornamental glitter flares into static
And graffiti into crows-feet
As I am swallowed
Into the yellow-padded flooring

Jazzmin Duncan

And the lapels squal
trash! T-rash!
They command

My arms stretch into a compass
And my legs roll into noisemakers
While my torso melts into word-cereal
A beautiful display of showmanship;
My elbows point toward the poles
And my hands reach for either coast

(The Wiz enters stage right with a Cab Calloway-like fanfair; Ensemble crescendos)

My hands gently wrap around his ankles
Melting into his shadow as I'm suctioned into
"Oz"

Can you get me home?

I squeeze the rings of my hands and take a final gasp,
Dragging his feet to face

the results of the first experiment, subject is a hopeless failure.

Jazzmin Duncan

RRII PPP

why dont you listen to me when i speak?

i ramble

but what did i do to deserve ignorance?

i never knew how much it hurts to be unheard

usually i wouldn't care

but now i'm bitter and old,

aged by anger and jealousy,

and i care about being listened to

like Ms. Couth.

what have i given birth to?

This green monster

Who cannot be sated

But for a single ear

born by the head of an anxious mother and a jealous father

Slime slides down the valleys of its backside

and begrudgingly marries the floor

their affair, tacky

Heard in the delicate ***RRII PPP*** sound

As the slime makes a covenant

With the bottom of a passerby's shoe

Jazzmin Duncan

View and voice
blocked by every movement
made by these husbandly feet

Wiped away more
with each step

RRHHPPP

I scream,
Watching slimy remnants
grow smaller
As im carried away
please listen to me
i don't want to become her

The (s)ick

she's sloppy.
icky, even
green slime dries in her tear ducts,
puke sits on her chin and blood on her cuticles.
all in a good nights fun.

my eyes bored into her head as it hung into the trash can over there.
I hate that I had to see that.
Some girls just can't hold their liquor.

I guess, not.

I've been sloppy, too.
Loose leaf paper flies free in my bag
rolling out of my hands
Like the meal rolling back up my throat

My calendar overflows
Anxiety bubbles up
Emotional indigestion
Bleeds into this trash can,
Traverseing the crevices of the opaque black bag,
and falling onto dirty paper plates

I am sloppy, but lighter.
So I'm happy she got that off her stomach.

The house she grew up in was haunted by something.

This odd, ambiguous energy polluted the halls, and an invisible string
always pulled her towards her grandfathers' room:
where she bathed every night,
the walls was lined with indexed rows of biblical runes
and display cases of black-skinned, red-lipped, overalled dolls, funeral programs, and loose
change.

I saw them over there.
And I still wonder if they like me, alot
if the doll who sat atop
How to be a Deacon's Wife
on the dresser
liked my outfit or
saw me staring;
If it's proud.

I feel it's judging eyes, full of love
when my mom sends me Lavender aromatherapy for anxiety
But it still keeps me from going to my bathroom late at night;

I've always been afraid of the dark
Because I'm left to hear the whites of their eyes
scrape and roll in their porcelain skulls
As they remain annoyed and curious

A black-skinned, white-lipped, overalled man,
with a funeral program in his hand follows me around now
He doesn't speak or move
But I wonder if he watches with pride or hatred
Or is a curse resultant from my family's naked pride
Or is my family
So I can know whether to be scared or not.

The first time I ever saw him was when my visits to their house
stopped.

Zydeco Hee Haw

My cousin, Irene, was the first to introduce me to their family's accordions.
They've got a store where they sell them right up the street.
At her house, gold rings and cowboy boots march exclusively to the Ardions
through the French Quarter towards Port Arthur and Galveston
and somehow straight into Oakland, her hometown

I've never met someone more country, un-Couth.
Who wasn't from one, a country, thst is

Side by side someone like Bun B or Chamillionaire,
their accordions cannot rhyme
Nor can they fade into food tycoons over time
But they can signal the heir,
The next up in the music historians' academic line
Up
Reduced to a to-do, and flattened to

Country

Genre's are a funny little concept aren't they?

Bouncing between people, place, and parlay
Controlled by whatever Mr. Music Industry say
But

Just like the two sides of an accordion
His opinions splish splash splosh
How to play? I doubt I'll ever know
But in the words of Teddy Afro
Abebayewosh

Zy-de-co;
A-be-baye-wosh:
To
Celebrate
With an accordion or krar or harmonica

Jazzmin Duncan

Season your crawfish with berbere
To commemorate these levies breaking
And I don't mean to be sardonic of tragedy,
if anything,

We must begin taking time
To remember our change of scene,
Wash out the taste of thyme,
And break the mould of Mr. Splish Splash Splosh

While we line-dance
To Ababayewosh

Like a simile

Someone once told me that
Ms. Surance looked like the Pacific sea
and also like me.

It pissed me off,
but it made me think:

I am not a simile,
Like a bee
Nothing is like me.

I float

Over the plight
nestled under the Texas City Dike
I see boats that circle
Like they're in a moat,
Tracing lines in the sand,
To where the fish stand

I float
and I see like a bee

I am not a
fish
Down under the sea
in boat,
Or a moat

I float, i bee

I am not like a fish

I swam
until I grew thumbs, lungs, and 666 feet
I carry my bushel of 6 switch sticks bound by wheat
To beat the bricks off whoever tries to trick me into thinking that me and like will
ever meet

Jazzmin Duncan

You have
No sounds, no grounds
To see anything but who I am as I stand.

And like the man in that movie called Slam,

“I know God personally, in fact, [she] lets me call [her] me!”
For now, you see me float, but please know that I will not stop at bee.

And I will evade being what you can and have seen.
I am not like anything
I am not a simile.

I bee.

Jazzmin Duncan

In order

to transmute pain into progress
to find my line
to make anything out of anything
to make it out of shittything
to make something out of shoddythings
or to share a line with pityone

I need to scope out the scenery
of this
liminal space

Between and within
Poetics
Phonetics
Phonics
And phony

That's my job;
to be
On the mark
On beat

I spoke to Ms. Surance the other day and
She told me

I must
See myself
with those not from here nor there
Or shittywhere - like me -
To eventually

Realize myself
Watching this scene
At the premiere of my biopic

Jazzmin Duncan

I felt her words
As they panned over my walls

Watching this scene
As she painted on them

Over Beyonce hanging out of that one Blue Cadillac
(Cue the original demo of Sorry)
Over a black and white Louis Armstrong with his trumpet
Over clothes I've hung in the sizemetary

Hard cut

To me
 Slouched over my computer
 in a Snuggie,
 typing this poem,
 as large animated white clouds materialize over my head
Balancing out the tears and snot that bubble down my face,

 which precipitate
into 23 lousy LinkedIn profile views —
delineated by lines
that are shittything and everything;
and not mine at all —

Then cement
into salt trails down to my chin
That I think may show me the way to
Shittywood.

Jah Boogies

My mother dropped out of Clark when she was the same age that I am now,
She left Atlanta and went to Beaumont
to write poetry
and met Ms. Couth

and they planted the seeds
that grew into
Teezo Touchdown's nails
and my rainbow hair beads
that twinkle under the gaze of doubt
and leave welts on my back and forehead when I think or move
too quickly.

They wrote a book of poems, multiple books actually
And called the last one
Jah's Boogie.

Her beads left welts, too,
that's why she has a pixie cut now;
Jah was, in fact, not always boogying.

Sometimes He stared while hugging the wall

and listened to the twinkle of the nails
that they drove through eachothers hands and feet
and the clicking of beads as they sang through the translucent walls of their prescribed prison,
monitored by Walmart's 6-pronged North Star on top

They harmonize,
And scream against the blue childlock
As they stare into Jah's lazy eyes,
 begging Him for rapture,
 To boogie.

A standoff.

Jazzmin Duncan

He says,

“Who first?”

Deliverance

When I became a girl
 When I became a woman
When I became good
 When I became pretty
When I became Black
 When I became disillusioned

 When I got tired
 When I cried
 When I pried
 Ms. Couth just sighed

I don't know how to read,
and I've forgotten how to write.

But I know what that lady's voice sounds like.

I think
 So much, all the time
 About who I am
 Where I'll become,
 Who I'll become,
 How I'll be in the coming months

I have no time to imagine because I've spent it
thinking about,
memorizing, becoming, reimagining
Ole Ms. Surance Couth

I've got not one tooth,
not any hard proof,
and hardly any roots;
but, Mr. Mailman,
Please trust me
And just send this to

Jazzmin Duncan

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