



it hurts  
2b touched

janea kelly

If you break her  
you buy her.



# **IT HURTS 2B TOUCHED**

janea kelly



# Lyre Song

I was in bed with you when the ache began.  
Like all great melancholy, metamorphosis--  
it happened. Without (much) control. I transformed.

My skin turned to rubber. Your kisses slid off.  
I shake off every fingerprint, bruise  
you'd left on my body thus far.

Teeth and hair grow long. Eyes like dung.  
You say it smells like something died.  
I tell you I killed the girl you wanted to fuck.  
We aren't having fun anymore.  
I felt you go long before I left the bed.  
You found me alone on the couch staring at the snow.  
What's wrong?

Nothing. I'm okay. I'll be all right. I just feel off. I'll be right back. I just  
can't. I don't know. I'm sorry. I'm fine. Don't worry. It's not a big deal.

Later I returned to bed someone you knew like an impersonal "HAGS"  
in your yearbook. Hands and feet blue from standing outside in the snow.  
Cold toes scraped your ribs. You suck in air between your teeth like when  
Facebook suggests you reconnect with a dead friend.  
Goosebumps on your skin contrast against the heat you exhaust.  
I know you're alive as your eyes open and mine close.

Lie back, you say. I say, I'm so sorry.

You kiss heavy coins onto my eyelids then travel down. Orpheus to the gates to beg back  
Eurydice with a song. I can only see your back through my funereal shroud.

We get so close.. So close to the light. I get so close. So close.

# Kelly's Fables

God is a glass blower.  
This is why we are  
all so beautiful, so fragile.  
God didn't have a son.  
God had a ball of light  
trapped in glass  
covered in dirt, flesh, satin.

God had an heir. An apple, a sty in his eye.  
Long before infallibility there was  
Daughter Hephaestus.

God pissed into a sink  
from the foam  
came the Venus of Anacostia.  
Oxyopia. Eunoia. Esperanza.  
Born of God's clavicle, bentonite clay, and  
cocoa butter.

God kept her hair, nails short.  
God never let her sleep alone.  
I think God's daughter had  
his fat nose and a gap  
as big as The Atlantic between her  
teeth. She had stretchmarks  
in the shape of God's right thumbprint.

I think she died of old age.  
I think she died in childbirth.  
I think she died by a fist / a stone,  
I think she died on a stick / in flames.

God's sty burst. Apple rotted.  
God's blanket put stones in her pocket  
waded into the water. The Venus of Anacostia  
grew tired of God's touch. I think God's ball of light  
died tired as hell.

# Medea & The Argonaut

I.

want to use my body for good

want to use my body for good

sorry i cannot kiss you sorry i am not chill no no no i'm still a cool girl but sorry i cannot put four fingers in your mouth casually yes it will feel good tonight/ tomorrow you will turn your face from me. you are narcissus by the river and will never think of me again. and i'll reach to grab the back of your left elbow. i'll ache something wicked til nothing but an echo remains.

want to use my body for good

stupid deal with the devil and i'll mourn and i'll be wrecked and i won't be chill and i'll think about how young you look in your sleep like isaac when god asked his father to kill him and oh no i don't have time for that no that's not good and i'm not good and hell hath no self loathing like love starved demi-gods

there's something wrong with your kiss or maybe mine

too much spit, not enough spite--

goodnight



II.

you kissed the wrong mouth  
sorta in the way someone could  
stumble into the wrong house if the door was unlocked  
but i didn't shoot you dead  
hoped you'd let yourself out when you realized  
the pantry, the drapes were different

instead of pulling back  
admitting you fucked up, *mea culpa*  
you kept kissing me until your tongue fit  
slick crowbar  
breaking my mouth open so wide it unhinged  
my jaw  
kept kissing me until my teeth loosened  
until it worked until it felt right until i said okay

in the morning you said  
i'm sorry  
whiskey, acid, weed, broads, the recession, the moon, mercury made me strange

now i have this hella broken mouth  
chipped tooth swollen tongue mangled heart  
no one can fit without really trying  
no one wants because it's horrifying

persephone sucked the juice from six pomegranate seeds  
and hades' fat thumb. i gargled salt water  
and silence all at once.

# Sagittarius

My father was larger than life and I inherited his girth  
when he died in childbirth.

I was born under Jupiter's gaze.

My arrow ripped through his cranium. He coughed  
placenta. Tiny palm cradled his heart, squeezed.

Drenched in blood I took comfort in his consort's arms.

I am the killer. Call me a complex. I am complicated.

Twenty-something years later

All I see in the mirror is the mother  
who fed me poppies instead of breast milk.

3 muses raised me after my mother left a curse:

When I speak, the earth shakes and in the boom, I know my  
crime. I survived my father's love.

On sunny, rainy days

they say the devil beats his wife.

Those were the days my mother's hands lingered on my throat.

Awake a mouth full of goose feathers.

If you ever feel suffocated by my presence--

it's because my laughter's two strong hands.

My smile is an engine left on.

I am not water in your lung. I am the Siren's lips,

I am french kissing in the Atlantic.

All tongue and riptides.

You asked me to tell you something you don't know.

I killed my brother in the womb to suffer in his stead.

Christ, what a sweet boy. I am the beast with a gallop like thunder.

I am the arrow. I am the stallion. I am the killer.

# ESC

One hand along my inner thigh,  
fingernails grate the cold teeth of the zipper.  
Vulnerable beneath denim.  
Mouth open, ready to receive.

Grab the tongue.  
Thumb to index.  
Shiver to shudder.

Eyes strain. Focus on the glow. Read receipt.  
Words forming like tectonic plates shifting--  
constant aching and awaiting deep in the Earth's core. ,  
Hand unearthing something real;  
bones grind as the back curves to the sigh.  
Thumb roams the smooth path a-s-d-f-j-k-l-;  
hitched breath, pregnant pause-

Waiting for your move; press enter, thrust.  
Tell me I can do that thing you'd never.  
Tell me how hard this is for you. You wish I'd send you  
that one picture. I imagine my vagina being in your icloud.  
I imagine that photograph outliving me.

Lids shut. Sight not needed to know  
you're at that place where you need you.  
I implore you to come love me. It seems the right thing to do.  
You promise all your love and more. You promise me your love.  
You promise me spit. Yes, right there. Read receipt. Type a little faster.

Fingertips hover--  
hesitant to show my throat: "Absence makes my orphan heart grow fonder."  
Backspace. "And if you were here" Backspace. "I wish you were". Backspace.  
Backspace. Chewing dead skin from my lips. Thumb on the home button.  
You: It's late for me, need to clean up.

And if you were here.  
And if you were here.  
Three fingers deep.  
Two thighs wide,  
I forget the miles.



# Hell-bent

Why is it so hard to ask for help  
but asking the moon to fall from the sky  
and be a piece of cheese you can eat is easy.

Like my sisters and I asking for the rain to mix easy with powdered milk.  
Like the strange things you do to make EBT last.  
Ask my mother why I was born so heavy but I am not a stone.  
I am not a slab of marble in the form of foam born Goddess.

They name storms after people because they're nature's biggest disaster  
I am an unhinged door. Splintering mahogany. Weathering the storm.  
Mother asked me if I was afraid of the dark--  
I am afraid of hands and wedding bands that catch on my baby teeth

Mother said lock the door. Only let the right one in.  
We had a secret knock. 3 fast, 2 short. She said only let the right one in.  
I said please don't leave me alone. She said only let me in.

Exposed  
built like  
A seat for when you are  
my hands out stretched like a bowl, an  
I am awkward standing posture.  
ugly broken body  
a tagpole, a chair.  
Big, deep palms made to hold a heavy heart.

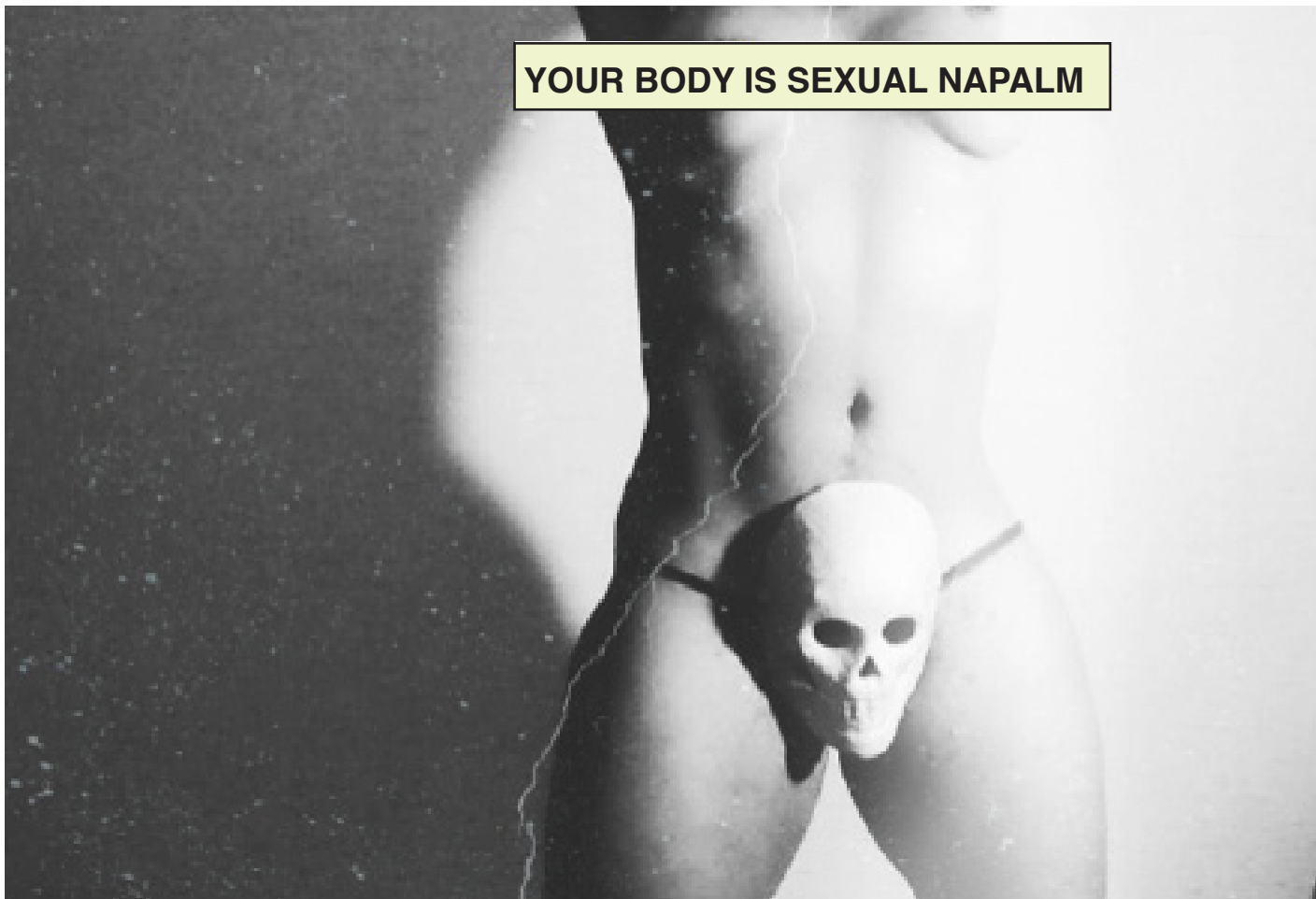
Lifting, lifting, lifting.

Whole body aching to grow and wilt at the same time.  
I am Demeter's hungry girl. Red-handed and spitting.  
Splitting open fruit on a cold throne.

Icarus trying to high five the sun. Tripping on a cloud. Falling.  
Dumb youth. Pomegranate cum.  
The earth opened to snap me up.  
Here I am. Fucked in the horizon.  
I roamed where my mother warned not to go.  
I unlocked the door. I let the wrong one in.

I fell  
heavy,  
a stone.

**YOUR BODY IS SEXUAL NAPALM**



a hymen is a  
weapon of mass destruction  
slowly defuse her, ow—

are the sheets bleeding  
yet— like sunsets burn august.  
split summer open.

if he stays the night,  
he loved her right? if he leaves,  
it was just a fuck.

purity is an  
incendiary agent,  
sexual napalm.

he says, “this was fun.”  
“i feel like a casualty,”  
she sighs.

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26. Loves to peel grapefruits and oranges.

Janea Kelly was probably a reptile or a ficus in  
her past life.

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