

## Mambo Cadillac

Drive me to the edge in your Mambo Cadillac,  
turn left at the graveyard and gas that baby, the black  
night ringing with its holy roller scream. I'll clock  
you on the highway at three a.m., brother, amen, smack  
the road as hard as we can, because I'm gonna crack  
the world in two, make a hoodoo soup with chicken necks,  
a gumbo with a plutonium roux, a little snack  
before the dirt-and-jalapeño stew that will shuck  
the skin right off your slinky hips, Mr. I'm-not-stuck  
in-a-middle-class-prison-with-someone-I-hate sack  
of blues. Put on your high-wire shoes, Mr. Right, and stick  
with me. I'm going nowhere fast, the burlesque  
queen of this dim scene, I want to feel the wind, the Glock  
in my mouth, going south, down-by-the-riverside shock  
of the view. Take me to Shingles Fried Chicken Shack  
in your Mambo Cadillac. I was gone, but I'm back  
for good this time. I've taken a shine to daylight. Crank  
up that radio, baby, put on some dance music  
and shake your moneymaker, honey, rev it up to Mach  
two. I'm talking to you, Mr. Magoo. Sit up, check  
out that blonde with the leopard print tattoo. O she'll lick  
the sugar right off your doughnut and bill you, too, speak  
French while she do the do. *Parlez-vous français?* So, pick  
me up tonight at ten in your Mambo Cadillac  
cause we got a date with the devil, so fill the tank  
with high-octane rhythm and blues, sugarcane, and shark  
bait, too. We got some miles to cover, me and you, think  
Chile, Argentina, Peru. Take some time off work;  
we're gonna be gone a lot longer than a week  
or two. Is this D-day or Waterloo? White or black—

it's up to you. We'll be in Mexico tonight. Pack  
a razor, pack some glue. Things fall apart off the track,  
and that's where we'll be, baby, in your Mambo Cadillac,  
cause you're looking for love, but I'm looking for a wreck.

from Lingo Sonnets

Betty Boop's Bebop

Because I'm a cartoon airhead, people think it's a picnic  
down on these mean streets. Sure, my skirt's short, but it's a crime,  
fellows, how you give a frail the slip, leave her simmering,  
hot and bothered. I have feelings, cardboard, but bordering on ennui,  
just this side of *tristesse*. I may not be human, but I can kick  
like one and bite and pinch, too. Don't forget, mister, I'm  
not just a bimbo with a helium voice. I'm no rococo  
parvenu pillhead. I've read your Rilke, your Montesquieu.  
Really, I'm not as dumb as I look. Or maybe I am. Less  
tries to be more, but ends up being nothing. My last beau  
vetoed the philosophy of religion class in favor of pre-law,  
exactly why I don't know, but I'm getting a glimmer. Stay  
zany, the cartoonists tell me, and next year you'll play Cinderella.

Ganymede's Dream of Rosalind

Girlfriend, I am the boyfriend you never had—honeysuckle mouth,  
indigent eyes, no rough Barbary beard when kissing me. Popinjay,  
keep me in your little chest, nestle me in your cosy love hotel,  
my mouthful of tangy violets, my pumpkin raviolo, my spoon  
of crushed moonlight in June. On your breast let me sup,  
quaff the nectar of your sweet quim, trim repository of dear  
succulence. Only touch my cheek with your hand, and let  
us again meet as we did that first time in Act II, Scene IV  
when we ran away to the Forest of Arden. Rough sphinx,  
you know my heart, because it's yours, too, and quartz,  
altogether transparent stone. I yearn for you as a crab  
craves the wet sand, a wildebeest the vast savannah, a toad  
every mudhole and mossy shelf. Forget Orlando. I'll marry myself.

Karen, David, and I Stop across the Street from the Pitti Palace

*In questi pressi fra il 1868 e il 1869 Fedor Mihailovic Dostoevskij compì  
il romanzo L'Idiota*

Knocking around after dinner at Alla Vecchia Bettola in the cool  
Mediterranean evening, we are joined by Prince Myshkin,  
of all people, because a plaque above a little paper shop  
(quoted in the epigraph of this poem) tells us he was created here, or  
so it says. Writers are such liars, and I should know. Fact:  
until this moment I'd forgotten about the prince. It's like the TV  
Western you watched with such rapture as a kid while eating a bowl of Trix;  
you see a raccoon and suddenly remember the Lone Ranger's mask. Jeez,  
and I loved Tonto. *Hi-yo, Silver*, I'm such a stale piece of crumb  
cake, because during the dark night of 1974, Myshkin held my hand,  
even though I was more like a shipwreck than a woman—mute, deaf,  
gnawing on my own heart as if it were meat, your words a match  
I lit to find this place—forever in your debt, Fedor Mihailovic Dostoevskij.

Nietzsche Explains the Übermensch to Lois Lane

No, no, no, no—he doesn't even have nerves of steel. No  
point asking him to save you, ma'am, he's more likely to rescue  
rain from the street. Born on your block, not Krypton, he's  
terror with a capital *T*, the beautiful mind you  
vain dames can't see for the mascara on your lashes. You saw  
exactly nothing when you clapped eyes on him, a nerdy  
zip, not even head of the class, just skulking in the back, a  
brilliant light in a room full of blind men. But when he rises, havoc  
descends on the world, lightning storms blister the earth, for he

fears nothing, feels nothing, sees everything. From the beginning he's been a juggernaut, crushing everything in his path, from the Hindi Jagannath, Lord of the World, a guise of the god Vishnu. A dark Lex Luthor was more what I was thinking of than Superman, ma'am.

### Zeus, It's Your Leda, Sweetie Pie

Zip up your toga, thunder thighs, that's Hera barking like Cerberus on amphetamines. I was a skeptic, don't you know, but you've got the equipment, as the frigging king of the gods should. All the mortal gals are agog, hinting for an invite to our next divine date, as if I jump in your Caddy and we race toward a three-star snack, lightning bolts setting the highway ablaze miles ahead. I'm nervous about your wife. She blinded Tiresias, and Apollo plays possum when she's around. Zeus, that's your cue—reassure me. Don't think I want to move to Mt. Olympus. Those relics are a snooze. Athena, there's dust on her tutu, Venus's, too, so get a move on, or my Helen will wow exactly no one and his horse. Let's dillydally, Ding-Dong Daddy.