

## Hello

The person gazing at this page before you had really amazing eyes—  
blue the way the Caribbean is blue that first minute off the plane

to someone who grew up in Jersey. Anyway, it's good you're here.  
The truth is I've been lonely, crawling up and down the page at night.

Life is like this boomerang: you get hurled out, and everything  
is fresh, then you hit forty, start to arc back to the hand

that flung you from the womb, the Lord's hand, and then  
it's all rerun. I know I'm complaining, and that it's unattractive,

but please, forgive me, because complaining is like sex for old people.  
Have you ever cringed with your whole body? Been so filled with shame

you wanted to wriggle out of your flesh, like a serpent in a forest,  
like the snake that betrayed Eve? No one ever mentions

how the snake apologized, how he tried to make it up to them,  
how the Lord punished the snake too, said *I will fill your kind*

*with so much shame and self-hatred you will writhe out of yourself  
every six months, just like a man's penis.* It's true—twice a year

men wake and find nothing in their boxers, but the empty casings  
of their runaway fallacies. Anyway, 1875, a Civil War vet from Virginia

gets off a boat in England. Everyone calls him *Yankee*. He cringes, snarls  
*I ain't no Yankee. I killed Yankees*, but after a month he begins to take it,

the way we all begin to take the gray hairs in our underpants, the ring  
of our anus loosening, our rocket ship struggling to pierce

the atmosphere. Now, if you would just lean forward a little, friend,  
and drag your fragrant strands over my voluptuous grief.

## Track of Now

It's one of those days when you can hear everyone's heart beating,  
    can feel the blood trickling through people's veins.  
I feel so fertile—each woman in Tompkins Square Park  
    eats her ice cream just for me.  
Trees shimmer and swell in their bark.  
I have guitar strings in my throat and flamenco the mother  
    hauling three children in a stroller.  
I see the vein in the haystack of the junkie's arm.  
I feel people across town thinking about me, can sense myself blooming  
    in Molly's mind like a desert rose.  
Old people gather around the dog park and look at the hounds  
    that had been their youth.  
I can see the smile being passed from face to face, like a baton,  
    as we glide around the track of now.  
Even the cosmic amputee feels three-quarters whole.  
Joan Wasser sings under an oak tree, her voice so fierce and luminous,  
    like watching glass being blown.  
Young women float by in dresses made from the skin of green apples.  
A businessman drools his boozy initials onto the blouse of a Polish teenager.  
Everyone's genital odometer is wiped clean.  
So this is what it feels like to have sex with the universe, I think,  
as a pigeon lands on my shoulder and whispers  
    tomorrow's winning lotto number in my ear.

## A Brief History of the Future

There will be traffic clones with glow-in-the-dark eyes  
that live under intersections and only pop up  
when the power sputters to a halt.

You'll be able to adjust the sound of your heartbeat  
like the ring of a cell phone.

After a night of heavy drinking, you'll peel your face off  
and send it to the cleaners to have the wrinkles steamed out.

There'll be virtual amusement parks  
where you can drown in the milk of your first lover's thighs.

When you have a feeling, you'll be able to push a *here* button  
so you'll always know how to get back.

Regular memory will begin to look like an old, beat-up car.

Parents will sneak into their children's brains at night  
and examine the raw footage.

Instead of churches, we'll have giant radios  
with huge metallic antennas for steeples.  
If you sit on the coils, you can listen to god  
with your entire body, as his holy broadcast ricochets  
off the aluminum walls of your bloodstream.

## **Beware of the Dark Sedan Idling Inside You**

I flick a switch—out flashes the lightbulb,  
like God snapping his fingers in my face:  
*Wake up, Pumpkinhead.* I've been running around  
half-naked, with the rest of America,  
wearing only a credit card and a cashmere scarf.  
*Arf, arf.* Yesterday, I went to Circuit City's  
going-out-of-business sale to revel in the fall of capitalism,  
but all I saw were the sad faces of underpaid workers.

Welcome to land of the free fall  
and the freebaser, as well as the freelancer  
and freeloader, and front-loading washing machine,  
where you can empty your conscience and wash  
all those illicit thoughts about illegal immigrants  
out of your brain, where it's still ok  
to dock your canoe at the racist joke island  
at cocktail parties and chuckle. Two housewives  
bang prescription medicine bottles  
and whisper *cheers*. An hour opens  
its trench coat and shows you its stolen minutes.  
A homeless man gets a boner while sleeping  
on a steam grate. There's a dark car idling  
inside you. The question is: do you get in?