

The first dottery was called Limbo.

Before the first dottery was shut down it had twenty million legs across the steppes. It was like a thaw. It meant itself too, almost exclusively. Before it was eliminated, consigned to the once-drawer, the curio-city, Limbo was overdant—so lush with the unspoken it pirouetted on its own face, on the rolling buttocks of its own hills. It was a plague of giraffes, chewing trees, preventing oxygen. Beatific. Before it was sent to your room, where it waits still, in ancient meditation on bedframe, the first dottery was a vibrant bully—out storking the streets and prairies for the godless, ready to swoop in like the end times and carry off our weakest.

Which leads me to my question for our current dottery: What are we to do with our weakest? Who will own them?

A bone spider wove it out of brick. The bricks came out her ass like silk constipation. The mortar, threads between. This was the original secretion. No one still knows where the dottery suspends. Each new dew and it is gone from yesterday's span across the grass. The dottery houses women before they are conceived. The building teaches them waiting. The walls teach confinement. The inner warden teaches them how to occupy their small time with things that fit in hand. One-window teaches them the moon. The dotters learn it all so that it seems familiar when it is taught again or else they are bored abhorrent and so unlearn. Dotters know this: all things undone contain their enemies. Dotters are not dotters from anatomy, dotters are dotters from edits, diets, tides, the cakey residue of Desitin in folds of infinite orchid. They arrive in silk, flee down ropes of root.

The failure I began with was the failure to be brilliant.
Fables have a remarkable habit of transparency.

You're no star—my sister has told me.
I see, I say. I, eye, sir.

I am much brighter (true-bling) than you are, unless you are reading this
my book of prosies (one potato, two potato)—

these unbirthdays all mine—and deriving
some proof.

WARNINGS: Some orphanages happen before birth—preconceptions herein are mobbish, little more than unruly tenets. Evict. Some orphanages are theaters with no stage to ovate toward, no postpartum afterproduction, no violent, satisfying striking of the set. Some orphanages are nail salons where patrons are taught, like children, manicures cancer. But manicures don't.

Artery-red, the dottery is a brickbox warehoused near the next street over. Schoolroom-style, very like a church, it migrates every other day to its present location. It is a piggy-bank, and you can make a deposit through the mail slot. A pale pink embryo. Hers are left all the time. All the time develops hers into dottage—the substance of the boutique. Also, clothes can be left. Catholic plaids, Swiss dots, thigh-highs, shantung. Inside the dottery, dotters are fashioned—matched to apparel.* You asked. This is how.

How should a dotter go? With god.
How should a dotter live? Against given.
How should a dotter be? Trou-bling.
How should a dotter care? Church her.
How should I treat a dotter? Sugar.

* Engendering: the putting on, or in, of the first undergarment. Planted unmentionably, painsgivingly, beneath skin with skewers or very straight razors, it is not unlike botfly larva, as it can appear to have arrived beforehand and from another country.