

CREATION MYTH WITH BLATANT COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT

After Mathias Svalina

In the beginning, Jason slashed every one of us.
Our ghosts lingered in the black lodge. We watched
sunlight pass through the window like a tide.

Eventually, some teenagers showed up.
Jason slashed them too. Then, college students
drove up from the void outside the lodge.

Jason slashed all-but-one of them. She opened
the Necronomicon Ex-Mortis. Our bodies fell
from the walls and ceiling.

We took his skin and made the Earth.
We took his mask and made the moon.
We took his machete and made all of you.

MIXED WHITE/FILIPINO POET ANTHONY SUTTON
INTERROGATES THE BASIC NOTION OF "PASSING"
AND THEN ACCEPTS BEING READ AS A LATINX WOMAN

There's how the words "Ma'am" and "Man" are indistinguishable.

If ma'am: *Did that parking guard not notice my facial hair?*

If man: *Was he just really informal?*

Am I really this dumb? If so,

let me state the obvious: that a marginalized subject

can be mistaken for a majority subject

means identity is, to varying degrees,

fictional. But here's what we don't say:

an antonym of passing is failing.

In this, failure can be broken down two ways:

1) The marginalized subject is seen as themselves.

2) The marginalized subject is seen as a differently marginalized subject.

On my last day in Houston, I walked through downtown

when a homeless man crossed the street

to ask *Are you a male or a female?*

I said *Um. Male?*

He turned around disappointed and walked in the opposite direction.

I'm trying to come up with a joke about how I should return to Houston

for the homeless man who wanted to be my boyfriend,

but I can't get it right, so

I'm putting this incident in the pile with the others.

I order them like a tarot deck.

In my major arcana, I was (rightfully) pulled over

for speeding in a school zone.

I remember the line on the ticket for ethnicity.

It read *Latino*.

I wondered if it was possible

to correct this, and how

bad Americans are at confirming that we understand

each other. How English doesn't

provide many opportunities to talk

about race and gender simultaneously.

Then I stuffed the ticket in my wallet and drove to work.

[Some days I am more ghost]

Some days I am more ghost
than word. You flinched
while we sat at the patio table
of your favorite gay bar
as I denigrated it. *Bastion of men.*
Cisgender hellscape.

The perpetually hung
Christmas lights should have flickered
as I spoke, but instead there was the swift
response you gave
the bartender: *I'll take*
both tabs.

Most days I am more anarchist
than sex object. *Female Trouble*
by John Waters played on your laptop.

I dozed off with Aunt Ida's best line,
The life of the heterosexual is sick and boring,
in my floating thoughts:
It's not just the heterosexual.
I am expected to be
more of a man than a person...

Moments ago I kissed you
for the final time.
Think of it as an archive
to prove that yes, I was here,
and though I was not
what I was when we met
I still was.

A SMALL GOD CARRYING ENDLESS LIGHT

Even after dedicating my life
against prayer, never having
written the word *prayer*, getting

self-conscious upon hearing
mention of *prayer*, I know
if I had a god to pray to

it would be the light fixture
in the jail cell I spent most
of a day in. It sat behind

textured glass, imitating sunlight.
At 2 AM I thought it resembled
daybreak. By 2 PM, my cellmate

believed he was watching an overcast
morning. Now, I bow to it,
to study its changes in color

to understand the changes
in myself. I should consider
its correlatives with Dante.

What of the other sky behind it?
Is the universe organized
by relative distance from the light?

Then, I would abandon Dante.
Then, I would study the god
for itself. Is its light cast

from a lantern or from the god's
mind? When I learn
the answer I will abandon

the material world and enter
a field on the other side
of the glass, one implied by the light

(where true believers go). I'm sure,
at some point today, someone sang
God Bless America. I want

to ask them if they really believe
that a nation's legitimacy
depends on its being

the expression of a god. If
my god's light is unending
because the god is fed

by corporations and taxpayers.
Many of whom live nowhere
near this jail, but

many have driven by.

ON THE NATURE OF TRANQUILIZERS

When you got to the party, I did not know why you had come.

The next day I read the text on my phone telling you to get me home.

My name was in the third person. I don't know who typed it, but I do know
if it was a rooie, it touched my blood and then

the night collapsed. Everyone's faces were glowing.

I watched my hands glowing, white against concrete.

Then we were in your car. I watched myself from outside your window.

Everything else has fallen through a scar in my memory.

And also the word *tranquilizer*.

And it's root, *tranquil*, which wears its suffix like a ring.

it means *beyond rest*.

I opened my eyes in the morning and my self came back as a flood.

After I crawled out of bed, I was so quick to crawl back in.

How hard it is to crawl out of that sleep.

C'MON AND SHOW ME SOMETHING NEWER THAN EVEN DANTE

You might think a Dante poem is all hell
and white people, and, yes, or as I call it,

the Midwest where the riots started,
specifically in Minneapolis. The internet

is flooded with bricks thrown at a Target window.
Police cars set ablaze. Some people drown

crying to protect property, which is somewhat concerning
since they didn't have much to say

when video footage of George Floyd being murdered
hit the internet, but OK. When I moved

to Indiana I drove through Fergusen
the week Mike Brown was shot.

The state patrol had taken over, which meant
no more tanks, no more tear gas. Agents sat in a van

and watched from a couple blocks away.
In the seventh circle of hell, sodomites run

in circles across burning sand, though this sounds
like normal life to me. The painful repetitions.

I had the thought that time was like flowing water,
rising and sinking in intervals, but maybe

time is a stag, charging through a field.
He has his spot where he likes to graze.

When he looks, he looks with his eyes and horns.

C'MON AND SHOW ME SOMETHING NEWER THAN EVEN DANTE

In Dante, the universe is constantly shifting
in relation to where one is, so that
when on Earth, Satan is at the center, and

when one is among the stars, everything slides
as if on gears so that God is the center.
In non-Euclidian geometry, this shape is called a hypersphere.

The concept is not too different from when,
in the queer theory class, we talked about the intersection
of sexuality and race, and I playfully said *And actually,*

I'm just the least white person in the room. Something
I wouldn't clarify when walking down the street
and people think I'm Latinx

and maybe a woman. The man outside
the gas station hollers *sister* at me, but
when he hears my voice he bums me for change.

I keep walking block-by-block, transmuting
as fast as the uncertain Earth around me.