

Anne Boleyn

Anne Boleyn had reptilian creatures
dwelling in her ovaries eating
all her eggs.

Henry's sperm, dumb and excited,
would swim in and chomp, chomp
be devoured in seconds, a

16th-century version of *Fear Factor*
in which none of the contenders are
scared of anything at all,

even eating their partner's babies
or chopping off their concubine's
extremities.

She would have chewed the top
off Mary's head

would have gnawed right through
the skull, and if straws had
been invented, sipped
the welling blood till only
the brain was left – an ice cream
ball at the bottom of a berry
sundae.

Then time for the
razor-edged spoon, used
with the Luciferic skill of the
fifth finger.

Anne stood in the corner
of a room hung with velvet –

the plush right angles
a private screen on which
her mind could blossom
darkly outward

with her clever back to men – gasping
anemones left high and dry without
the pandering feminine waters
anywhere around.

There would be no
mollification.

Her back, a straight and
soundless bell chiming its
judgement,

premeditated and
whip-raw with disrespect.

She had the claw marks of
past lives –

the mauling scars of
cold-blooded marauding.

She came out of the
primordial swamp straight into
the mind of humanity,
learned like lightning,

laced her speech with the
stenchless worm of arsenic,
its small and ruthless mouth
attaching to the most tender
place in men and women.

The proof: Catherine's heart – a
hoar-frosted garden, small teeth marks
across its surface, the roots of
anger finally withered and dry.

Anne glimmered coolly –
a magnificent ice axe,
cleaving the earth's breast.

Her shoes the shape of
inbred alligators

squashed the weakest fruit to
rot beneath the pale English sun.

Snow chart

It is snowing for the first time in twenty years.

Millions of iced flowers are falling from the sky.

But love is just another way of looking at the weather, I think.

We are on my bed and you have a piece of paper and a pen.

You are drawing a graph to show me how love changes over time.

Two small people with rough biro bodies and big heads walk along the x-axis, holding hands.

They are you and I heading into our own future.

It can be tough to walk through love, you tell me gravely.

The y-axis charts the push and swell of your feelings, starting low the days after we met at the club and then

creeping up. Come now, our second winter, and the line rockets skyward.

You wave the paper at me. *See? Did you see that?*

This is how much I love you now.

I nod. We both look out the window, where the snow has covered everything.

**The moon and my 'house':
A review of Haruki Murakami's novel, *1Q84***

There is an electronic moon attached to the side of my 'house'. It emits a low hum and is neon white. It might sound funny but it's not. At night when I have the blinds pulled to an appropriately 70s-cop-interrogation-room angle, the iced light scans across my body and I feel like nothing but a collection of meaty braille being read by an indifferent finger.

In these moments, I am sure I am the calm-in-the-face-of-sheer-madness protagonist of a Haruki Murakami novel – yet to realise her massive inherent power; yet to realise her breasts are perky and perfectly shaped like small Mt Fujis shining brightly in the sun; yet to realise the other half of the universe is some shy math teacher with a natural six-pack.

Beneath this indifference I feel like a glistening, wet creature. But it is more apt to say that I feel less like any living thing than I do a state. I am a voiceless want. An ache on the sheets. Maybe the metaphor of a sprig of something organic in a shadowy place frequented only by slightly magical cats, pushing its way up toward a pinprick of light far above – whether it's a star or the exit outta here, the sprig never knows.

At the end of a Haruki Murakami novel we are not sure if we are sure or not. There seems to be a form of resolution but we were never clear in the first place which side of the door represented internal or external reality. And in some way this huge planetary wing mirror attached to my 'house' pushes me further into and further out of the world.

The space in my room breathes and on the exhale it bends everything including my body and yet-to-be-realised perfect breasts in a convex sheet out toward the soupy night. I do not know where my internal organs end and where the neon street sign begins, but it doesn't matter – it's all sexy. All red. All ruby. All wet. All glistening. All some kind of entrance or exit.

Final 8os exposé

At an auction of Jacqueline Fahey's art
all your old teachers in their
batik headbands drink Henkell Trocken

and swing parrot earrings from
pulled lobes.

Every face is almost the one
you want to see and
every conversation about a
daughter that isn't quite you –

she's an awfully clever scholar

she's beautiful at science

and her algebra is simply

magnifique

On the floor a river of peewees,
clinkers and galaxies roll in a
stream toward a small hole in the corner
of the room

and children scrabble about on
their knees dragging collaged
party hats behind them like
parachutes.

From downstairs there is

a rhythmic thump

thump

thump

where a Morrissey concert
that you're dying to get to has
already begun but

the auction hasn't started yet
and you're fretting because you
need to get away and because
you need *that* painting,

the one where your mother,
finished teaching for the day,
sits at a table
her diamond rings hazed in
Pall Mall smoke

and the wispy brown
quarter moon of a
child's head can be
seen to rest against
her knees.

Moon-baller

Open up your mouth and
we'll press our lives together.

In the future you'll stop breathing,
and in a loving way we either will
or will not have been kind enough
to each other in this lifetime.

Remember the night we thought
we heard an owl telling the future?

Remember, no matter how hard
we looked, we couldn't find its
two pale orbs among the camellia's
thatched branches.

What I meant that night but
said badly, or didn't say at all was:
your b-baller's touch was
like a stone fruit – hot from the sun,
tender, but with an aftertaste
of rocky indifference – traces of planet,
mineral, amethyst, a hint of dry river bed.

I think I am terrified of being
left alone with a spade on a
small, sweet-skinned moon where
the view is beautiful but
nothing will grow.

So, I'll kiss you on your
big pink mouth, but leave before
I learn it's me who's not fit
for life.

Because a woman's heart is like a needle at the bottom of the ocean

When we have sex and I can't see your face and your hair is tied up, I feel like I am having sex with myself or myself as yourself. I am a good boyfriend. I am emotionally stable but in the bedroom I dominate in a gentle fashion. I am blonde and brunette and I wear both of my head hairs up in a topknot. Sometimes I whisper to myself in Mandarin – I say there's no 我 in 队,¹ and the small mountains inside me burn. The forests sway a little. And there is possibly someone who comes out of a tiny cabin in a valley and yells something inaudible but meaningful up the slopes toward us. I cannot hear her well, did she say, 什么都没有意思了, 但一切都是非常非常重要的?² And somewhere a yang moon is speaking about a job she just applied for while a man who feels just like me appears to be listening but is thinking about what he wants to say next. The night crosses its leg over the day and the ankles don't touch in the middle because 女人心海底针.³

¹ There's no I in TEAM.

² Nothing means anything at all, but everything is so very important.

³ A woman's heart is like a needle at the bottom of the ocean.