



BAD BALLERINA DANCES  
AGAINST VIOLENCE

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*Cover photo graph by Lance D.C. Paradis*

*for Kimberly*

## **AT CLUB FAB**

An auditorium without an audience. Two women dancing. One dances in a white gown, and she moves with confident abandon— a performance addressed to emptiness.

The other woman is on a swing, center stage. She wears black frilly briefs and a transparent tunic over a beige undershirt. Her black hip boots have spike heels. She fuses the can can dancer to the go go girl.

The woman in white is a bride. She is death. She is a piece of cake with vanilla frosting being eaten by a man with dirty fingers. She has lost her shoes, and she looks for them, high and low.

The can can dancer fused to the go go girl twists the ropes of her swing, winding and unwinding her body in languid arcs. She is asleep, and she lies in the sand of her dreams and feels the warm sun and the cool sea breeze.

Both women have a secret. In these two secrets are all the other secrets.

## **ROOM**

I'm in a room with a door  
you can go through  
but I can't

You're in a room with a door  
I can go through  
but you can't

I'm in a room with a door  
you can go through  
but I can't

You're in a room with a door

I can go through  
but you can't

I'm in a room with a door  
you can go through  
but I can't

You're in a room with a door  
I can go through  
but you can't

## **FOR ANYONE**

no floor  
no walls  
no ceiling

what did you expect?

a wanting heart  
a burning mouth  
tangled nerves

there is a bell  
and a mirror  
and a lamp

as the bell rings  
it begins to crack  
the mirror reflects  
a broken shadow  
the lamp reveals  
everyone has gone back

what did you expect?

## **I WAIT**

in this room  
full of words

each moment advancing  
in the eternal

jumping up, leaping sideways  
each foot ahead

putting each foot  
up

each step a prayer  
and the shadows letting themselves down

I am motionless, beyond doubt  
seeing the shadows grow fainter

finding I am staring inward  
and the night is there

and I ask  
"Am I awake?"

and the darkness shakes  
and leaves

## **MY WORDS**

one at a time  
each has gone  
across

one at a time  
each has gone  
over

gone  
in silence

without memory

with closed eyes  
and little hope

trying to avoid  
the mistakes  
of their ancestors

already they are extinct

## **ALREADY EXTINCT**

whatever  
whatever  
whatever  
whatever  
whatever  
whatever  
whatever  
whatever  
whatever  
whatever  
whatever  
whatever  
whatever  
whatever  
whatever  
whatever  
whatever  
whatever  
whatever  
whatever  
watever  
WHATever

## **HARD**

but I want to understand why I'm here  
on this planet

in this body  
in the embodied mind

I feel small  
thinking of the Universe

looking at the stars

and the stars look small  
to me, so

far away

## **SKIMMING**

Deport, unfinished

Don't know who the president is  
and don't give a damn

Just want to get laid

Raw, ridiculous

Jumping up  
and leaping sideways

I cross my fingers

## **FOR PALOMA**

C'est non poeme.

## **THEY'VE GOT ME ON GUILT INJECTIONS**

it's spring in the meadow of noon  
the rain is dropping  
negative Orgone energy

we're



This is  
a test

Test  
test  
test

Dark clouds on the horizon  
a burning beach  
and the working of the sun and worlds  
the logic of my nerves  
my dream bubble

This is a test

One  
two  
three

## **TOWARDS THE LIGHT**

To make sense of the chaotic flux  
the consuming patterns and  
the puzzling utterances

I love

## **A CHICKEN LEG IS A RARE MEAL**

Can you taste it now?  
Good

Can you taste it now?  
Good

Can you taste it now?  
Good

Can you taste it now?  
Good



Can you taste it now?

Good

Can you taste it now?

Good

Can you taste it now?

## **AFTER THE INVISIBLE**

flipped over, turned around  
winter sprawls in space  
at everyone

flipped over, turned around  
winter sprawls in space  
at everyone

voice repeats  
because ear retreats

flipped over, turned around  
spring twinkling in the antipodes  
does not care to speculate

flipped over, turned around  
spring twinkling in the antipodes  
does not care to speculate

voice repeats  
because ear retreats

flipped over, turned around  
blissful in uneasiness  
hard to tell desire from distress

## **CONTACT**

a jumble

makes a coherent whole

a confusion clears  
in order

to let me view  
the Trinity

I follow a trail along a fence line  
picking up discarded pizza boxes  
which I stash in a pile near the base  
of a post and cover with a tarp

someone I can't see is with me, has  
gone ahead into a field, we  
are talking about litter  
and I think of a litter of pigs  
instead of pizza boxes

I remember killing the runts in a pen  
on a farm in Iowa when I was a boy  
crushing their skulls with a hammer  
and, later, standing in my bloody overalls  
and asking forgiveness of the Universe

**IN**

a forest— an old  
cannon in a tree  
that could fall if  
there was a breeze

later

a boy kisses a girl  
and the cannon falls  
or not, if no one's there

later

abnormal that  
there is a forest at all

after those kisses

later

a sequence  
of abstract pictures

placed  
between  
interruptions

## **CRETAN LYRE**

beyond joy and woe  
where I can do what I do  
without having to lie

addleheaded in Safeway  
Jigme Lingpa arises in the eggplants  
transmits mantra to my inner idiot

OM AH HUM OM AH HUM  
WICHA TYE TYE WICHA TYE TYE  
CUMA ROMA CUMA ROMA HEY HEY

coming before coming before  
coming way before coming

## **CIRCLE**

My memory born in a lotus  
peacock feathers heavy with poison  
our lives jumbled together

You drop your fork and say it's time to go  
then remember the show's not over  
until the tattooed lady dances

## **DIRGE**

*for Joe Saviers*

everybody knew  
your friends knew

your family  
your psychiatrist knew

but you kept drinking  
and drinking and drinking

and now your friends say prayers  
by the oven where you are cremated

and we did a puja in the gumpa on a full moon night  
Tashi heard your voice, it was raining through sunlight

two rainbows appeared, so she put flowers on the shrine  
and Jack got a message, "What's up with the dead flowers?"

## **PROMETHEUS SINGS**

RAM YAM KAM  
GI SANG JYNG TRU  
OM AH LA LA HO HRI  
SARVA DAKINI PHE PHE

uncertain  
chained, yet

rocked  
laughing in the rafters

starburst in his prime  
splendid

rage mixed with joy  
unsubdued

singing to be free  
of his secrets

## **FREEDOM AHEAD**

I pray to the imps at the crossroads  
where I clean a window to a broken promise  
and my dusty feet are washed in the sea of beginning

the imps are writing dirges  
on the bag of bones we call spring  
I keep speaking, and they keep writing

I listen to a plum tree rattle its branches—  
staccato beats against this empty cage

the imps demand I give them a line of credit  
I give them marks on a drum and a flag  
but such answers never satisfy

the trick is to proceed without certainty

## **CARRYING MY BONES**

rays of light coming out of me  
as I walk down the street

I'm walking an inch above the pavement  
skimming the surface

responding to the simplicity of rainbow body  
while I mutate into a welcome mystery

ahead of me, temptations pile up

## **FALLING**

off a horse  
off a roof

out of a tree  
out of a car

preparing to fall  
removing my shoes

listening to your voice  
knowing the pain

knowing what I owe  
what I will do

left to right  
left to write

## **FACELESS PRESENT**

unborn  
unbidden

the sunlight  
fills the unlit

street, and  
suddenly, I

turn and smile  
leaving the night wind

full of whispers

## **NEXUS OF ENTITIES**

*for Darrell Gray*

Arrested by material reality  
thrown forward into fantasy  
knowing "I" am the subject  
and "am" is the verb and not  
having to go further

Let me relax and the occasion  
take the wind out of suffering

## **AND HERE I AM**

mistakes in my mind  
but light in my heart

Ol' Dog  
dancing to a drum  
with feathers on

"Look!"

I'm growing wings  
I'm

I'm falling in love

## **THE CALL**

some  
lead

and some  
follow

or stand back  
or hide

there are those that stay in bed  
and those that run away

eyes that stare forward  
and eyes that stare back

eyes that shift  
eyes that are blind

to the light  
we spin