

Poetry

# rihanna, unapologetic, track two

by Nicole Pisani

so much depends upon  
the rhinestones doja wore to the met —  
forgive me for I've erred, lucifer.  
it was schiaparelli, they were crystals,  
and I forgot to hobnob with trust fund babies  
labelling their forks as they frown at have-not children  
whose mothers taught them to eat with their hands,  
lick the plate clean of crumbs —

how much money would it take for a skull to collapse  
in on itself like the bedazzled turtle  
and oceangate's stocks, anyway?  
I'm asking, luce, because I just can't seem to wrap *my* head  
around what it'd be like to scream  
twenty thousand leagues under the sea.  
I'd be a blip, no one would hear  
a gadfly crawl in their ear —

they're wearing headphones  
and it was a tortoise.  
say, goatman steve, when *will* our ears start to ache?  
when will we feel those ten thousand red hands bleeding through cave walls?  
when will my pencil run out of eraser to chew up  
and fancy unmanned plexiglass sliding doors stop opening for me  
as they have for misnamed syrian sprogs drowned on pacifier plastic beaches  
stranded —

I bought a birthday card for my brother,  
debated which one to get:

beer puns or profit poetry?  
it sits now, blank, behind a wall of unread books  
on my sacrosanct penless desk  
where I loathe to write ?  
should I put a comma there  
or a smudge —

I can't, this is a touchscreen  
and I've lost touch.  
his birthday was a month ago.  
maybe I should put a jewel  
what's the shortcut for that  
emojipedia! (they don't have a ruby)  
cut and paste like the british museum (they do, lots)  
blood diamond wealth accumulation — or perhaps not:

bright red, glistening  
I worship you as you slip from my crippled palms and seven severed fingers  
ringed with the tourniquets they didn't get in sierra leone —  
excuse me? no, I'm sorry ?abibi I can't lax your genocide  
I've got to donate to my ghost pumpkin frappuccino fund ?  
but how can I?  
when I'd rather you steal this book off TOR  
though please don't one-up it on c.ai.ver.7.4

that one doesn't quite sit right.  
although, I'm missing the human myself —  
I haven't met enough people to make them  
so it seems I have a mouth, and I must not scream  
lest I scream in another's tongue  
and fill every spit-soaked pore with a shred of a self  
that is the sum of its parts even if some parts were misassigned at birth —  
but that's al(?t?)right!

here we have progressive laws,  
less progressive fathers,  
and mothers who cry over their daughters' silk-soft brown hair  
death-spun, boiled in vats of holy water  
shrivelled worm lay dying within.  
well, blast it across the church's pews and/or hirschfeld's grave  
but papa please don't make me preach  
because I have no right to mouth along to nina when "I" say

I don't belong here, I don't belong there  
I've even stopped believing in prayer.

maybe I'll travel to that unreal city  
where matty's god-shaped hole got infected,  
chuck a white lighter in my pocket,  
and find my own personal rapture at twenty-seven  
second coming be damned — *this* is my god:  
gnawed bits of rubber like pauper breadcrumbs  
dissolved in stomach acid and overpriced caramel-sweet caffeinated drinks  
that would make a roman cry tears of greek fire.

bloodhound sniff-gambling on fugazis,  
I chew on knockoff tiffany diamonds  
revered piss-coloured little things —  
but if I could *just* find a pen  
(damn, would it feel good to dust that bad boy off)  
trench a line on this near-pebble  
break it open, see if it's jadeite,  
fumble the ballpoint between yellowed teeth  
as I scratch around these three final finger soldiers  
middle pointer and thumb cocked gun.  
etch it onto a cave somewhere below patagonia  
fact-guessing: whatever the hell happened to the enveiled women in iran?

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