when there are three

Trish Salah

Quand ils sont trois

Le narrateur-narratrice de Trish Salah dans «Quand ils sont trois» explore une subjectivité et une sexualité liminaires. D'un mouvement qui à la fois défie les définitions étroites de «la femme» ou de «l'écriture féminine» et qui reconnaît l'expérience des femmes qui vivent dans un régime où l'on ne prend pas en considération leur différence sexuelle, il/elle demande «qui écrit à partir d'une identité féminine et quel corps détermine?» Repoussant les frontières reconnues du corps convenablement sexué et d'un objet de désir «approprié», il/elle rappelle que «selon le cadre choisi, on peut toujours couper certaines parties du corps et en laisser voir certaines autres». En ce sens, «Quand ils sont trois» non seulement déstabilise l'équation binaire homme/femme, mais résiste à la négation de la différence sur laquelle s'appuie la culture dominante pour protéger ou renforcer une seule représentation et une seule pratique de la sexualité et du sexuel.

3

if i called you "darling" you would know all words are laden
what's next? you might ask, roses?
well, i'm in the grip of something you won't like
& i might call you (& you
as a prelude to stealing you away
the delusion i could call (that you must answer
must be symptomatic
of what? my rapture in proximity?
my lack of ego boundaries?

the other night, we three (i thought we were three

the perfect revolutionary couple

poised for radical intervention, engaged art and hot sex
well, my mistake, and thank you (& you
for your protests
because i was caught up in my own narrative, careening towards your
thighs, your lips & yours,
white tusks shining
like knights on white chargers off to slay sexism,
you know, though progressive non-possessive, wet and wild,
truly liberatory
my dispute with penetration
could hardly be called chivalrous (or disinterested)
after all after the demo, you’re to love me, need me, fuck me,
right?
(& if this poem doesn’t do it, nothing will)
nothing will,
and anyway what’s
one more cock
or less (unless)
donning these fake names in crimson
casting seduction as sedition
like Cixous’ seamed stockings
i manage to beg, ask, force – the question?
who is writing in the feminine on whose body
whose cheesy equation of the feminine
with desire
is giving, getting
off here
and who slips

this is between you and who and me, just the three of us
who will trace, task, turn whose bodies for whose pleasure?
who’s dumping whom?
or equally,
who says we can’t make a home of pain for us all?
who says,
ain’t that romantic?
you & you, ever practical:
we’ve had enough of mutilation from our enemies, thanks,
don’t really need it from our friends
why don’t you go ironically venerate Madonna
or masturbate in theory or
rather be painting a girl friend's toenails or my bathroom door,
editing a zine or my self
but, yours in struggle

us (you (& you))
but
wait, wait! does this mean we can't even do genderfuck sometime
wax our legs or
nostalgic
don birkenstock drag
with linked arms so earnestly
handsome
march into the future?)

okay who's pushing now –
you two take it
you have your love,
i'm stuck, stupid in dustmotes
in the fever of light, in this unfinished poem
lodged in my spine, shivering and wanting you & you
to efface myself
to say

the poem wants
to emerge in a body of love
to be dispersed

2

s/he's wearing her hair the way nostalgia does
mirrors, tucked behind ears,
under reversed baseball cap s/he boundlessly
collapses in to you, these touches,
your in)difference
more than s/he could hope for
given the shape s/he left you in

as in thirsts, as in ghosts, as in as it gets
(and out of
when there are three

all her – enveloping frictions
touches of, the very inside)

never has the hysteria of this body been so un/clearly
a case of his story (that old saw)
going madly after hers
après hors

touches of, the very inside

ever has the hysteria of this body been so un/clearly
a case of his story (that old saw)
going madly after hers
après hors

this in seme(s) less
in sides taken, turned
out of, or,

after
boundless

compared to

you’re so big, how can s/he come to

only this body

hysterical and less,

reliable?

in any frame some skin is in

some skin’s out
memory snapshots exclusive clubs
membership ascertained

at press of skin

the condensation of self

is this realization of body

an inhabitation of desire?

(the in s/he needs

after breaking up

(some wind shield

some bloody fist)
on concrete

memory of you/her

confounded obliquely

embers raw lips

lapsing these now girl kisses

s/he says:

the new girl is no

thing to me

no girl now not like you no way no how not ever
maybe it’s just:
"the unconscious oedipus complex takes the form of a k/not"
and you cut it
sabcdsy:
cut it out
leading hir to decide s/he could not find you and
now i’m not too cordial as i cave on your demands

but before
your words “how
like a boy”,

hang there unspoken

unspeak me
like a boy cannot be spoken
lips close about – uncut my tits, my clit,

my womanly body

unfrag me, unslice through
us like children hungering

me all wet gushing
pussy mess talk
what kinda
pussy must talk “me”
kiss and teething tongue seething
childtalk tied
you toss me
like a boy

out the window, into the ruins

moving on to your next sweet, love
unkiss me unkill me

why don’t you
and how dare
you treat me
like a boy

horsexe/ whore sexed
– hardly a fit subject for desire
speaking the whole story of a sex (k)not spoken

/hors plaisir/our pleasures were telling
the (h)our of the other us,
fragments of three sliced from a crowd
and piled on top of,
s/he's possessive still
scrawling our game plans
on the memory of the back of a napkin
balled and tossed in a dust bin:
in order to go awry you must confide in strangers
desire strangers' desires
hide the flicked tongue like a pimp
riding silvery sloped in humped backs
gain their trust

you may say "that most repulsive hysteric" but s/he's getting used to that, anyway spent a long time rehearsing this little sign play,
no supplement to your absence, dear -
your body gifted elsewhere to a straighter talkin' straighter shootin' boy

1
funny you're not here to hear
funny to think of more innocent endings:
that night in the bistro
the possibility of another route to love
opened with your words:
not so like a boy now

how did you read my fidgitting blush
arms curled one round one round small of back
straightjacket style and rocking
fragile, never more
sorry for my part in making
acceptable that cut of 3,
2,
1

sorry i cut you
out
up we all drift,
now you say
you cannot hitch here
your voice is
gone
along these roads
gone
is what you were before i left
following always and racing
coming after
s/he’s come undone
alone on the road
with a stranger
half frozen
to myself
leaving you
taught me

you can’t hitch in to love
love is closed
like a sign
saying “Closed”
i knocking against it all night long
wanting in
mouthing all the right words:
your can’t is loose
i’m loose in it

your incantations
lost

your love hits hard on the road
i’m splayed upon
open
writing
s/he sees
why you didn’t want her
as difference re)cedes
our ground moves,
her(e horizon