

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 la 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

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

never has the hystery 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 (be
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 *in*habitation 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"
a can/not
and you cut it
said ballsy:
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